



VIETNAM

AUGUST 2014

The Vegetarian Issue

HOPE FLOATS

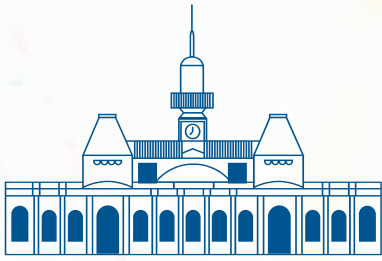
Addressing Vietnam's Drowning Epidemic

PAGE 20

THE RELIGION OF BARBECUE

Delicious Finger Licking Ribs and Chicken

PAGE 46



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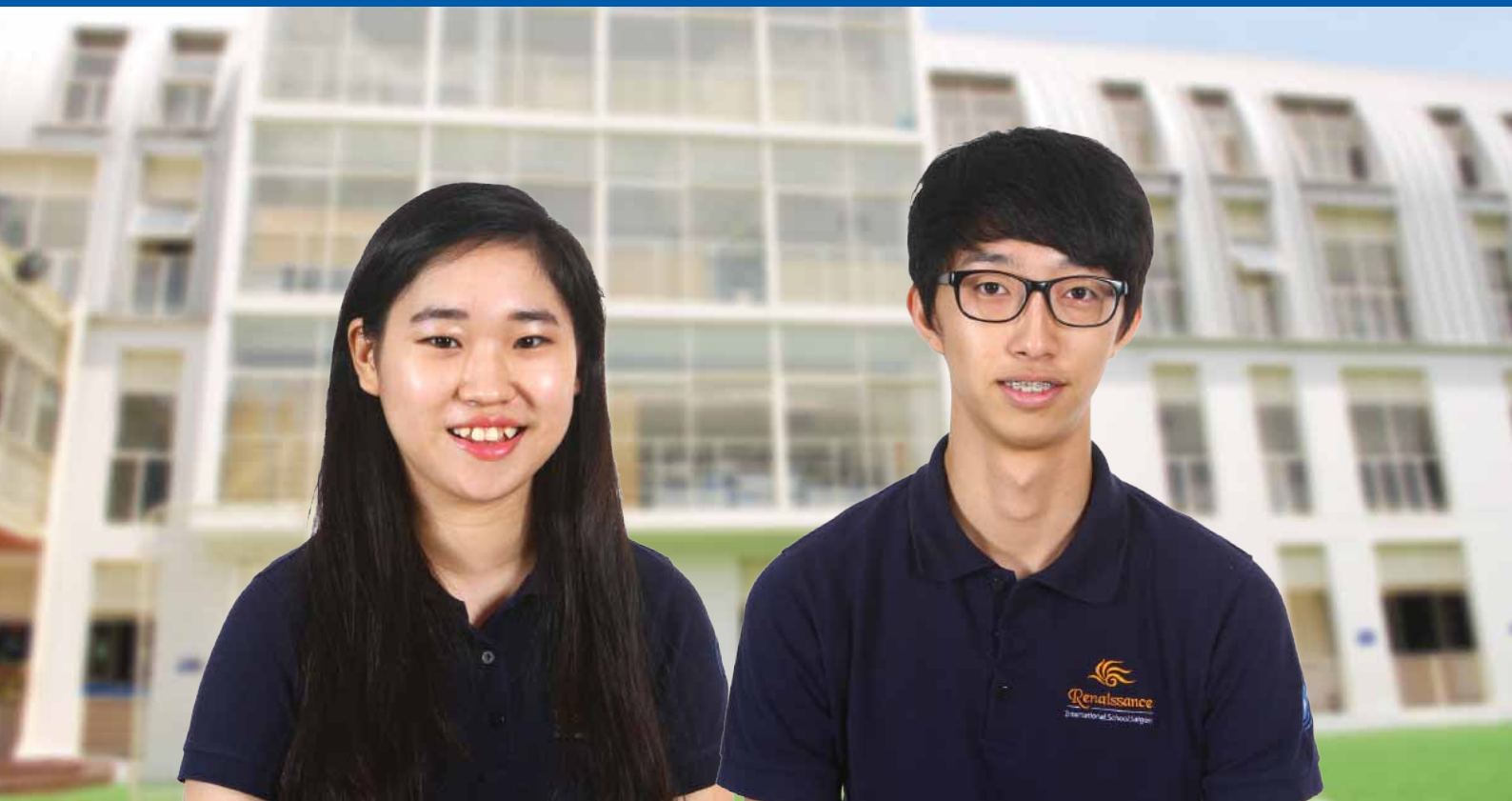


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WINE & DINE

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

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Vegging Out

WHEN MY FAMILY emigrated to My (literally “Beautiful,” the Vietnamese word for America), we fell in love with meat all over again. Gone was the chewy beef that left your jaw sore for days. I guess that’s partly what made me into the meat lover I am today. Give me a Flintstones-style 12oz T-bone medium rare with a side of mash any time of day and I’ll be a happy, satiated girl. I think I’d be the world’s worst vegetarian. Most weekends back in New York, my friends and I would drive out to some steakhouse in Long Island or New Jersey to tackle the house steak challenge — finish a 40oz steak and it’s free or compete against another person to see who can finish the steak the fastest. I was more of a spectator than a participant but those weekends were fun, drool-worthy events. For me, vegetables have always been relegated to the realm of side dishes, never the star of a meal. My early experiences with vegetarian meals in Vietnam didn’t help much, with mock meats and bad versions of “regular” meals. As our issue shows, though, the country has come a long way in making a vegetarian lifestyle one that is truly palatable. James Pham interviews Bob Allen, the man practically single-handedly responsible for bringing some innovative products to Vietnam and in *Vegetable Indispensable*, highlights some of the unique and delicious ingredients available in country along with a twist on how to prepare them. We also hear from two expats who share their insights from going green.

This month’s Mythbuster focuses on the Vietnamese superstition around the importance of the first sale of the day. It finally made me understand why my dad would always accept the first offer back when we had a stall at the flea market in the 90s, even when it was below what he paid for the item. Even though we had immigrated to the US for 15 years by then, he still practiced certain Vietnamese beliefs about luck. Had I had known then what it meant, maybe my sisters and I wouldn’t have argued with him so much about underselling every Sunday morning!

In *Unplanned Parenthood*, Annie Hoang shares a fascinating insider’s look into the world of birth control (or lack thereof) in one of the city’s reproductive health centers. Reading the story brought me back to the days when I volunteered as a translator for my friend’s NGO. I would hear stories from rural women about how they were afraid to sleep next to a man because it might get them pregnant, or that if they washed with bleach after sex they couldn’t get pregnant. It was shocking to hear this but what shocked me more was that, even though we were trying to educate them on healthcare and the fallacy of these myths, we knew that few would actually take it in, instead passing on these misconceptions to their future daughters, perpetuating the cycle of ignorance.

Having recently moved to District 7, I am constantly amazed at the number of restaurants within walking distance of my apartment. However, finding a

restaurant that’s not Korean in Phu My Hung has been a bit of a challenge, so when I recently stumbled on VIVA!, a new tapas place around the corner from me, it was a welcome addition to our dining out rotation. This month, we also review TnT BBQ in *The Religion of Barbecue* which I have also added to my speed dial for some good ole finger-licking ribs and wings (again, feeding the carnivorous side of me).

Another great article this month is *Capital Consumption*, a guide to a foodie weekend in Hanoi’s Old Quarter. While I’ve lived here almost 10 years now, I’ve sadly only had brief brushes with the nation’s capital. The weather was so humid on my first trip that my cell phone was actually sweating from the inside. I had to take it apart and dry it out in front of a fan to get it working again. I only ventured out a few times and the most memorable dish I had was streetside *bun rieu cua*. Jimmy Dau reveals some of the best local places to eat and I’ll definitely bring this foodie guide with me the next time I make my way north.

So whether you’re a herbivore or a carnivore, there’s bound to be something for you in this issue. Happy eating! ■

CHRISTINE VAN
Managing Editor

Datebook

Fill up your calendar with these exciting events



AUGUST 5

What: Demystifying rural Vietnam

Where: Movenpick Hotel Saigon, 253 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan

About: Vaughan Ryan, managing director of Nielsen Vietnam, will tackle the makeup of Vietnam's rural consumer, their shopping habits and purchase drivers, the strategies for success in rural Vietnam and how you can effectively communicate with rural consumers. Registration fee for co-hosting and AusCham members is VND500,000 and VND700,000 for non-members.

Contact: Email Nhien at events@auschamvn.org for more info



AUGUST 6

What: Marketing and Media Network

Where: Cargo Bar, 7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4; 6pm-9pm

About: An event for people interested in advertising, digital, marketing, media and technology. Speakers include Andrew Duck, entrepreneur focused on the media and publishing industries; Phi Nguyen, an MBA holder from Queensland University, Australia, majoring in marketing communication and Aske Ostergard, managing director, Epinion Asia. Registration fee before August 3rd costs VND250,000, VND350,000 at the door and VND150,000 for students.

Contact: For more details, visit www.m2.vietnambusiness.tv

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AUGUST 8 - OCTOBER 31

What: Conjuring Capital Group Exhibition

Where: San Art, 3 Me Linh, Binh Thanh

About: Features works of contemporary artists who reflect diverse localities of historical and cultural difference and innovation, mediated via video, sculpture, installation, painting and drawing. Participating artists include: Adriana Bustos (Argentina); Than Sok (Cambodia); Sudarshan Shetty (India); Nguyen Hong Ngoc (Vietnam); Hank Willis Thomas and Christopher Myers (US). This exhibition is curated by Zoe Butt and forms part of Conscious Realities, a three-year project sponsored by a network partnership between the Prince Claus Fund and San Art.

Contact: Visit www.san-art.org for further info



AUGUST 9

What: Retro Party

Where: The Grand Ho Tram Strip

About: The Grand will organize party zones all around the resort, making every corridor a time capsule with roving dancers, impersonators of 80s stars, artistic performers and a vintage photo station where guests can put their best face forward. The event will kick off with a fusion dinner, including free flow beer and wine, before The Grand turns it up with performances and DJs spinning into the night. Guest packages start from VND5,880,000++ that includes a one-night stay, two tickets to The Grand Retro night, round trip transfers to The Grand from Ho Chi Minh City and more.

Contact: Visit www.thegrandhotramstrip.com for further info



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AUGUST 13

What: The Aristocrats live in Vietnam

Where: Light Music Center, 57 Cao Thang, D3; 8-10pm

About: Rock/fusion power trio The Aristocrats, featuring Guthrie Govan on guitar, Bryan Beller on bass, and Marco Minnemann on drums, bring their tour to Vietnam. Depending on the location in the auditorium, ticket prices vary from VND500,000 to VND1 million.

Contact: Visit www.ticketbox.vn for further info

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AUGUST 16 - 17

What: 3A Station Bazaar

Where: Nha Ga, 3A Ton Duc Thang, D1; 9am-8pm

About: The bazaar's focus is on showcasing locally sourced & handmade products with an emphasis on quality and value for money. The first event will feature more than 40 booths with a wide variety of products. The 3A Station Bazaar will offer two 30 minute Happy Time Sales, one in the morning and one in the afternoon where all products will be discounted 10 percent. The event is fun for the whole family with food on offer as well as entertainment and street performances. Mai's Gallery, famous for their paintings and caricatures will also be open for viewing. The event will also support local charities, enabling them to display their products and raise funds. Saigon Children's Charity will be participating in the event. The event will take place rain or shine. The bazaar is a two-day event that is slated to be held on the first and third weekend of each month

Contact: Facebook: "3A Station Bazaar"

AUGUST 21

What: CBC Networking Night

Where: Boudoir Lounge, Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1; 6pm

About: Mix and mingle and share some stories while expanding your network and enjoying some canapés and drink specials. Come out and meet some new contacts from all different types of industry sectors and other business chambers. Free for CanCham members and co-hosting members. VND50,000 for non-members.

Contact: Email hcmc@canchamvietnam.org for more info

AUGUST 21

What: Canvas & Wine: Edvard Munch and Expressionism

Where: VinSpace Garage, 95 Pasteur, D1; 6:30pm-9pm

About: Join this session and give yourself a chance to emphasize your individual perspectives and express them on canvas, like those of expressionist Edvard Munch.

Contact: Visit www.vin-space.com for info

SEPTEMBER 20 - 21

What: The Vietnam Mountain Marathon

Where: Sa Pa

About: Trail runs of 21km, 42km and 70km in the stunning rice terrace-clad mountains surrounding Sapa. With an expected field of 400 runners, this will be the largest mountain marathon ever seen in Vietnam. Competitors from Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, France, Denmark, Hong Kong, Brunei, England, and Switzerland have already signed up. The event also features a 10km fun run on September 21. This will be a great opportunity for more people to get a taste of off-road running. Registration fee ranges from USD20 to USD510 and is open until August 20. Every entry fee for the event includes a USD20 donation to Sapa O'Chau, which runs a variety of local projects, including its own school with over 70 students.

Contact: Visit www.vietnammountainmarathon.com for more info



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Troi Oi

The country by numbers

30

is the number of days apart a pair of boy-girl twins was delivered to a young

ethnic minority woman in northern Vietnam's Ha Giang Province. Lu Thi Bien, 27, who lives in an ethnic minority village in Hoang Su Phi district, gave birth to her first male child Then Van Chuyen on May 4 and baby girl Then Thi May on June 5. "This is the first time I have seen such a case. It sounds unbelievable but true," said Lu Thi Kim, who helped Bien deliver the twins at home. Doctor Ma Trung Nghia, Deputy Director of a general hospital in Hoang Su Phi district, confirmed this rare delivery and that the twins' birthdays are separated by 30 days. Tran Duc Quy, director of the Ha Giang Health Department, said local authorities will provide care and pay special attention to the twins.



OVER 14,000

Android phones are tapped in Vietnam. Police in Vietnam have

discovered a Hanoi-based company selling an illegal phone tracking app, which has been installed on more than 14,000 Android phones, and manipulating the data its customers secretly collected from their victims. Viet Hong Company, a tech firm based in Thanh Xuan District, advertises its tracker app as being able to help users track other people's Android phones, read their SMS messages and contact books, record their phone calls, and even turn on features like camera, 3G or GPRS connections from the target devices. But its customers may not know that all of the data they covertly monitor from the handsets have been transferred to the server computer of Viet Hong Co. at the disposal of the company's employees, according to an investigation report.

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2 men have been jailed for looting a beer truck in southern Vietnam. A court sentenced them to six months in prison for “publicly appropriating property” after they stole hundreds of beer cans dropped from a overturned truck late last year. According to the indictment, Tran Kim Hau drove a truck with 1,450 cans and bottles of beer on board along National Highway 1A en route from Ho Chi Minh City to Binh Thuan Province.

The driver lost control of the brakes causing hundreds of cans to pour out of the truck into the street. After that, a crowd of people rushed to steal the fallen beers, ignoring the driver’s plea for help. Some even threatened to beat him when he tried to prevent them from stealing the beer. Cuong and Vinh took away 240 cans and 12 bottles valued at VND3 million on a delivery tricycle. The duo shared some of the stolen beer with their families and sold the rest for VND360,000. The court said there were 12 people involved in the looting. However, only Vinh and Cuong were indicted while the 10 others received cash fines or warnings because the items they stole were valued at less than VND2 million, which is the threshold for criminal charges under Vietnamese law.



1ST Bitcoin trading floor in Vietnam opens. A private company launched Vietnam’s first Bitcoin exchange despite pledges from central government officials to shut it down and jail its operators. Ho Chi Minh City-based VBTC Vietnam cooperated with Israeli company Bit2C to launch

the exchange in July at www.vbtc.vn, following a pilot run in late June, Thoi Bao Kinh Te Saigon reported. In February, the State Bank of Vietnam said it does not recognize Bitcoin as a valid currency, citing similar rulings in nearby countries like Thailand, China, Malaysia and Indonesia and European nations including Russia, France and Norway.

Bitcoins were introduced as an open source software in 2009 by Satoshi Nakamoto, possibly a pseudonym for one or more programmers. Transactions using Bitcoins have been conducted in a dozen countries in Europe and America; the currency itself is considered an asset. Analysts said Bitcoins provide little guarantee of payment as there is no central authority or bank to take responsibility for their authenticity or provide protection in case of fraud.

Tuesday Night is Darts Night in Saigon



Saigon’s International Darts League is a competitive organization, consisting of 24 teams in 3 Divisions, competing at 17 Venues around town...

RED Bar
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Voodoo Bar
92, Ho Tung Mau, d1

Buddha Bar
7, Thao Dien Street
Anh Phu d2

Ice Blue
54 Dong Khoi, d1

Phatty's Bar
40, Ton That Thiep d1

Stella Bar
119, Bui Vien, d1

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Phường Tân Phong, d7

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104, Ho Tung Mau, d1

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The Bulletin

Promotions and News in HCMC and beyond...



MOON CAKES AND FOOD PROMOTIONS

Kabin Restaurant (Renaissance Riverside, 8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1) offers "All you can eat" lunch and dinner from August 2-24 for VND450,000++ per person (food only). Dining vouchers are accepted with surcharge and applies to Standard Club Marriott dining benefits.

Kabin also offers a collection of moon cakes to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival. Place your orders until August 31 and enjoy 10 percent off for any order of 10-49 boxes, 15 percent off for any order of 50-99 boxes and 20 percent off for any order from 100 boxes. A 20 percent Club Marriott discount is also applicable. To order, call 3822 0033.

The Riverside Café, in celebration of the National Day of Vietnam, offers authentic cuisines from Vietnam's main regions. Enjoy Vietnamese three regions dinner buffet on September 2-9 from 6pm-10pm for VND850,000++ per person (food only) and VND950,000++ per person (free flow of local beer/wines/sodas). Dining vouchers are also accepted with surcharge and applies to Standard Club Marriott dining benefits.



MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Saigon Bakery, at New World Saigon Hotel, celebrates the mid-autumn festival until September 8 with moon cakes on special promotion. The moon cakes (available in flavors including green bean, white lotus, pandan lotus, black sesame, coconut and mixed filling baked skin) are priced at VND850,000 for boxes of four or eight (cakes come in different sizes) or VND185,000 for an individual cake. Purchase 10 to 20 boxes to receive a five percent discount, 21 to 149 boxes to receive a 10 percent discount and 150 boxes or more to receive a 15 percent discount. Saigon Bakery offers free delivery to District 1 or District 3 on orders of 50 or more boxes. Those who place their orders before August 14 will receive a five percent discount. Club Epicure members will receive an additional five percent off your order total. To order, call 3829 4000 or email saigon@newworldhotels.com.



OSTRICH SPECIALS

From August 9-15, Reflections (Caravelle Hotel, 19-23 Lam Son Square, D1) offers ostrich dishes such as goulash and kofta. Diners who wish to expand their ostrich tasting can order three courses from the menu for VND810,000++, or four courses at VND938,000++. For more info, visit caravellehotel.com.



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NEW STEAKHOUSE

Recently opened Nossa Steakhouse (36 Pham Hong Thai, D1) features Western steaks and Italian cuisine. It offers a wide selection of imported meats along with local fresh seafood. The restaurant has an outdoor terrace, a bar and a private dining area. To celebrate its opening, Nossa is offering free dessert for every guest dining in August. Visit www.nossa.vn or call 3825 1536 for info.



BRAZILIAN LUNCH MENU

In August, Au Lac do Brazil (238 Pasteur, D3) is offering a set lunch menu that includes "elephant ear" – thin cuts of D-rump served with special fried potatoes and "picanha" – Brazilian special cut with french fries. Call 3820 7157 or visit www.aulacdobrazil.com for more info.



SUMMER GETAWAY

Pandanus Resort (www.pandanusresort.com) offers a Summer Getaway Package priced at VND4,800,000++ for two people including two nights' stay in a superior room, two set lunches and dinners at the Café Blue Lagoon Restaurant, round trip transfers to and from Ho Chi Minh City by bus, 40 minute massage at Peony Spa, tai chi class every morning and yoga class every afternoon and a walking tour of Mui Ne. Guests who stay on Saturday night, add VND300,000++ per person and substitute a poolside barbeque buffet for one set dinner. Entertainment is provided during the barbecue buffet by the Stardust Band from the Philippines. The package is available for bookings made before October 31.

CRAVING FOR CRAB

InterContinental Asiana Saigon's Yu Chu restaurant (corner of Hai Ba Trung and Le Duan, D1) will satisfy your craving for crab. They will prepare it any style you want: wok fried with garlic and chili, wok fried with chili sauce, fried with glass noodles and XO sauce or steamed with Chinese wine. The offer is priced at VND350,000++ per whole crab including one Tiger draught beer or soft drink, available until August 31. In the same period, Basilico will offer a lobster set dinner from 6pm-10pm for VND1,900,000++ for two including free flow of soft drinks and complimentary two glasses of wine.



MODELING CONTEST

Elite Vietnam, together with DTN Communication and Yamaha, bring Elite Model Look to Vietnam for the first time, open to Vietnamese women aged 18-24. Twenty national finalists from Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang and Can Tho will go through a 10-day model boot camp, with the top three being named in the finals in early September. The winner will take home prizes valued at VND600 million. Elite Model Look, launched in 1983, is the world's largest international modeling contest, discovering top models from over 60 countries along the way, including Cindy Crawford and Gisele Bundchen.

BOUTIQUE HOI AN RESORT PROMOTION

The Boutique Hoi An Resort (Group 6, Block Tan Thinh, Ward Cam An, Hoi An, Quang Nam) is offering a 'Stay 4 nights and pay for 3' promotion for those booking online from August 21 to September 30. Rate includes daily buffet breakfast for two at Le Café restaurant, free wireless internet in room and throughout the resort, complimentary shuttle bus to Hoi An's Old Town and free bicycle usage. For more info call 0510 3939 111 or visit www.boutiquehoianresort.com.



SPECIAL GIFTS

This month L'Apothiqaire (www.lapothiqaire.com) will open a new branch in Diamond Plaza. To celebrate the event, they will be offering special gifts to the first 50 customers. L'Apothiqaire Artisan Beaute opened in 2005 and sells a comprehensive range of organic body and face oils, scrubs, bath salts, organic soaps and organic herbal blends from France.

TRAVEL SEARCH ENGINE LAUNCHED

Spaniards Alberto Moreno and Miguel Garcia have developed Baolau.vn, a travel search engine that collects all information from public transport in Vietnam and makes it available online. According to Moreno, Baolau offers up-to-date travel information and a safe way to book tickets online. It currently provides price comparison and instant booking with three domestic airlines: Vietnam Airlines, Jetstar and VietJet Air. It has also collaborated with Vietnam Railways to put train schedules and prices online. Recently, they signed an agreement with Click1BUS to sell tickets for Mai Linh and they expect to announce new partnerships with more transportation companies within the next few weeks.



DANCE WORKSHOP

DanCenter is running a summer workshop program for kids from four-years-old and older until August 22. Each workshop is Monday through to Friday with an independent theme, and a little performance every Friday for families and friends. Children will learn to dance and have fun with arts and crafts activities, featuring Cartoon Heroes themes (4+), Pop Star themes (7+), and International Hip Hop Battle themes (10+). In A Summer on Broadway musical theater workshops (7+), children will build performance skills in singing and acting by learning songs and scenes from some of the world's most famous musicals such as *Mama Mia*, *Hairspray* and *Les Miserables*. For more info, visit dancentervn.com, or call 5319 4490.

DENTAL PROMOTION

Dr. Hung & Associates Dental Center has opened a second location on 244 Cong Quynh in District 1. Visit their new dental center and enjoy a full range of services with the latest equipment and technology including 20 Sirona Sinus and C4+ dental chairs, CT Cone Beam Icat Vision and Orthophos XG. To celebrate the opening, the dental center is offering a special promotion valid until August 30. The promotion includes free screening, 50 percent discount on X-ray film and teeth cleaning, 20 percent discount on composite filling and teeth whitening, 15 percent off on orthodontics and 10 percent discounts on veneers, porcelain crowns and dental implants. Call 3925 7526, or visit www.nhakhoadrhung.com for more info.

LOUDEST BICYCLE HORN

Hornit, the world's loudest bicycle horn, is now available at The Bike Shop (250 Nguyen Van Huong, Thao Dien, D2). Hornit emits a piercing 140 decibel sound which is enough to alert trucks, vans, buses, cars and even 'in a world of their own' pedestrians. Compatible with all styles of bikes, including road bikes, it gives cyclists a way of letting all other road users know where they are and makes cycling much safer. The Bike Shop offers a 20 percent introductory offer for *Oi Vietnam's* readers. For more info, call 3744 6405, or visit www.thebikeshopvn.com.



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Hope Floats

Tackling drowning, a silent epidemic in Vietnam

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY DAN NORMAN AND BEN COLLINS

ON A RECENT weekend in June, one of Asia's silent but deadly killers struck again, this time claiming the lives of six Vietnamese children. Four schoolgirls aged 13-15 in Ha Tinh, Central Vietnam, presumably slipped into a river while hunting for oysters, leaving slippers and bicycles behind as the only witnesses to the tragedy. Two hundred kilometres north, in Nghe An, two brothers, aged 6 and 9, drowned in a nearby pond while in the fields with their grandmother.

These incidents gave human faces to statistics shared earlier that same week at a conference organized by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, showing that Vietnam has the highest drowning rate in Southeast Asia, an average of nine children a day. Other estimates put drowning rates as high as 35 per day, the vast discrepancy due to the fact that drowning deaths are often underreported to hospitals (the source of data for most national health statistics) for reasons including the speed at which it claims its victims making medical intervention unnecessary or because incidents often happen in rural communities, far from health facilities. Known as the "silent epidemic," drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, and

in some parts of Asia, reportedly kills more children aged 1-4 than those who die from measles, polio, whooping cough, tetanus, diphtheria and tuberculosis combined. The Alliance for Safe Children reports that in 2008 there were 50 child drowning deaths in all of Australia compared to 50 child drowning deaths *per day* in Bangladesh in that same year.

With more than 3,000 km of coastline and an untold number of rivers, lakes and ponds, it's not surprising Vietnam is battling a drowning epidemic. Ask any rural family and chances are they will have a first-hand drowning or near-drowning story to tell. While many developed countries have had generations of education on water safety, in Vietnam limited awareness, combined with inadequate adult supervision (where children are often left in the care of grandparents or left to play on their own) and unsafe environments (the majority of children drown within 20 meters of their homes, in shallow ponds, wells or other water hazards) contribute towards these extreme drowning rates.

Another factor is the lack of swimming skills. Surveys show only 35 percent of Vietnam's children aged 8-15 can swim,

leading the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs' Child Care and Protection Department to put forth an effort to make swimming a compulsory subject at schools by 2015. Sadly, a lack of funds led to the failure of this initiative, causing Nguyen Trong An, the ministry's deputy director to suggest that "provinces and cities would be better off raising funds themselves instead of waiting for funds from the State or ministries."

NGOs and charities, like Water Safety Vietnam (WSV), are stepping in to fill the gap. The Melbourne-based not-for-profit has been training swim teachers since 2011 and running swim programs for at-risk children and adults. After a near-drowning incident of two tourists off the Ho Tram (Vung Tau) coast, WSV was brought in to train resort personnel on basic water survival and CPR. The next step was to train local children, but getting support from local officials and parents was surprisingly difficult.

"In those early meetings with [government authorities] and parents to encourage them to send their children to the swim program [first using hotel swimming pools and now the free community swimming pool managed by a consortium headed by HCMC



“We can very quickly teach children to float and swim and we can only hope that one day that skill will help them save their own lives or that of their friend or family member”

businessman Carl Gay], I had to tell them that while tourists were drowning in the sea, their own children were drowning in the rivers and streams,” says Pam O’Reilly, Project Manager for WSV.

Center of Gravity

Since the pool opened in August 2013, more than 300 children have learned to swim and recently 19 primary school teachers participated in a 14 day teacher training and school holiday swim program. Since its founding, WSV has run swim programs and trained teachers in HCMC, Hanoi, Vung Tau, Phuoc Buu, Hoa Hoi, Bien Hoa, Binh Tuan and Ben Tre, with particular focus on rural locations where children are the most vulnerable to drowning hazards.

Part of the problem lies in Vietnam’s water culture, or lack thereof. “A lot of people come to [the beach] and get wet but like a tea bag, dunk, dunk, dunk, fully clothed and then get out. From what we can see, actual swimming in deep water is not encouraged. Lifesavers will whistle you back when you go into deeper water. Maybe it’s because they

don’t feel well enough equipped to rescue anybody so they’d rather make sure you don’t get into trouble in the first place,” says Pam. “In villages, there are deep wells which have no barriers because it impedes access to the women who are getting water, so kids are riding their bikes around these wells freely. And of course, children are attracted to water. But for so many, they don’t have a choice. They have to live near water, whether it’s a well or fish farms or agricultural ditches. And when parents can’t swim, they then tell their own children to not go near the water. But every child’s inquisitive nature has it that they will, often with a mate, and often unsupervised. However, our trainers have noticed that kids, especially village kids, take to swimming very quickly. And perhaps because they’re expected to take on responsibility at a much younger age, they turn around and teach other little ones.”

The charity also brings in Australian volunteers to conduct two-week swim programs for children, as well as works with similar locally-based charities to exchange materials, share staff, help train presenters

and upgrade qualifications for local swim teachers.

Ultimately, WSV’s programs stress knowledge as much as skills. “Unfortunately, in Vietnam, we often have multiple deaths associated with a drowning accident. On too many occasions, when one person gets into difficulties, another weak swimmer tries to help and they too, drown. Children in our programs are taught: If you can’t swim, don’t go in. We encourage them to reach with a bamboo pole or throw something in the water instead. There are so many things that float, even for a few minutes: a palm frond or a backpack, for instance. Kids will naturally scramble and hold on to something. If small kids lay flat on their tummy, they can actually pull quite a heavy person in by lowering their center of gravity. But one of the most important things we teach is the knowledge that you can actually intervene when someone is drowning and not stand by helplessly or jump in if you can’t swim. Hopefully, one day this simple rule may save a life,” says Pam.

At this stage, WSV is content to work with authorities at the local level in addressing the lack of suitable training locations and trained swim teachers. “Right now, there is no way to know if WSV programs are making a difference to the drowning rate in Vietnam. What we *do* know is that not a day goes by without us being told another story of someone drowning in Vietnam. We can very quickly teach children to float and swim and we can only hope that one day that skill will help them save their own lives or that of their friend or family member.”

Additional reporting by Pam O’Reilly. For more information on Water Safety Vietnam, or to volunteer, help raise awareness or donate, visit www.watersafetyvietnam.com ■



"I sell flowers to everyone but pretty ladies are my preferred customers. Speaking of which, would you like some daisies?"



"This is going in a newspaper? Lilies are in season this time of the year. If I don't work fast it's going to be morning before I can clean my stock."



"You don't seem very busy at the moment."
"I'm not. I'm playing Candy Crush. The peak hours are over. Now I just need to stay awake until morning."

Pushing Daisies

Stop and smell the roses at the city's largest flower market

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **ADAM ROBERT YOUNG**

FOUNDED IN 1987, Ho Thi Ky in District 10 is the largest and oldest night flower market in Ho Chi Minh City. It is here that flowers from Da Lat and the northern provinces of Vietnam converge before being shipped off to flower shops and retailers all over the city. It boasts flora of all kinds, from common daisies to rare foreign imports from Thailand, Japan and China. The locals say that if you can't find a species in Ho Thi Ky, you probably won't find it anywhere in Vietnam.

Despite its size, Ho Thi Ky goes about its daily business quietly. A small shop with hyacinth branches hanging off its faded banner some 25 meters deep inside the market is the only indication of what it is. Go in further and the first shop will be followed by a bevy of stores selling orchids, wreaths and flower supply services for weddings and celebrations. Then the street branches off into Tran Binh Trong and a handful of alleyways and from then on flower shops after countless flower shops are nestled in a checkerboard pattern around the Le Hong

Phong apartment block.

Even in its most lively hours during peak trading time, there's only a subdued buzz as sellers and buyers politely bargain.

"The flower market is a different breed of market altogether," says Lan Anh, whose family has run a store in the heart of the market since the '80s. "Seeing plenty of Vietnamese day markets is not the same as seeing Ho Thi Ky. We sell flowers so naturally we are quieter than the folks who sell fish and meat. And since it's a supply point, the people who need to know about us already know and the people who don't probably aren't in the business anyway so there is no need for advertisement or attention seeking of any kind."

Ho Thi Ky initially started out as an ad hoc gathering place for farmers to wholesale their flowers. The cheap temporary accommodation provided by the Le Hong Phong apartment block provided the perfect place for trucks to come in and out. Eventually, it expanded and received official recognition by the government in 1987. The

market opens 24/7 but it is from 11pm to 6am that the trading peaks.

Anh explains the market's etiquette: "Do not ask the price if you do not intend to buy. If you already bought something then you can ask all you want. Sales are always in tens or bundles. We are not small time flower shops. We don't sell less than 10 flowers at once. If you make the mistake of asking and the buyer does not reply - or replies by saying these aren't for sale - then walk away. Do not bother them. You do not want to cause a scene. No trucks in the market; park your truck in the designated area. Within the market, try to walk. Bikes are only allowed if your shop is nearby and you do the transport yourself. If you need help with your buys, we have hand-pulled carts and a couple of boys you can hire by the hour. Flowers that have stayed in-shop for more than a night are called 'hoa muoi'. Always haggle hard if you want to buy those. As for tourists and passers-by, we really don't mind the odd one as long as they do not intrude on our trade. And remember: do not ask if you do not intend to buy... in bulk." ■



"It's not Women's Day or Valentine's Day, but roses are always popular."



"I've had a good turnout today. Very busy trading. Some of the flowers that came in the ice trucks got a bit of a bruising since the driver wasn't properly monitoring the temperature, but luckily only a few of them so it's not so bad. I'm holding one right now. It's still cold. I think I can still sell it. Say, do you happen to have an empty vase back home?"



"To arrange the petals of a pre-blooming Lily of the Nile is a delicate task. Please don't break my concentration."



"I've done this job for the last 20 years. It's a little repetitive except for when tourists or press people like you come around with your flash. I can think of worse ways to spend 20 years than working with daisies though."

Turning a New Leaf

Vietnamese tea farmers pick leaves in a verdant field in central Vietnam's mountainous highland region. A little background on the journey of your tea leaf - from plant to pot - might just make the significance of your next cup of tea a little more remarkable. ■

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**







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RESORT & SPA

THE MYTH:

Is it true that the best time to shop for bargains is right when the shop opens because there's a Vietnamese belief called "mo hang" – meaning that the first sale of the day will bring them good luck – so the shop owner can't refuse the first offer because it'll be bad for business?



IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

YES the belief called "*mo hang*" exists, although its exact meaning is a bit different. "*Mo hang*" refers to the action of a buyer to open/start the sale of the day and it is also the name of a Vietnamese superstition held by merchants in which the first sale of the day acts as a sign of how the entire day of trading will go. If the first sale is smooth and quick, the day will be good. If the first sale is troublesome and ends up a no-sale, then the day will be bad. This belief is mirrored in the Vietnamese practice of "*xong dat*" where the first person who opens the door of a household on the morning of Tet will dictate the

fortune of the entire household for that coming year.

Vietnamese shoppers use *mo hang* to get a good bargain on things that they want. This does not necessarily mean that the shop owners cannot reject a sale either. A proper "*mo hang*" is initiated when a potential buyer asks the price of an item. The seller accepts by answering the question with a clear price.

Because a bad *mo hang* means a bad day of sale, many owners, if they feel the shoppers are merely curious about the items and not serious in buying, will reject by not answering or by saying that the

item is not for sale. More aggressive shop owners may also ask the shopper to move along if they have no intention to buy. In this way, *mo hang* technically did not happen and the shop owner can then wait for the next serious buyer who will bring good luck.

In the case of a bad *mo hang* in which a sale does not happen, less than polite shop owners may also react negatively (verbal insults, burning small pieces of paper to ward off bad luck, or in a rare case, physical violence) to the shopper guilty of bringing him/her bad luck for the entire day.

THE MYTH:

Is it true that if you kill a Vietnamese person during a traffic accident, you have to pay USD1,000 to the family of the victim?

THIS IS FALSE. The punishment for killing a Vietnamese person during a traffic accident is stipulated in two separate legal documents: The Vietnamese Penal Code and the People's Supreme Court Resolution 3/2006. The prescribed punishment in the penal code (clause 202) is six months to 10 years of imprisonment, depending on whether the death was caused by another traffic violation or an occupational misconduct, as well as an administrative fine from VND5 million to VND50 million.

The financial compensation to the

family of the deceased person is further stipulated in Resolution 3/2006 but no exact amount is given. Instead, the amount is calculated as a total of the funeral cost, compensation for emotional damage to the family of the deceased and monthly financial support if the deceased person was a source of income for the family.

The penal code is applicable to everyone and any crime committed on Vietnamese territory regardless of status, race, religion or native country except in two special cases - if the expat who

commits the crime is from a country with a bilateral agreement with Vietnam, the case will be judged and processed according to the specific agreement; and if the expat who commits the crime has diplomatic immunity, the case is documented and supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Copies of these documents are transferred to the relevant embassy, and depending on the severity of the crime, the expat may be forcibly evicted from Vietnam. ■

June / July Oi Photo Contest Results

Food, Glorious, Food



Fan Favorite Winner
Submitted by **KYLE L.**

Award: One night stay (with breakfast for two) at the Hotel Muse in Bangkok, an M Gallery Accor hotel



Oi Favorite Winner
Submitted by **CLEMENT J.**

Award: 2 Ooh! level tickets to the A O Show at the Saigon Opera House



Best Story Winner
Submitted by **PATRICK D.**

Award: (1) BBQ Sampler courtesy of TnT BBQ

"We were visiting our friend's family in the deep south, Ca Mau. They were cooking up a storm for over 30 guests that night, all relatives. One item on the menu, delicious cháo gà or chicken congee! Home grown chickens, scallions, homemade broth, it couldn't get any better. It cooked for hours and it was delectable! The home sits on the river and the back view is the family's snake farm, something the family farm,

something the family does on the side . . . An unforgettable feast of food, friends and love."



Most Engaging (most unique comments and shares),
Submitted by **JULIANA G.**

Award: (1) VND 1,000,000 voucher to Scott and Binh's

HONORABLE MENTIONS



Submitted by **HARRY D.**



Submitted by **PHUONG V.**



Submitted by **SON N.**



Submitted by **STAFFAN S.**



Submitted by **ZUZANNA K.**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS AND
THANK YOU TO OUR CONTEST SPONSORS!**





We all know the arguments that being vegetarian is better for the environment and for the animals — but in a carnivorous culture, it can be hard to make the change. However, as we find out this month it's easy to find great-tasting and good-for-you vegetarian food in Saigon. Whether you're strolling the aisles of your local wet market or walking down the street at lunchtime, there's an array of tasty vegetarian options to be found. If you need inspiration in the kitchen, look no further than our chefs' recommendations on popular local ingredients.

Chuc An Ngon!

The Vegetarian Issue

Good Will Eating

TEXT BY NPD KHANH IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

*Understanding
the Vietnamese
custom of 'going
vegetarian' based
on the cycle of the
full moon*



VIETNAMESE BELIEVE THAT the full moon is an analogy to one's virtues. On the first and 15th day of the lunar month, locals, whether Buddhists or not, lay down their spicy meat stir-fries in favor of vegetables and meat substitutes. It's a cultural belief that "*an chay*" - abstinence from meat and various stimulants - during this time will help them obtain good health and peace of mind.

"It certainly is true that the Vietnamese word '*chay*' means to not eat meat, but that is not all it means," says monk Ap Tich of Vinh Nghiem pagoda in District 3, who claims that the Vietnamese to English translation of "*chay*" as "vegetarian," while

correct, fails to communicate the spiritual undertone of the word. The Vietnamese perception of *chay* is loose and can either mean a long-term commitment or an intermittent bid to a spiritual and religious discipline.

"*Chay*' is the common dysphemism of the word '*trai*' or '*trai tinh*,' a transcription of the Sanskrit word '*Upavasatha*.' Its true meaning is to keep oneself pure and clean from worldly taints," explains Ap Tich. "To keep oneself from taints does not merely mean to not eat fish or meat, but a true and complete restraint of self indulgences concerning food and drinks. Buddhist undergoing *trai tinh* abstain from

extravagant meals, sweet pastries, wine and spirits of any kind. Their meals are reduced to only two or in some cases one per day and the portion is just enough to sustain the body. In other words, to undergo *trai tinh* is to create as little harm and waste to the world as possible. To seek *trai tinh* is to seek to sympathize and act with mercy towards all other living creatures. It is the slow path to enlightenment."

According to Vietnamese Buddhist scripture, there are two primary ways to practice *trai tinh*. One is called *chay trung*, which means to completely commit to strict vegetarianism for life. The second is *chay ky* (meaning "vegetarianism on a schedule")



an intermittent vegetarianism on a fixed monthly or quarterly schedule. *Chay ky* is far more prevalent in Vietnamese culture. There are many types of *chay ky*, each of which follows a different schedule and timing. *Nhi trai* is to practice vegetarianism two times per month on the first day of the Lunar month and the day of the full moon. *Tu trai* is to practice vegetarianism four times a month on the first day, the eighth, the 23rd of the Lunar month and the day of the full moon. Similarly, *luc trai* is on the eighth, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 29th, and 30th day of the Lunar month.

Nhat ngoat trai, which operates on a yearly schedule instead of monthly, is to practice vegetarianism for a full month in important Buddhist months like January, July and October. *Tam ngoat trai* which lasts for three months instead of one is on the same schedule.

"The final purpose of *chay ky* is to prepare Buddhists to eventual *chay truong*, a life of

self-discipline and restraint, to inflict as little harm and to create as much good as possible to the world. The Vietnamese Buddhist definition of true life-long vegetarianism is far stricter than Western vegetarianism. It is no small feat to simply jump directly into *chay truong*, and such a life is naturally not for every Buddhist. For that purpose, *chay ky* serves as the primer to see if a Buddhist can adapt to *chay truong* and a prolonged, gradual transition that takes years to complete," explains Ap Tich.

Karma Waters

Hai, 42 and father to three teenage children, is a practitioner of *tam ngoat trai* and on the verge of full transition to *chay truong*.

"Buddha says he who seeks to harm none is rewarded with merits that will bring good fortune not only for himself but for his children and grandchildren as well," he shares. "I have many children. A lot of merits from Buddha are not going to go to

waste. In this tumultuous world, how do you know when you will need divine help to get you or your children out of trouble?"

Unlike Hai, Xuan, 23, and strictly not a Buddhist, doesn't really buy in to the spiritual aspect of the practice. Xuan has been on and off her *luc trai* schedule for two years.

"It was difficult at first," she confesses, "but after a while, I got used to it." So why does she practice this custom while none of her family are followers of Buddhism? "It's for my health. The Buddhists really mean it when they say to keep one pure and clean from worldly taints. Aside from meat, fish and spices, they also do not eat butter, cheese or greasy food. They refrain from using too much spice, salt and sugar. Their meals are very clean and light. When you examine it, it really is the ideal diet for optimum health. Western people have something similar they call a detox diet. Have you heard of it?"

Flexing her muscle for definition, Xuan adds: "I treasure my health above everything. You can't buy health even if you have a fortune. We Vietnamese have a saying: 'When we are young we sell our health for riches; when we are old we sell our riches for health.' I'm not going to do something like that. I'm going to take care of my health when I'm still young. Riches will follow soon after."

Mrs. Hue's family in Go Vap are twice-a-month vegetarians in the karmic hopes that it will clean up their mistakes in life and to wish for peace. "I know that eating vegetarian food cannot help change my life, cannot turn me from poor to rich, but when I eat vegetarian food, I always feel peaceful. That's enough!" she says. ■

Free Meals

During the days of *chay ky*, particularly on full moon days of each month, many pagodas treat their visitors and followers to free vegetarian meals:

- **Xa Loi Pagoda**, 89 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3

- **An Quang Pagoda**, 243 Su Van Hanh, D10

- **Giac Lam Monastery** (also the oldest Buddhist monastery in Saigon), 118 Lac Long Quan, Tan Binh

- **Long Hue Pagoda**, 131/27 Nguyen Thai Son, Go Vap

- **Vinh Nghiem Pagoda**, 339 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

These free vegetarian meals are communal and at fixed times, usually only after the main morning or afternoon prayer services.

The King of Green

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



*Greengrocer
Bob Allen
speaks about
his experiences
as a farmer in
Vietnam*

IF THERE'S ONE name synonymous with fruits and vegetables in Vietnam, it has to be Bob Allen, owner of Veggy's, a specialty produce store with locations in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Phnom Penh and a godsend for vegetarians who want the freshest produce around. With a background in farming, trading in produce and the air freight of perishable items, Bob describes his decades-long obsession with fresh fruits and vegetables as "an innocuous pursuit. I've always liked being around green stuff".

Residing in Vietnam since the mid-90s, Bob initially started with strawberries. That venture has now grown into Golden Garden Produce (golden-gardenvn.com), a four hectare farm in Dalat and Bob's personal agricultural laboratory.

"From the beginning, I said we were going to produce in a clean, green manner, with no residue in our products. In those early days, there were lots of problems [in the news] with poisoning, mostly coming from vegetables. While our objective isn't to be organic, it is to keep everything residue free, to go for quality, to add nutrients to give our products good leaf structure and a better shelf life," says Bob.

In the book *Communion: A Culinary Journey Through Vietnam*, Bob talks about the early days of experimenting with new crops, including one time when he was shipping broccoli out of Vietnam, only to be asked by the customs inspectors why he had painted his cauliflower green. Fast forward 20 years and Bob's still tinkering with what Vietnamese soil can produce. "We're always



*“People here
now eat a lot of
zucchini, more
salads, broccoli...
I think we’ve
changed eating
habits quite a lot”*

trying to come up with something new and exciting. Right now, we’re growing rhubarb - although it’s not working out very well - and Jerusalem artichokes. We’re also looking at colored Swiss chard and micro vegetables — tiny little carrots and radishes. We’re trialing a new mix of heirloom cherry tomatoes which are really magical.”

While Bob describes his operation as small but intensive, sowing, planting, harvesting and shipping six days a week, 52 weeks a year with a relatively large range of products, there’s a continual focus on innovation. “We’re getting more serious about using a soilless culture system and we’re installing hydroponics for all our salads [which include exotic varieties like Salanova and mizuna]. We also use things like coconut coir and burned rice husk. At the moment, we have 16 different varieties of tomatoes in the ground and 12 varieties of romaine lettuce in the testing stage.”

Bob’s efforts have borne fruit, not only with the expat community who crave a taste of home, but with the Vietnamese community at large. “Back [when I started], there was a very limited amount of fresh

produce coming out of Dalat — mostly cabbage, onions and carrots. In those early days, there were only two kinds of lettuce in the whole country, butterhead and escarole. But things have changed over the years. People here now eat a lot of zucchini, more salads, broccoli... I think we’ve changed eating habits quite a lot.”

There is a limit to what can be grown in Vietnam, however. “Here, everyone and their brother claims to grow organic [fruits and vegetables], but that’s nonsense. In Dalat, there’s acid rain and lots of nitrates in the soil and water. At our main farm, we use a borehole and can drink water from the ground, but most people are dealing with less than perfect water. [Organic] is not really feasible.”

And has being surrounded by some of the country’s finest fruits and vegetables made him a vegetarian? “My wife and mother-in-law get on the vegetarian Buddhist thing at times and I see lots of vegetarian restaurants opening up. People want to eat healthier, they have more money, and they travel more. But I just eat whatever. I haven’t been suckered into it yet.” ■

Vegetable Indispensable

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM

IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

ADAM ROBERT YOUNG

QUINN RYAN MATTINGLY

Exploring
Vietnam's best
vegetarian
ingredients



Chef Nguyen's Lotus Stem Salad

FOR MANY, VIETNAM IS a paradise for vegetarians of all kinds. Restaurants roll out a vegetarian menu for the first and 15th of every month for those looking for a bit of soul purification. Home cooks revel in a huge assortment of fruits and vegetables, changing with the season. And foodies rejoice with all the new vegetarian-as-health-food places that are springing up around the city like mushrooms.

Kim Fay, author of *Communion: A Culinary Journey Through Vietnam*, recalls what she saw of the country's love affair with fruits and vegetables. "Vietnam is a country for vegetarians. Not only are salads plentiful, there is a strong tradition of vegetarian cuisine in the Buddhist communities. I love that meals in Vietnam are often followed by cold fresh fruit, rather than dessert. I also

love that when I lived in Vietnam, you knew the season by the fruit in the market. As for veggies, I think about the herbs that are used to garnish everything from salads to soups to spring rolls. Even if a dish is deep-fried, it will usually come with some fresh greens to lighten it. I find now that a meal is not complete for me if it isn't accompanied by some type of fresh greens."

While the majority of Vietnam's vegetarians do it for religious reasons, it's becoming a more vegetarian-friendly culture for expats and travelers. "In my experience, people are not offended if you tell them, 'I can't eat this' or 'I can't eat that,'" says Kim. "My sister does not eat beef or pork and the people we met along the way — in private homes and in restaurants — were happy to accommodate that. The one issue vegans

might have is with fish sauce, which is essential to the cuisine. But many Buddhist dishes use soy sauce rather than fish sauce, so you're sure to find something you can eat. And when you're in a pinch, head for a *banh mi* stand and buy a baguette — you can never go wrong with that. Bottom line: Vietnamese food is very flexible!"

For our cover story, *Oi* met some of the city's top chefs to ask them about their favorite vegetarian ingredients and how to prepare them.

Lotus (*Stems, seeds, roots and leaves*)

Vietnamese: *Sen (ngo, hạt, cu, la)*

Nutritional value: According to Auburn University (USA), lotus seeds can be ground



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Ben Dell's Sweet Potato, Prem Bistro & Cafe's Eggplant dish, Robin Deepu's Palak Paneer, Chef Ninh Cong Dan's Bitter Melon

and used as flour, the roots cooked like sweet potatoes and the leaves used as spinach. The stems have antioxidant properties and are a rich source of calcium, iron and fiber.

Cost: Stems are approximately VND26,000 per kilo

Uses: Almost every part of the lotus can be used in cooking. In Vietnam, the seeds can be eaten as a snack, straight from the flower or steeped in a sugar syrup and then dried, or are cooked into desserts or glutinous rice. The stems can be found raw in salads or stir-fried or pickled. The leaves can be used to infuse flavor into fried rice. Even lotus root can be used for stocks and salads.

Tuan, owner of Tuan and Tu's restaurant, recommends using lotus seeds in stews, as they need time to soften. And Chef Nguyen of New World Saigon Hotel's Parkview Restaurant says preparing the stems for the restaurant's Lotus Stem Salad is simple (with crispy tofu replacing the more traditional boiled shrimp and pork). "Just cut off both ends of the stalks and rinse. Use your fingers or a knife to peel off the outer skin before soaking in a diluted salt water bath for 15-20 minutes. Most people throw away the part closer to the root and just use the stem, but you can keep it for a stir-fry because that part is actually a bit sweeter. For lotus roots, instead of salt water, soak them in ice water with a few drops of lemon juice to keep them fresh, crunchy and tasty."

Purple Eggplant (*Ca tim*)

Nutritional value: Eggplants and other purple plant foods, such as blueberries and

grapes, provide phytochemicals found in the skin of the eggplant, and have been linked to protecting fats found in brain cell membranes. They are also low in calories and contain other compounds that promote good health, possibly even helping to prevent cancer and lowering cholesterol.

Cost: Approximately VND22,000 per kilo

Uses: "Eggplants are extremely versatile as they can be used in Asian and Western dishes and they're easy to find cheaply here in Vietnam," says Thanh Yen, co-owner of Prem Bistro & Café, a vegetarian restaurant. Spongy, with a pleasantly bitter taste, purple eggplants find their way into Vietnamese stews, soups and stir-fries, or are simply grilled and topped with scallion oil. Prem's uses eggplant slices (lengthwise), salted and pan-fried with olive oil to wrap around a filling of onion, spinach and ground cashew nuts, topped with a lightly seasoned tomato puree. "For Vietnamese, the word 'vegetarian' has a negative connotation. Vegetarian dishes typically include a lot of chemicals, or are made from flour and molded into fake meat. Because Vietnamese are vegetarian mostly for religious reasons, they don't really care whether what they're eating is good for them or not. But we're seeing many younger Vietnamese take on vegetarianism as a lifestyle, to be more healthy," says co-owner Ha Le.

Sweet Potato (*Khoai lang duong*)

Nutritional value: Known as one of the healthiest vegetables around, a medium sized sweet potato contains more than your daily requirement of vitamin A, nearly a third the

vitamin C you need, almost 15 percent of your daily dietary fiber intake and 10 percent of the necessary potassium. Sweet potatoes also contain antioxidants and have anti-inflammatory properties.

Cost: Approximately VND30,000 per kilo

Uses: The Vietnamese use both the leaves and tubers in cooking. Leaves can be stir-fried and the tuber is often seen deep-fried as a snack sold in small glass cases on the side of the road or stewed in curries and even in desserts. Bodybuilder and restaurateur Ben Dell, who owns Ben Style, says sweet potatoes are an excellent source of carbohydrates and are slow burning so they don't raise your blood sugar, important when you're looking to lose fat. He also makes a healthy version of sweet potato chips. "They're a little bit tougher [than regular white potatoes], but are great for people who want to stay healthy. Because they're tough and hard, soak them in water for 24 hours to soften them up. That also keeps them from drying out when cooking. Cut them into wedges and brush them with olive oil or a non-fat spray before putting them in a convection oven. Just add a bit of allspice for flavor. No need to go to McDonald's!"

Yogurt and Cheese (*yaourt or sua chua and pho-mai*)

Nutritional value: Not a carbohydrate, protein or fat, natural yogurt is nonetheless plentiful in lactose, protein-rich and abundant in healthy fatty acids. Vitamins and minerals naturally found in milk are better assimilated in the form of yogurt, and the healthy bacteria aid in the production of vitamins



Chef Vinh Ton That's Eryngii Mushroom

and help the bloodstream better absorb calcium. Cheese is a source of many essential nutrients, including high-quality protein, and can be part of a healthy diet, especially when paired with lower-calorie foods.

Cost: VND30,000 for 1 liter of homemade Vietnamese yogurt

Uses: The Vietnamese tend to eat sweetened yogurt more as a snack than in cooking. Yogurt frozen in small containers or little bags are a popular after-school treat. It can also be made at home easily and cheaply, using one can of sweetened condensed milk, mixed with two cans of hot water and one can of lukewarm water. A starter culture (for instance, a small container of store-bought yogurt) is added, stirred and then refrigerated. For thicker yogurt, use fresh milk instead of water.

Robin Deepu, owner of Baba's Kitchen, says in his native India, yogurt isn't a breakfast food but is mainly used in cooking, as a base for spices used in marinades, or used in *lassi*, a refreshing yogurt drink. The key to good yogurt is boiling the milk over a longer period of time, as high heat will shorten the process and make the yogurt watery. His restaurant also makes *paneer*, a chewy, milky, fresh cheese (no aging required) and one of the easiest cheeses to make at home. "You just take fresh milk and boil it, then add a little vinegar. Once it thickens, tie it up with a cloth [to strain] and then press it with a weight on top," says Robin. Because *paneer* doesn't melt the way cheddar or mozzarella does, it keeps a tofu-like consistency in soups or curry, like Robin's *Palak Paneer*, cubes of paneer

simmered in a puree of spinach, tomatoes, garlic and onions and flavored with ginger, *garam masala*, turmeric, chili and coriander power and fenugreek.

Bitter Melon (*kho qua*)

Nutritional value: Bitter melon is a good source of iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, pantothenic acid and vitamin B-6. It also contains lutein, a crucial component for healthy skin, eyes, nerves and hair as well as polypeptide-P, a plant insulin known to lower blood sugar levels.

Cost: Approximately VND15,000 per kilo

Uses: The bitter melon may have originated in Southeast Asia and grows readily even in small spaces which may explain why some Vietnamese do not find it bitter at all. However, for those who do, soaking it in cold or ice water may make it more palatable. The bitter melon is most commonly found stuffed with minced pork and made into a soup or simply fried with scrambled eggs. Because the melon doesn't transfer its bitterness to other ingredients, it's also delicious in stir-fries, as it balances the flavors out, especially in "one dish" meals. Executive Chef Ninh Cong Dan of the Renaissance Riverside Hotel recommends stuffing bitter melon with a mince of tofu and mushroom and seasoned with salt and pepper before steaming for 15-20 minutes or until the bitter melon softens. Top it off with a sauce made from pan-fried garlic and shallots, black bean sauce and minced tomato. "Bitter melon is very low in calories, however, its pods are rich in phytonutrients like dietary fiber, minerals, vitamins and

antioxidants. Vegetarian ingredients are sold everywhere in Vietnam and most of them are very easy to work with," says Chef Dan.

Eryngii Mushrooms (Also known as king oyster mushrooms or *nam dui ga*)

Nutritional value: In addition to being an antioxidant, king oyster mushrooms (called "chicken leg mushrooms" in Vietnamese for their thick, meaty stem) have significant antibacterial activity. They are also high in nutrients while being low-calorie.


Cost: Approximately VND85,000 per kilo

Uses: Because they're so meaty, king oyster mushrooms are often the main ingredient in vegetarian dishes. The Vietnamese stir-fry them, caramelize them with ginger slices and use them in mushroom hotpots. Vinh Ton That, Executive Head Chef of Shri says: "There are so many varieties of mushrooms grown here in Vietnam. They're cheap and provide good textures to food." Chef Vinh presents a mix of mushrooms with risotto. "The Eryngii mushroom is very common here but a lot don't know what to do with it because it's actually quite bland. But when you braise it in butter and a seasoned stock, it soaks up all that butter and flavor and almost becomes a different type of mushroom, tasting like abalone in a way." By way of preparation, Chef Vinh recommends that because of their spongy texture, mushrooms should never be soaked in water as that will ruin their flavor. Instead, use a damp cloth to wipe off any dirt. Then either pan-fry them quickly to achieve a crispy outside, or braise them for longer until they soak the juice back up. ■

A Dead Vegetarian

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD

IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a piece of raw, dark red beef in the left hand and a bunch of fresh green lettuce in the right hand. The person is wearing a white t-shirt. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with buildings.

*One man's
losing battle as
an herbivore
in Vietnam's
carnivorous
society*

MY VEGETARIANISM DIED in Vietnam. No, it wasn't a craving for a steaming bowl of beef *pho* that did it, nor the spring rolls – it wasn't anything like that. It was more a sense of resignation: that in a country where vegetarianism is embedded so deeply in the culture, where three quarters of the population profess to at least sometimes follow a vegetarian diet and where a commitment to eating vegetarian meals is a major tenet of the dominant religion, avoiding meat was just much too hard.

It's hard because there's a subtle difference between what it means to be a vegetarian in the West and what the same thing is

here. Overseas, while I'd occasionally been goaded for turning up my nose at a perfectly good steak, there was at least an implicit recognition of what being a vegetarian was all about. You have an ethical viewpoint, you draw the line somewhere and you stand by what you believe. In my case, I'd been swayed by both reason and experience; the Hare Krishnas, for example, used to serve cheap vegetarian dishes at my university and their enthusiasm for preparing clean, wholesome meals without killing anything was kind of infectious. It was the joy of simply feeling that you were doing the right thing by not allowing a sentient creature to

"People do it to win spiritual favor too – if you want something bad enough, you'll eat vegetarian"

die just for the sake of your lunch that made an impression on me.

I watched all those "I'd rather be naked" PETA clips condemning cruelty to animals. I read all the literature on how the human physiology is largely herbivorous by nature – ever tried using your so-called 'canine' teeth and fingernails to kill an animal? I could see the logic in the broader reasoning for leaving meat behind – 18 percent of the world's greenhouse gases comes from livestock farming, and although a field of cattle will deliver more nutrient-rich food than a field of corn, you still need to devote several other fields to grow their feed, which is a massive drain on resources. One study undertaken in 1997 by Cornell University concluded the amount of grain used to feed livestock in the US alone would be enough to feed 800 million people – about three times the country's entire population.

All these reasons made sense to me – but on a personal level, it was simply the feeling that I could make one simple decision to control such an intimate part of my life that was the clincher – it was an empowering move. I was proud to be a vegetarian, I enjoyed it, and it became part of my mild-mannered character. People in my own country who actually knew me got that and they made no attempt to dissuade me from something that was obviously working for me.

But I quickly discovered those kinds of sentiments hold very little weight here in Vietnam. It's probably precisely for this very reason vegetarianism has such a well-defined role in the local culture that my own brand seemed awfully peculiar to the Vietnamese people I met. Local friends presumed I was hungry all the time; if we went out to lunch, they'd rather thoughtfully take me to places where I could find food without meat, but then order meat dishes anyway because they were "delicious," only to get frustrated when I maintained my stance. I was constantly reminded what a "pity" it was I couldn't enjoy beef and pork. Some people would be cool with me telling them I was a vegetarian until I mentioned I wouldn't eat seafood either – and then they'd give me those incredulous stares one gets when you've said something that doesn't compute on any level. Clearly, if someone can't grasp why a vegetarian wouldn't eat a fish, then we're not even talking about the same thing.

I'm not the only one who's had these kinds of experiences here. Blogger Tabitha Carvan of *The City that Never Sleeps In* writes of a particularly towering, brawny British expat who was warned by locals not to ride a bike here – not because he was too big for a

Honda, but because, being a vegetarian, they presumed he was probably so malnourished he was in danger of keeling over at any moment while driving. She confronted a similar logic when visiting a friend's family home, where, forewarned that she didn't eat meat, the hosts thoughtfully prepared an omelet for her – but then added pork to it because they didn't want her to go hungry. My own vegetarian anecdote is a little more dramatic: when my fiancée asked her father for his blessing, it wasn't the fact that I was a foreigner that was a problem, nor anything to do with my family background, but rather, "He seems nice, but how long is this vegetarian thing going to drag on for?"

The V-Plan

The widespread presumption a vegetarian diet is related to undernourishment in Vietnam seems to trump any concerns about animal welfare here – admittedly, not an issue that gets paid much attention to in a country where human welfare is the larger problem. What that also means, however, is a lot of people here will deliberately turn to a more-or-less meat-free diet if they happen to want to lose weight. Nicole Hankins of Nutrifort Fitness, who works both as a trainer and a nutritionist, has spoken to a surprising number of locals who practice vegetarianism simply in the hope of shedding a few pounds.

"It's not true that Vietnamese people are strangers to a vegetarian diet," says Nicole, who has lived and worked in Vietnam for a decade. "There's actually a big push towards vegetarianism here from religion. Most people are vegetarians for a day twice a month in phase with the moon, when it's more or less like giving something up for Lent. People do it to win spiritual favor too – if you want something bad enough, you'll eat vegetarian. But most vegetarians I talk to just want to lose weight. For a lot of the men and women here, if you want to slim down, that's the direction you go."

I have to admit I never experienced any weight loss or feeling of malnourishment during the years when I followed a fairly strict vegetarian way of life. Vegetarian propaganda tends to dismiss attempts to claim that by avoiding meat you're going to end up physically deficient in some way. Any vegetarian who's done their research will tell you all the nutrients you can expect to gain from a hunk of beef can be derived from vegetables as well – anything you need for your food can be synthesized within your own body from the building blocks that occur naturally in plants. There's only one exception – Vitamin B12 – and you can get that from eggs or dietary supplements.

Then again, I didn't lead a particularly athletic lifestyle at the time and for those who want to be both vegetarians and physically fit, it's a little different. "It really needs to be managed," says Nicole. "I've been 70-80 percent vegetarian for the past two years and I feel the difference. Energy wise, you need to snack more – the metabolism is faster, so the energy in your food gets used up faster than it does with animal proteins. Every three hours, I gotta eat. But you don't get peaks like you would with a big plate of chicken."

"Most vegetarians do actually lack B12", she says. "That would lower your energy and make you less active. If you're not very active anyway, it won't really affect your way of life. But being mostly vegetarian for me definitely does have benefits. Animal products tend to inflame the body, especially now they're being fed all those hormones."

Being active without meat does take some effort and a bit of knowledge of the subject. "From a lifestyle perspective," adds Nicole, "if I go for a month without eating animal proteins, I feel more fatigued. You need to know how to supplement your nutrients – calcium from your milk, omega 3 from cauliflower, iron from dark green vegetables like spinach. Soy and quinoa have the most complete set of amino acids to substitute for a lack of proteins."

That said, Nicole doesn't have much time for the Vietnamese preconceptions about meatless diets. "I don't think philosophically it's something most people here have really thought about and they don't usually know anything about the nutritional side of things. The problem is that here it's associated with the elderly – thinness and teeth falling out, that sort of thing. There were famines here in the 70s, and it was difficult to even afford meat then. Now, not eating it just reminds people of poverty. Seventy percent of Vietnamese people these days are under 30 and they're more attracted to Western and fast food restaurants – that's what they're aware of and fascinated by. There's nothing trendy about being a vegetarian."

For me, I don't regret giving up the vegetarian diet too much. I saw my mother-in-law going the extra mile to prepare separate dinners for me and I saw how uncomfortable it got at the big get-togethers we'd have where we'd all get to a restaurant and they'd discover the only thing on the menu I could eat was a plain *banh mi*. Everyone has to keep their ethics in balance and for me, family turned out to be more important than refusing the meat. Sorry, animals – bad luck. ■

Confessions... of a part-time vegetarian

TEXT BY TOMO HUYNH

IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN



I LOVE FOOD. And while I wouldn't go so far as to call myself a foodie, the idea of depriving myself of meat means to miss out on many of the world's awesome flavors. But does my taste for meat come at some cost? I knew there were people living alternative lifestyles, ones free from meat. What if it wasn't that vegetarians weren't just missing out on meat, but that I was the one missing out on something? I think the fact I might be missing out was more important than what I was missing out on so I decided to become a vegetarian for a week.

I don't think you can effectively be told by others to give up meat. I'd heard the arguments before and it wasn't until now that I felt the need to make the change and experiment on myself. Plus, I'd heard enough horror stories about meat in Vietnam, about the tons of putrid, rotten meat still making its way to local markets, only occasionally caught by inspectors. And I've had severe food poisoning on more than one occasion after eating mystery meat wrapped in leaves (*bo la lot*) and then blackened to the point anything inside was concealed. It's much easier to fail to cook meat properly here. Too many times I've been served still-raw chicken, while I willingly and consciously eat raw beef in my *pho*. I just try not to think about it too much, which is pretty useful (but unhealthy) general advice for living in Vietnam. My motivation wasn't based on religion or wanting to feel self-righteous although I can certainly see the appeal of looking down on others. I wanted to feel better - and feel better

about myself - but at the same time not taste less.

I was exploring an exciting style of traditional Vietnamese cuisine. The city is full of vegan or vegetarian restaurants, possible over 100 of them. Most of them fall into what are called a *quan com chay* and are easy to find in any district of the city. Just make sure it says "*cơm chay*" and not "*cơm cháy*" (note the tonal mark in this spelling) because the latter is a kind of crispy rice cracker often served with non-vegetarian meat floss. A *quan com chay* is a vegetarian eatery with a cart by the entrance with vegetarian dishes such as tofu, mock meats, sautéed vegetables, greens, among others, to be eaten with rice.

Mock Meat

While Asians have really pioneered mock meat for some time, I've found some meatless-meat dishes to be great and others tastefully less so. I've had convincing '*com tam*,' a staple morning breakfast in Saigon which is a rice dish with grilled pork (all faux pork in this case) with shredded pork skin and a slab of pork meatloaf. Other favorites that convert well to vegetarian are *cha gio* (egg rolls) and *canh kho qua* (bittermelon soup stuffed with meat). Besides soy-based 'meat,' Vietnamese use wheat gluten (*mi can*) to make mock meats. But I've also had very satisfying meat-like mushrooms. There's more to Vietnamese vegetarian cooking than just trying to approximate meat dishes though. The more proper, upscale vegetarian restaurants will have dozens of choices for appetizers, soups, salads and main courses. They've

figured out creative ways of featuring plants as the focus of the dish.

During my period as a vegetarian, I found myself feeling a bit more compassion for animals. Not that I'm making huge sacrifices out of fondness of chickens because my neighbor's roosters crowing when I'm trying to sleep annoy me to hell. But I don't ever consider eating my neighbor's whining dogs either.

I'm not strictly vegetarian, although I continue to do week-long stints from time to time. For those who don't eat meat because meat is murder, I'm still guilty. As much as my diet may offend them, I know the animals who die to become part of it find it even more offensive. But now I am more deliberate when I choose what I eat. I make an effort to eat more vegetables, more eggs instead of animals that had to be killed, and fish instead of mammals. I haven't eliminated suffering from my diet, but I can at least take steps in reducing it. Ultimately I do this for myself, and there are numerous health benefits to eating all kinds of plant-based foods.

I came to Vietnam partly to experience new things. There were a few dishes I had been eyeing on the menu at one of my favorite vegetarian restaurants last time I went. I think I'll go try them now. ■

BIO: *Tomo Huynh is a technologist and entrepreneur who has spent most of the past six years in Vietnam building up e-commerce businesses such as Taembe.vn. He writes about the tech and startup scene along with expat tips at www.saigonist.com and can be found tweeting as @tomosaigon.*

Monastic Living

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGE BY NGOC TRAN

*The musings
of a novice
Buddhist
monk*

TUCKED AWAY ON a side street off of Highway 13 in Binh Duong, the Hoi Khanh temple is a place for serene meditation.

An eight story pagoda overlooks the carefully manicured gardens, a place for supplicants to offer up incense and prayers for the dead. However, it's opposite the street where the Buddhist school is located that devotion finds human form.

Under the shadow of the largest reclining Buddha in Vietnam at 52m (eclipsing the 49m reclining Buddha in Mui Ne), lies the Buddhism Center of Binh Duong, home to over 200 novice monks enrolled in the four year program.

In the back of the school, a block of concrete rooms faces a bursting lotus pond, a powerful icon in Buddhism, embodying the concept of something perfectly beautiful rising from the quagmire.

After Graduation

My name is Duc Hanh (meaning "Righteous" or "Virtue"), but that's not the name I was born with. It's my new name, given to me when I first came to the pagoda at the age of 15.

It's not like I was a bad kid. I didn't get into fights or anything, but I did like to play and often got into minor trouble. But when I was 15, I guess you could say I ran away to the monastery. I didn't mean to, really. I only intended to go for a visit, to help clean the pagoda in Tien Giang Province. It was like something drew me





there. Soon, one week became two and one of the monks asked me if I wanted to join the program.

I'm 21 now and in my fourth and last year at the Buddhist school in Binh Duong, with graduation only two weeks away. It's summer which is why it's pretty deserted here. The instructors have a few weeks off. After all our studying, we're free to perform our prayers and relax on the grounds. [On this hot afternoon, some monks are fiddling with their phones as others go about their chores of sweeping and laundry.]

On an average day, though, we get up at 3:30 in the morning and pray for an hour. You have to get used to waking up early here. And the bells. There are bells ringing constantly.

Come 5:30, it's time for breakfast. We gather in the pagoda on the other side of the street and prayers begin and end the meal. Breakfast is sometimes *hu tiu*, *bun rieu*, *banh canh* [variations of Vietnamese noodle soups] or *xoi* [glutinous rice] — whatever the faithful bring in that day. Of course, it's vegetarian only — vegetables and tofu. At the beginning, it was hard to get used to. I remember getting hungry much faster. But afterwards, your stomach gets used to it. I don't want to go back to eating meat. Just the smell now makes me sick.

I know the Buddha wasn't a vegetarian himself. He ate whatever alms he collected because food was just a means to an end. But that was a different place, a different time. Buddhism is all about mercy and a respect for life, whether it's a worm in the soil or a grasshopper or a cow or

an elephant. Everything wants to live. All animals fear death. All of us have a right to life, a right to share the natural environment. Taking a life to sustain a life is a sin. We're taught to respect life, whether actively by helping people, even sacrificing our own lives if needed, or passively by not harming other living creatures.

The Buddha teaches us balance. For instance, your eye, your nose, your body belongs to the outside world. If you see a pretty girl, she becomes a temptation and you stop thinking about consequences. A girl wearing perfume spawns illicit desire. The smell of food can make one greedy. But the Buddha teaches us to gain mastery over our senses to the point where even a beautiful woman looks average. We learn to put things aside, not hold grudges. It's actually a very practical way to live.

But you were asking me about my day. From 7:00, we learn our lessons. Twelve subjects in a year: English, Chinese, culture, law... but nothing 'outside' like Geography or Math. The rest are religious classes. We also have computer classes, but not everyone has a computer, so we can't always practice. Out of my class of 20, only seven or eight have a computer.

At 10:30am, we prepare to have lunch. Then a nap at noon, and we review our lessons in the afternoons.

At 4:30pm, we use donations to start preparing dinner. Then it's prayers for an hour until 7:30pm. The temple gates close at 8pm, so no one can leave after that. There's not much to do around here, anyway.

It's a good life, living at the pagoda. At first, some people may join because they

want to get away from the world, run away from life, but once you're here and understand the Buddha's teachings, it's all different.

Most people, once they open their eyes in the morning, they think about money — how to get enough money to live for that day, especially for those with families. Here in the temple, we don't think about money. We think about how to contribute to society, how to better ourselves. In the outside world, you only look after yourself, but here, you look after many other people.

It's not all easy, though. Even here, your mind is never fully at peace. We can't go out, mingle with society. Life is rigid. Sometimes, you may want to eat something, but you can't. Even sitting still for an hour during prayers can be hard.

But those things don't matter. Life is temporary. Our bodies are temporary. We're born, we grow old, we get sick, we die. We're continually in a state of flux. At least here, lots of people love you. You have no quibbles with anyone.

After graduation, some of my friends will leave to become monks in pagodas around the country while others will simply return to their previous lives. But all of us will leave changed somehow. Personally, I feel more at peace with myself. These past few years, I've done a lot of growing up.

After graduation, I think I'm going to continue with the program for another three years at a school in District 9. After that, who knows? Life is a journey. You can always set your destination, but you never really know if you're going to make it there. ■

Wine & Dine

IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



Embutidos
Viva! Tapas Bar & Grill

Eat Your Vegetables

Vegetarian diners don't have to subsist on salad alone

TEXT BY **JULIAN AJELLO** IMAGES BY **ADAM ROBERT YOUNG**

DID YOU HEAR the one about the rutabaga? No, probably not. Vegetables don't tend to inspire great jokes. On the contrary, they conjure their very own brand of humorlessness, the tight-lipped officiousness of grim nutritionists that is captured in the phrase "eat your vegetables." As it happens, not only can vegetarian food be far better than the dispiriting notion of a pile of raw vegetation, it can be exquisite when done well.

Enter **...hum** (32 Vo Van Tan, D3), an eatery devoted to serving vegetarian food to please the senses. ...Hum derives its name from the Buddhist mantra "*om mani padme hum*," which can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but the literal translation is "behold the jewel in the lotus." Crossing the threshold whisks you from the

bustling streets of Saigon to simple, placid surroundings perfect for a relaxing meal.

Starting off with cocktails is always the right move, and ...hum offers some interesting twists on old favorites. The kumquat mojito and cucumber and ginger martini both proved refreshing, not an oft-used adjective for alcoholic beverages. The martini in particular was a striking blend of sweet kumquat and spicy ginger that makes you forget that it's a cocktail. For those wishing to eschew the booze, order the kumquat and mint beverage, it's crisp, fresh, and delicious.

Not knowing our way around a vegetarian menu, we asked for recommendations. The manager selected some of their signature dishes for us to enjoy. We started off with the square,

deep fried spring rolls (VND75,000) filled with three kinds of mushrooms (chicken leg mushrooms, button, and black mushrooms) along with carrots, glass noodles, and black pepper and served with a vegetarian version of fish sauce for dipping. The first thing you'll notice is the black pepper popping in your mouth. The mushrooms are cooked to perfection, and when balanced with the glass noodles and carrots they stood out. The texture, the taste, and the fact that they were deep-fried made them moorish. Having two orders is advisable.

As we basked in the after-glow of the spring rolls, the salad a la ...hum (VND70,000) made their way to the table. Their signature salad consisted of sliced papaya, carrots, baby tomatoes, peanuts,



Deep fried vegetables



Pad Thai

and green beans. Everything about this dish is fresh and it definitely has a kick provided by the spicy, chili vinaigrette dressing. The papaya counters it with tanginess that will make you pucker, but only a little.

The seasonal fried vegetables (VND85,000) included sake, tarot, green beans, and sweet potatoes. Their batter is akin to tempura, so they're light. If you enjoy tempura these are right in your wheelhouse and should be consumed with gusto. They're served with a plum sauce for dipping. It's a tad viscous, which is a bit of a surprise, but so sweet you'll find yourself dredging the bottom of the ramekin hoping to get that last dollop onto your final sweet potato. If that wasn't enough to make eating your vegetables fun, they arrive in an edible tarot basket that'll make you wish you had saved some of that plum sauce.

All Thai'd Up

Pad Thai (VND80,000) was something we hadn't expected. The manager explained that the head chef, who is Vietnamese, lived in Thailand for seven years and absorbed a great deal of knowledge about the cuisine there. Having not yet had a satisfying Pad Thai in Saigon, I was curious

to see what a vegetarian place was capable of producing. While I have a strong anti-tofu bias, it mixed well with the eggs, crushed peanuts and sprouts. To our delight, the noodles came out wonderfully. It felt like good Pad Thai in just about every way that's important. While the texture of the noodles is most often the Achilles' heel of Pad Thai around the city, ...hum's chef has figured a way to get it right, albeit without chicken.

Keeping us on the Thai side of their menu, we rounded out the meal with steamed mushrooms served in a coconut (VND85,000). Easily the most interesting item we tried, it combined lingzhi mushrooms, eggs, and chili in a sweet coconut milk curry served in a coconut husk. The curry is a great rendition of the familiar Thai staple and has just enough oil to be naughty without making you feel bad. The coconut meat inside lends a sweetness to balance out the chili's spiciness. One order was enough for us as we were losing steam by this point in the meal.

Of course the health benefits of vegetarian cuisine are obvious and something to consider. But it's because ...hum places good taste and enjoyment ahead of religion and morality that their food sparkles. ■

The first thing you'll notice is the black pepper popping in your mouth. The mushrooms are cooked to perfection, and when balanced with the glass noodles and carrots they stood out



Signature salad



Steamed mushrooms in coconut



The Religion of Barbecue

TnT BBQ is making new converts

TEXT BY JAMES PHAM IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN

PEOPLE SAY THAT if you want to start a fight in the US South, just bring up football, religion or barbecue. It's been described as a metaphor for American culture, this worship at the altar of "Low and Slow," with parishioners fervently divided between the four denominations of barbeque styles: Texas, with its "naked" barbeque (sauce served on the side) and preference for beef; Memphis, known for its wet marinated pork ribs; Kansas City, with its thick, spicy, tomato-and-molasses-based sauce; and Carolina, featuring every part of the pig mixed with a tangy vinegary sauce.

Thirty-somethings Logan Tisdal and Mark Ton are aiming to make converts to the best of America's barbecue with **TnT BBQ** (a combination of the first letters of their last names, and a reference to the dynamite

sauces they use packing the heat of chili powder and cayenne pepper).

Part science, part art, the science comes through in the delicate balance of smoking the meat just right, a balanced equation of hardwoods imported from the US and the "low and slow" philosophy — controlled temperatures over 16-17 hours for brisket, smoking the meat just so, tinkering with moisture and heat so the wood smokes but doesn't ignite. The friends import apple wood and hickory, eschewing local products like cashew and sugar cane. "We want to stay true to what we do and that's doing barbecue exactly how it tastes in America. We want someone to bite into what they're used to, and not just say that it tastes *something* like back home. Without using real hardwoods, you simply can't get that

taste," says Logan. "Hickory produces a bite, not quite as strong as mesquite, which is great for beef and pork, but with poultry, you need fruitwoods which impart a slightly sweet flavor to chicken and turkey," adds Mark. "And forget liquid smoke. That's just sacrilegious," they agree.

Hailing from Clinton, Oklahoma, a blink-and-you'll-miss-it town of less than 10,000, but squarely in the southern Barbeque Belt and anchored by renowned Jiggs Smokehouse ("So good, they open and close whenever they want," recalls Logan), he knows a thing or two about barbeque. Mark is from California, via Chicago, and takes his inspiration from BBQ festivals like the nearby Great Eldorado BBQ, Brews and Blues Festival in Reno (Nevada).

Their collective but varied experience means the duo don't subscribe to any one particular style of barbecue. Instead their "goal is to make things taste as good as they possibly can. If that takes more butter, then it takes more butter," say the pair, proudly unapologetic. After all, one does not live on vegetables alone. Sometimes, it's simply soul fulfilling to chomp into something that once had a face and a family, smoked to the point of being impossibly tender, then slathered in sauce. "People talk about ribs that fall off the bone, but really, it should break off easily, but not fall off. Nothing will make you lose a competition faster than that," says Logan. The pair should know. A trophy sits in their kitchen, a testament to a second place finish earlier this year in a rib-off, beating out the



worthy likes of Hog's Breath, Al Fresco's and Quan Ut Ut.

The Holy Trinity

TnT BBQ is applying the "low and slow" philosophy to its business model as well. Since opening 10 months ago, the pair decided to start off as delivery only (order via phone at 0166 666 7858 or Facebook at [tntbbqvietnam](https://www.facebook.com/tntbbqvietnam)). There are only seven mains on the menu, including a quartet of sandwiches: the hickory smoked pulled pork (VND95,000), true to its North Carolina roots, including molasses made on site; the smoked beef brisket (VND130,000) smothered in TnT original sauce and served on a bun, truly a labor of love after 15-17 hours in the smoker; the apple wood smoked chicken breast (VND110,000), topped with a tangy southwest ranch sauce and crunchy bacon bits; and the apple wood smoked turkey breast (VND110,000), a generously portioned sandwich that's at once firm but juicy, hard to do considering how easy it is to dry poultry breasts out because they have no bone or fat. Topped with cranberry sauce and the shop's original sauce, it's basically Thanksgiving in your mouth, guaranteed to elicit some Hallelujahs or at the very least, expressions of rapture.

TnT BBQ's apple wood smoked chicken (either Original or Dynamite, marinated in a teriyaki sauce amped up with roasted garlic, chili powder and cayenne, both VND50,000 per drumstick or thigh) is nothing short of heavenly. The duo has chosen to use only US

"If we're going to take the time to cook something that long, we don't want people to feel cheated. Why charge people for a quarter kilo of chicken and have half of it be bone?"

imported chicken because "if we're going to take the time to cook something that long, we don't want people to feel cheated. Why charge people for a quarter kilo of chicken and have half of it be bone? It's also safer because it goes through the USDA process. We're feeding people we know — people we play sports with. We want to have food that's safe and good for everyone," they say of the added expense.

Outside the shop, the smokers are going at full capacity, the largest one able to accommodate 80 kgs of ribs. And if there's one menu item that's truly a standout, it's the hickory smoked pork ribs where the art of barbecue really shines through. First, the shop's original sauce adds the sour notes courtesy of sweet apple cider vinegar and ketchup. A rub gives it some saltiness and a secret final layer imparts the tanginess, culminating in a slap-you-into-next-Tuesday goodness.

Sides complete the menu (VND35,000 each) with well made classics like coleslaw,

garlic mashed potatoes and cornbread (popular with a customer in Binh Duong who always orders one or two pans' worth) and some with a twist like the spicy potato salad with cayenne and paprika and corn on the cob grilled with herb butter, all to be washed down with American favorites of Kool-Aid or Dr. Pepper.

The pair also have plans to add homemade sausage soon, "to complete the holy trinity of barbecue," says Mark (ribs, brisket and sausage), and are finalizing a dine-in location for later this year.

As a food, everything about barbecue, from its rich flavors to choice cuts of meat to it being the ultimate sharing food, makes it a religion worth joining. "Barbecue alone encompasses the high- and lowbrows, the sacred and the profane, the urban and the rural, the learned and the unlettered, the blacks, the browns, the yellows, the reds, and the whites," writes Lolis Eric Elie in *Smokestack Lightning*. Amen and pass the corn bread. ■

Memories of Granada

A new tapas restaurant offering the flare and flavors of Spain in Phu My Hung

TEXT BY MICHAEL ARNOLD IMAGES BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



Black pepper beef pinchos

SOME NIGHTS ARE unforgettable; they have a permanence about them that can rise to the surface even decades beyond the morning after. For new restaurateur Jeff Noble, that memorable night occurred during his student days while travelling through Andalusia with friends – and it was then that he first fell in love with Spain.

“We’d managed to get lost somewhere around Granada late at night,” he remembers. “We stopped in a village that still had some lights on. It turned out that the son of a local bar owner was getting married a couple of days later, and it was effectively his stag night. As soon as they saw our beat-up old car with British registration, they invited us in. We didn’t pay for a thing the whole evening – they were bringing out little tapas, local specialities, garlic roasted almonds and some of the best sangria I ever remember having, and we probably stayed there until about two o’clock in the morning. By that time we were in no fit state to drive, and so they put us up for the night. I thought really, this informal kind of ‘everybody’s welcome’ culture, and all those little snacky things that are each quite tasty in their own right – I think that’s what I really enjoy about Spain, and in some sense, that’s what we’re trying to create here.”

That anecdote is essentially all you need to know about **Viva! Tapas Bar & Grill** (R4-28 Hung Gia 4, Tan Phong, D7), Phu My Hung’s newest open-late venue. Best described as something in between a bar and a restaurant, you can treat it as either – sit yourself down at one of the tables for a feast of various tapas specialties, or stand at one of the leaning benches with a few good mates and enjoy some of the cheekier numbers from the wine list (tip – go for the hand-selected good stuff) or classics from the top shelf.

The venue was kick-started months ago as Chau’s Seafood and Grill after Jeff’s confidence in his original tapas concept wavered at seeing the number of superb existing tapas bars already operating in the city. It was only later on that he started to see he still had a niche to fill.

“When you travel around Spain,” he says, “what you find with tapas is that there are similar dishes, but there are also regional variations. Whenever I’ve visited the tapas bars here, I’ve tried all the standards – you know, the garlic prawns, and all the meatballs – but I’ve seen very little of the regional stuff. In Andalusia, for example, you can see there’s a distinct Moorish influence. So with our menu we decided to include things like Moroccan lamb, Andalusian beef stew, orange and bean salads – food like that. I’ve never seen them on any of the menus anywhere else here in the Spanish-style restaurants. So I thought, let’s give people something with a different taste. I want to give tapas fans here something they’ve never tried before.”

The resulting menu is unusually extensive and features the best of the regional cuisine. Explore at will – you could dine here for a month and have a different ensemble of flavors each night – but do keep an eye out

FROM TOP: Prawns in chili, Duck Rillette on toast, Mini-pizza de Berenjena con toncino

for the Andalusian highlights. The bean & orange salad (VND65,000) is an obvious refreshment item in this hot weather, while the duck rilette on toast (VND65,000) is a salute to the traditional French shredded preserved meat on crostini. The embutidos cold cut platter (VND105,000) is a fine salami and sausage selection of classic meats, while the black pepper beef pinchos (VND95,000) are a fiery shish kebab common to the north of Spain – try the lamb for a more Andalusian touch. Another must-try regional dish is the Andalusia beef stew (VND85,000), steeped in genuine moorish spices sourced from a local importer.

Probably the best-loved item on the menu is one of Jeff's own creations – the mini-pizza de Berenjena con toncino (VND65,000). A ratatouille sauce on roasted aubergines, this is a hybrid of a couple of regional tapas items that should be a classic of the genre – and with the soft textures of the eggplant, it's possibly more addictive than pizza itself. Of course, if you want to stick with the classics, the prawns in chilli (VND85,000) and deep-fried squid (VND85,000) will stand out for their freshness, particularly the former with its Spanish twist on a dish otherwise familiar to the Vietnamese palate.

Spanish Blood

The indisputable accompaniment to a tapas feast is sangria, but don't feel like a heathen if you're just enjoying the beer (and if you do, make sure you snack on the deep-fried olives (*olivos fritas*, VND45,000), a rare treat far classier and tastier than a plate of fries). People often overestimate the prevalence of sangria on the Iberian peninsula – Spaniards, like anyone else, generally take beer in their bars too.

There's no denying, however, that sangria is the sunshine in the Spanish soul; and yet, as a cocktail of fruit and wine, it may as well have been created for Vietnam – laced with a selection of local tropical fruit, Vival's house sangria will see you stumbling home with stars in your eyes. There are two selections, both of which come in half-liter (VND130,000) and full-liter (VND240,000) carafes; the bloodied variety uses red wine, cognac, and orange juice along with the soda water and fruit salad, while the sangria blanca swaps in white wine & apple juice.

Both beverages sing of happy nights spent at the tavernas, many miles away from this place and yet somehow nearer for the emergence of this unusual venue. Dim-lit and washed in cobalt blue, just as a moody Mediterranean restaurant should be, there's actually a lot of Hispanic sunshine in this place – do keep an eye on it in the months to come, as Jeff's next plans for the venue include a street-side café for daylight hours where you'll be able to enjoy café solo by the bodega on lazy afternoons, just as the Spanish do. ■



>>The List Wine & Dine



Ateexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents

bakeries

ABC Bakery & Cafe

The bakery serves more than 30 different baked products ranging from baguettes to pizza slices, along with a wide selection of drinks such as coffee and fruit juices.
223-225 Pham Ngu Lao, D1

Bread Talk

With a mission to revitalize the once-stale business of bread, Singaporean BreadTalk now has outlets throughout Asia and has established itself in several HCMC locations. A brand partnership with Gloria Jeans has seen a wide range of bakery goods available in the cafés, with both brands sharing the premises at this location.
106 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3930 3181

Brodard Bakery

Brodard Bakery has been operating in Saigon for over 30 years. It provides finely crafted cakes for all occasions in addition to ice cream, pastries, chocolate and tarts.
95 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 2416
6am - 10pm

Cheesecake Ngon

Cheesecake Ngon is a small boutique-style cheesecake shop. They use only top quality local and imported ingredients that give their cakes their signature smooth, creamy taste. They can provide cheesecakes for all occasions: birthdays, functions, cafe/restaurant supply or even just a single slice. With a range of flavors including passionfruit, raspberry, strawberry, lemon, coconut and of course original and a price starting at VND40,000 per slice.
44 Truong Quyen, D3
www.cheesecakesnow.com
3610 0211

Fly Cupcake

The shop specializes in various flavors of cupcakes.
74E Hai Ba Trung, D1
06 Pham Ngoc Thach, D1
www.flycupcake.vn

Givral

The cakes and tradition of this unique cake shop have captivated generations of Vietnamese customers. With many outlets throughout the city, this particular store was reopened in 2010 on its original site at Vincom A, built on the old Eden complex.
171 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 8659
www.saigongivral.com
6am - 10pm

Gourmand Shop

A traditional delicatessen shop featuring freshly baked baguettes, croissants, chocolate breads, charcuteries, pastries, finest macaroons and other French delicacies prepared daily. Special products imported from France are also available such as French oysters, Damman Freres luxury tea, and a range of authentic products.
Ground floor, Sofitel Saigon Plaza
17 Le Duan, D1
3824 1555

Harvest Baking

Harvest Baking offers a delivery-based bakery service with a charitable focus, teaching young Vietnamese hopefuls how to bake delicious breads and cakes through their food training program.
30 Lam Son, Tan Binh
3547 0577
harvestbaking.net
7am - 5pm Monday-Saturday

Kinh Do Bakery

Kinh Do Bakery makes reasonably priced baked goods to-go, such as cakes and cupcakes, tarts, sandwiches, Vietnamese "banh bao", Western-style hamburgers and mini-pizzas and gelatin-based desserts.
128A Hai Ba Trung, D1
3829 6552
kinhdobakery.vn

La Doree

Providing patrons with over 50 varieties of cakes, along with a rich sandwich menu from luxurious French-designed premises. La Doree is the best place in town for macaroons.
216 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3822 1718
www.ladoree.com

L'amour Bakery & Cafe

More than just another bakery, L'amour is the perfect place for those whom are looking for respite from busy HCMC. This patisserie offers a large selection of European cake and pastry, fresh juice and coffee. You will also find pastas, salads, and sandwiches, ideal for lunch time.
Open from 6am - 10:30pm
24 Hai Ba Trung D1

Nhu Lan Bakery

One of the most famous and prestigious local brands of bakeries in the city, Nhu Lan Bakery supplies bakery products, cakes, bread, ham, sausage, poultry, roasted pork, and dried foods.
50 Ham Nghi, D1
3829 2970
www.nhulan.vn

Pacey Cupcakes

This cozy little bakery features elegant décor and offers 12 kinds of cupcakes daily, located near the cathedral in a hip, modern setting.
53G Nguyen Du, D1
3823 3223
nguyen.tran@paceycupcakes.com
www.paceycupcakes.com

Paris Baguette

Korean chain Paris Baguette offers fresh baked products such as cakes, pastries, bread, as well as assorted coffee and tea drinks. They also serve sandwiches and salads.
Nguyen Thi Minh Khai corner Cao Thang, D1
Vincom Center A, 171 Dong Khoi, D1
2 Cao Thang, D3
www.parisvn.com

Pat'a Chou

French-style bakery with charming décor. Specializing in baguettes, fresh croissants of various varieties, small quiches, and cakes for every occasion.
74B Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 8179
5am - 10pm

Savouré Bakery

Shops have a wide selection of cookies, sweet and savory breads and cakes including cashew chocolate, taro and orange. Custom cakes can be ordered for weddings and holidays.
Unit E3, 1st Floor, Saigon Tax Trade Centre,
135 Nguyen Hue, D1
3914 3773
www.savourebakery.com

Tous Les Jours

A Korean owned French-style bakery franchise serving fresh baked bread and popular pastries, all baked on-site.
180 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 8302

bars

Ahoy Beer Club

Recently opened, this nautical themed bar serves local and imported beer along with food served by wait staff in sailor outfits.
79 Nguyen Cong Tru, D1

Allez Boo

A popular bar in Saigon featuring tropical bamboo decor, multiple levels and a DJ spinning funky beats. This unique bar offers a wide range of beers, shakes, spirits cocktails and food throughout the day.
187 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
6291 5424

Alpha

Alpha is a sports bar recently opened on the first level of The Manor. Offers weekly promotions such as Manor Mondays (happy hour all day for Manor residents), Teacher Tuesdays (happy hour all day for teachers), Thirsty Thursdays (two for one on all cocktails), Sport Saturdays (screening sports from around the world) and on Sundays movie nights by the pool and a roast dinner.
The Manor, Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

Bernie's Bar & Grill

An Irish bar and restaurant serving international cuisine like pizza, burgers, pasta and more. Celebrates happy hour from 5 to 7pm, and frequently provides live music.
19 Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 1720

Blanchy's Tash

This cocktail lounge is a perfect place to relax with friends, meet with colleagues or just enjoy a cocktail or two. With plenty of seating around the central bar as well as tables for couples or larger groups, plus a more intimate VIP area with comfortable sofas, you will find the right space for any occasion.
95 Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.blanchystash.com
090 902 8293

Blue Gecko

Blue Gecko provides a classic bar experience complete with a pool table, darts board, cold beer and friendly staff. Guests can watch live sports and relax in the comfortable ambience of the bar.

31 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3824 3483
simon@hcm.vnn.vn
www.bluegeckosaigon.com

Bootleg DJ Café

Modern, moody, and minimalist cafe bar with reasonable prices by day, chic lounge with DJs playing by night. Has a limited menu of sandwiches and other health-conscious Italian fare.
9 Le Thanh Ton, D1
090 760 9202
dorutodose@gmail.com

Boston Sports Bar

Located in the heart of the backpacker area, Boston Sports Bar is open 24 hours and provides guests with a modern bar-going experience. The bar boasts a pool table, live sports on LCD TVs, and western food.
28/4 Bui Vien, D1
6656 6338

Broma Saigon Bar

Famously known for 'not being a bar' Broma is one of Ho Chi Minh City's most popular hangouts with prices ranging from VND30,000 - VND500,000. Broma is a more upscale option for those wishing to escape the cheap drinks in The Pham.
41 Nguyen Hue, D1
3823 6838
bromasaigonbar@gmail.com

Cargo Bar

Cargo Bar is a dedicated music and arts venue designed and committed to delivering diverse entertainment, along with a good drink menu.
7 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

Carmen Bar

Carmen Bar features a small cavern-like entrance with rough rock walls decorated with ambient lighting. With an exclusive range of drinks and cocktails, guests can relax while enjoying tunes from an excellent Flamenco band.
8 Ly Tu Trong, D1



Cavern Pub

Live band entertains a crowd of locals, expats, foreigners every night. The bar also shows sport channels on a large TV screen.
Live music every night
from 9:30pm-1am
19 Dong Du, D1
090 826 5691

Chill Skybar

Offers the most stunning panoramic views of Saigon and a wide range of wines and cocktails personally prepared by Vietnam mixologist Le Thanh Tung.
Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1
www.chillsaigon.com

Boudoir Lounge

Designed to look like a lived-in yet immaculately styled Parisien home with plush leather sofas, silk cushions and velvet armchairs, Boudoir Lounge serves up everything from afternoon tea to evening cocktails along with signature dishes for any occasion from informal meals and business lunches to gourmet canapés accompanying evening drinks.
Ground floor, Saigon Sofitel Plaza
17 Le Duan, DI
3824 1555

Brotzeit German Bier Bar & Restaurant

The HCMC venue is in the flashy Kumho complex on the edge of the central district, and features a wide 24-meter restaurant frontage on the mezzanine level and a contemporary and chic setting with German-inspired wooden benches and a long wooden bar counter. Serving authentic Bavarian cuisines and premium beers.
39 Le Duan, DI
9822 4206
brotzeit.co/kumholink

Chilli Pub Saigon 🍷 OI's Pick

A fun place to unwind, with cold drinks, good music (customers can choose the music) friendly staff, light pub food, weekly quiz night (Mondays), darts and televised sport. Try a challenge shot from the big Chilli on the bartop.
104 Ho Tung Mau, DI
09 8376 3372
h291182@yahoo.com

Chu Bar

At this beautiful, laid back venue, tourists and locals alike can sit around Chu's large

oval bar or on luxurious padded benches. It has a full cocktail menu as well as a short menu of snacks and sandwiches.
158 Dong Khoi, DI

Cloud 9 Rooftop Lounge

Located near Turtle Lake, this stunning bar offers panoramic views of Saigon. Guests can peruse an extensive international wine list or choose from an array of creative cocktails and international beers.
Level 667, Hai Nam Building, 2 Bis Cong
Truong Quoc, D3
090 944 5544

Cold Beer Club

The bar features Beer of the Day Promotion all day, and also offers a 2 for 1 deal on the beer of the day. Prices start at VND30,000. The upstairs room can accommodate big groups.
64 Ton That Thiep, DI
3914 3999

Eon51

Eon51 includes a fine dining restaurant, a champagne lounge, a cigar bar and a heli pad cocktail bar. Spread on three levels, Eon51 is a destination for bespoke private and corporate events in Saigon.
Levels 51-52, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, DI
6291 8751

Game On 🍷 OI's Pick

Opened in July, Game On is Saigon's newest and biggest sports bar that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The bar also has an extensive drink menu that includes coffees, juices, beers, wines, vodkas and more. Besides being a good place to watch games, Game On also boasts a function room for corporate meetings or private parties.
115 Ho Tung Mau, DI
6251 9898
gameonsaigon@gmail.com

Ginger 60

A low-key expat bar with an extensive drink menu and live music in a friendly atmosphere.
60 Ton That Thiep, DI
093 772 1011

Go2

Go2 is a popular nightspot in the backpackers area. This two level bar offers dancing, shisha, and a street-side view with comfortable seating. The bar also has a pool table and extensive western food menu.
187 De Tham, DI

Hair of the Dog

A large space creating an interesting bar with an alfresco sidewalk area downstairs, and an upper lounge area overlooking the lower bar that allows for a view of the DJ station. If it follows its Hanoi theme, it will be a DJ music-focused nightclub.
194 Bui Vien, DI

Hard Rock Café

Memorabilia from Hard Rock's iconic collection adorns the walls of Hard Rock Café Ho Chi Minh City and there is live music most nights. Located in the Kumho Plaza complex.
39 Le Duan, DI
6291 7595
www.hardrockcafe.vn
11.30am - 2am

Heaven Bar Saigon

Standing out from other nightclubs, Heaven Bar impresses their guests with nice decor in tone of red and blue, a broad range of sparkling drinks, Ladies' night, awesome DJ at weekend, and many exciting events for expats.
8 Le Quy Don, D3
090 534 3316
www.barsaigonheaven.com

Ice Blue

A small, atmospheric, emphatically English-style pub, Ice Blue is a popular meeting place for Ho Chi Minh City's expats with reasonably priced drinks, friendly staff and a cozy atmosphere. Great place to play darts.
54 Dong Khoi, DI

Kim's Tavern

An expat bar on the edge of the downtown shopping district renowned for friendly, attractive staff, cold beer, and a relaxed 'local pub' environment.
20 Huynh Thuc Khang, DI
090 777 5141

Last Call 🍷 OI's Pick

A fine hole-in-the-wall cocktail bar in the centre of town opposite the Sheraton Hotel, Last Call is a 70's themed lounge with a permanent neon glow. Now one of the most popular expat/hip local late evening bars, with a small deck from which to overlook the nightlife set on Dung Du.
59 Dong Du, DI
3823 3122

Le Pub

In a brawny Australian snub to the effete vestiges of French Colonialism that pervade in Saigon, Le Pub is a hearty Oz-styled pub proudly located in a small alleyway between Pham Ngu Lao and Bui Vien st, Opposite the Chua Au Lac arch, where it is a magnet for backpackers and blokey expats. The manager and staff are friendly enough too, I suppose.
175/22 Pham Ngu Lao, DI
3837 7679
www.lepub.org



Baba's Kitchen
164 Bui Vien, District 1
49D Xa Lo Hanoi, District 2
Phone: 083-838-6661 & 083-838-6662
Open 11am to 11pm
North & South Indian food
Halal & vegetarian dishes
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order online at vietnammm.com & eat.vn
"Baba brings India to Vietnam"



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American Chinese Food
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www.woknroll.vn
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SUPER FAST DELIVERY!
0122-690-8881
Address: Hung Vuong 1 E006, Phu My Hung, District 7

Lion Brewery and Restaurant

The brewery offers its signature Lion beer, brewed by its German master brewer, who trained in Germany, along with other kinds of beer. The Lion restaurant has two banquet halls that can accommodate 530 persons.
11-13 Cong Truong Lam Son, D1

Long Phi

One of the staples in the backpacker district, Long Phi is a no-frills bar that doubles as a cheap diner serving some fairly decent French and European cuisine.

207 Bui Vien, D1
3837 2704

Lush

Lush has a highly distinctive, modern look, with different areas catering to different needs, including a VIP space with plush couches for chatting with hot new friends.

2 Ly Tu Trong, D1

Number Five Bar

Number Five Bar has become notorious for its "all you can drink" draught tiger beer offer. Attractive waitresses are always enthusiastic contestants on the billiards table.

44 Pasteur, D1

O'Brien's 🍷 O'i's Pick

Two-storey Irish-themed bar & restaurant furnished to high standard. O'Brien's promotes a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere. Known for its excellent food menu, this is a fun place to socialize while shooting pool, playing darts, or chatting with the friendly staff.

74/A3 Hai Ba Trung, D1

onTop Bar

Located on the 20th floor of Novotel Saigon Centre, onTop Bar provides views over Saigon on the outdoor terrace. Offers a menu with over 20 cheeses and Vietnamese and international inspired tapas.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D3

Phatty's

A sports bar offering a selection of ice-cold local and imported beers as well as a complete range of tasty pub food. Central features are the TVs, connected to an extensive sports channel network.

46-48 Ton That Thiep, D1

Purple Jade

Purple Jade is a stylish and chic venue with exceptional world class cocktails by the city's award-winning bartender along with snacks to melt away the bustle of the city.

First floor- InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon



RED Bar

RED offers one of the longest Happy Hours in Saigon, from 9am - 9pm, with live music available from Monday - Saturday. This multi-level bar has a non-smoking floor and a function room along with a top quality pool table and soft-tip dart machines. A menu of Eastern and Western dishes also includes wood-fire pizzas.

70-72 Ng Duc Ke, District 1

2229 7017

Saigon Saigon Bar

In wartime Saigon, the rooftop of the Caravelle hotel was one of the most popular drinking holes in the city for foreign journalists and expat embassy staff – and it remains one of the most sought-out casual tourist attractions in the city today. Panoramic views of Saigon can still be obtained on the garden terrace despite all the construction, and efforts have been made to preserve the original character of the venue with its multiple ceiling fans, subdued decor, and quietly romantic atmosphere with oil candles on the table tops.

19 Lam Son Square, D1
3823 4999

Saigon Retro 🍷 O'i's Pick

One of the newest expat bars on the block, offering friendly bar service. Live sport on screen, including English Premier League.

113 Ho Tung Mau, D1
6278 2349

Shots Bar

A corner bar on Bui Vien that, along with drinks, serves a variety of food such as seafood, pork and chicken dishes.

207 Bui Vien, D1

Slate

Slate takes its name from the dark grey slate tiling that covers the floor of the entire establishment. A modern, relaxing spot for an after-dinner drink with an extensive martini list and delicious BBQ menu. A tad difficult to find above a BMW dealership, but accessible from the hotel it is worth the effort.

3rd Floor, Moevenpick Hotel, 253 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan
3844 9222
5pm - 11pm

Spotted Cow

Hearty breakfasts, great pub grub, cheap drinks and the latest sport on TV make this an appealing destination for tourists of all budgets. Located in the heart of the backpacker district.

111 Bui Vien, D1
3920 7670
spottedcow@alfrescosgroup.com

Storm P

Storm P restaurant and bar is named after the famous Danish cartoonist Robert Storm Petersen, and it's the only Danish restaurant in Vietnam.

5B Nguyen Sieu, D1
3827 4738
www.stormp.vn

The Cube Bar

Besides being a place for drinking and unwinding, The Cube Bar is also a place where unique, educational and exciting events like bartending, modern cuisine, art crafts, theme parties and live music take place in a daily basis.

31B Ly Tu Trong, D1
09 0336 9798/01 2088 1964
info@thecube.vn

The Orient Bar

Its game room features pool table, foosball and darts. Offers free flow of draught Tiger and Sapporo during Happy Hours (5:30-8pm). Serves imported steak and pizza.

24 Ngo Van Nam, D1

Universal Bar Saigon

Offers food, drink specials and cold beers. Play pool upstairs or down by the main bar.

90 Bui Vien, D1

Vasco's

Stylish bar, restaurant and cocktail lounge in a converted colonial style house. European and Asian fare downstairs with extensive wine list and cocktails. DJs perform upstairs at night.

74/7D Hai Ba Trung, D1
3824 2888
www.vascosgroup.com

Wine Embassy

For those looking to relax and enjoy a glass of wine after work, Wine Embassy is the perfect place with wine specialists and an interactive menu to help you pair your wine with crafted food.

13 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3824 7827
www.wineembassy.com.vn
4pm till late
11am - late

Xu Bar

A cocktail hot spot with Coconut Martinis, Cranelo Sparkles and Passion Fruit Caprioska on offer along with a variety of tapas with DJs and drink specials throughout the week.

71-75 Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.xusaigon.com

cafés

ABC Bakery & Cafe

ABC Bakery & Cafe has over 30 different kinds of baked goods such as baguettes, danishes, whole cakes, sliced cakes and even pizza. Together with its range of baked items, it is also has Western and Vietnamese coffee and juices.

223 - 225 Pham Ngu Lao, D1
www.abcbnc.com

Achaya Cafe 🍷 O'i's Pick

Achaya Cafe have two floors providing a nice atmosphere for meeting, relaxation or party. The menu is extensive with drinks and Western, Japanese, Vietnamese food from sandwiches, spaghetti, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts.

90 Le Loi, D1
093 897 2050

Aisha Lounge

Aisha offers a menu studded with various Vietnamese drinks and food – although the belly dance show does evoke the spirit of the interior design.

63/1 Pasteur, D1
6660 9040
www.aishalounge.com

AQ Coffee

Beautiful café situated in one of the city's oldest French mansions, serving coffee made with traditionally-roasted coffee beans.

32 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 8344

Angel-in-us Coffee

A sophisticated and classy coffee franchise with exemplary attention to detail, Angel-in-us has a pretty angel wing motif and a quality coffee menu.

145 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3827 8588
facebook.com/angelinuscoffeevn

Bobby Brewer's

A contemporary cafe in the backpacker area set over three floors, the cafe features a large free cinema, a great place for couples.

45 Bui Vien, D1
3920 4090
www.bobbybrewers.com

Boulevard Cafe

This Parisian-style cafe has a fine, white tone and a warm ambiance that attempts a look of luxury with its plush sofas and chandeliers.

98 Phan Xich Long, Phu Nhuan

Bukafe - Cafe

This quaint cafe offers a Japanese style setting with chairs that have you seated on the ground. While offering elegant drinks and tasty simple dishes, make sure to catch the live bands. It won't set you back much either with inexpensive drinks.

43 Nguyen Huu Cau, D1
090 265 2635
bukafe.cafetruyen@gmail.com

Café Ban Sonate

Cafe Ban Sonate is a peaceful haven, tucked away from the boisterous noise of the city. This cafe offers elegant decor along with indoor and outdoor seating options.

53 Dang Dung, D1
3290 6004

Caffe Fresco

A new player on the scene currently battling for supremacy in the coffee chain market, Fresco offers a wide range of espresso and local coffees, juices and smoothies.

121 Le Loi, D1
3821 1009
www.fresco.com.vn

Cafe Runam

Cafe Runam (the name loosely comes from a traditional Vietnamese lullaby song for young children) is a three storey building with the first two floors designed and decorated in detail to offer different atmospheres for customers. The second floor is an intimate coffee lounge with big sofas and armchairs. Next to the lounge is a terrace where white wood tables and armchairs are surrounded by plants. Offers wide range of coffee, cakes as well as set menus.

96 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
08 3825 8883
www.caferrunam.com

Café Terrace

Cafe Terrace is a popular modern cafe/restaurant in the chic Saigon Center. This cozy, dimly lit cafe offers customers a long outdoor terrace with views of the bustling pedestrian and traffic scene. A second cafe is located on the first floor amongst fashion stores.

Ground Floor & First Floor, Saigon Centre,
65 Le Loi, D1

Cafe Vuon Kieng

Cafe Vuon Kieng is a quiet, casual cafe near the banks of the Saigon River, boasting relaxing views and refreshing breezes. This riverside cafe offers jasmine tea, coffee, ice cream, beer, even cocktails.

10B Ton Duc Thang, D1

3823 3279

Cake Durian Duiro

A chain of cafes selling durian inspired crepes and buns with prices under VND100,000.

Kiosk in Le Thi Rieng Park, 875 Cach Mang Thang 8, D10
093 333 9365
www.banhhsaurieng.com

Centrofarms Coffee 🍷 O'i's Pick

This recently opened cafe, located near the airport, sells its own eponymous

brand of Centrofarm organic roasted beans direct from Dalat with indoor and outdoor seating that's perfect for people watching and getting your daily dose of caffeine.

19 Ut Tich, Tan Binh

Chi's Cafe

Chi's Café is a restaurant serving both Western and Vietnamese food in the backpacker area. The menu is extensive, with everything from sandwiches and pizzas to their popular baked potatoes with filling.

40/31 Bui Vien, DI
3836 7622

Ciao Cafe

An icon in downtown HCMC, Ciao cafe features two floors serving simple food, coffee, smoothies and ice cream – and an opulent lounge bar on the top floor. Antique tiles mix with velvet curtains and stylish paintings to make this a memorable chill out environment.

74-76 Nguyen Hue, DI
40 Ngo Duc Ke, DI

Cosmo Lounge

Cosmo Lounge is a popular location for stylish and trendy locals and expats alike. Chill out in a bold blue and white environment with local and European cafe food and a broad selection of coffees and drinks.

86 Bis Le Thanh Ton, DI
3823 5848

Cooku's Nest

Cooku's nest has a clean, artsy vibe offering drinks and snacks.

13 Tu Xuong, D3
2241 2043

Crêperie & Café

Inexpensive Western fare targeted mainly at locals, delivering some fairly decent low-cost sandwiches.

5 Han Thuyen, DI

Cryptic Acoustic Cafe

Cryptic Acoustic Cafe features an architecture that blends classic and modern elements. Featured drinks include Cryptic frappe (the combination of coffee and Orion cake, banana and fresh cream), Cryptic soda (soda, flavored orange peel, lemon and fresh cream) and Cryptic yogurt (with yogurt, mango, strawberry, peach). This place also holds acoustic and art performances.

343/6 To Hien Thanh, D10

DeJa Vu Cafe

It is easy to mistake this cafe for someone's home as the tranquil atmosphere will have you tension free in no time. The peaceful setting is ideal for dates or low-key social events. Make sure to catch the live bands that frequent the cafe.

314/2 Dien Bien Phu, D10
6276 6966
info@dejavu.vn

Elle Cafe

Keeping in line with the sense of style that comes along with the Elle fashion label brand, the menu and décor of Elle Cafe sets it apart from the competition.

Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 45
Ngo Duc Ke, DI
6291 8766

Fe Cafe

Fe Cafe brings you all kinds of

scrumptious coffee, along with Vietnamese food and dessert. It offers breakfast, lunch, dinner and offers delivery as well. The interior is a mix of alternative and fancy, with wooden furniture, soft backrest pillows and decorative paintings.

26 Ly Tu Trong, DI
090 878 3788
www.facebook.com/fecafe.vn
7:30am - 11pm

Gemmi Coffee

This cafe serves a variety of food like salads, chicken dish alongside coffees and other beverages. Provides live solo piano music every night from 8pm.

193 D3 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

Hatvala 🍷 Oi's Pick

This tea house, coffee shop and restaurant offers selected, quality Vietnamese tea and coffee to drink or to buy as leaves and beans. They also have a delightful all day casual dining area in their stylish bistro.

44 Nguyen Hue, DI
3824 1534
8am - 11pm
hatvalavietnam@gmail.com
www.hatvala.com
www.facebook.com/hatvala

Hi-End Coffee

Located near the leafy Tao Dan Park, Hi-End Coffee is one of a few venues serving up just as much music as caffeine.

126 Suong Nguyet Anh, DI
3824 1004
Open to 10pm

Gloria Jean's

Australia's most popular coffee franchise now has a solid presence in Ho Chi Minh City with multiple locations in the inner city. While the favourite Dong Khoi address has now been given over to a Sony store, new venues in Vincom A and at CMT8 prove this favourite brand with locals and expats alike is steadily growing in Vietnam.

2 bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
www.gloriajeanscoffees.com/vn

Highlands Coffee

With over 50 cafes in Vietnam, Highlands Coffee serves up international and traditional Vietnamese blends. Coffee lovers can also find Highlands premium quality blends in selected hotels and supermarkets.

Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, DI

i-Box Cafe

iBox cafe is a unique, cafe with aristocratic decor. This decorative cafe specializes in red wine, Asian dishes and spaghetti. They also offer an extensive selection of ice cream creations.

135 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3825 6718

ID Café

Separated from the bustle of nearby Ben Thanh Market by a tiny alleyway, ID is a retro café opening a door to an earlier Saigon.

34D Thu Khoa Huan, DI

Imagine Coffee shop

One of the walls of this rustic cafe is literally covered with books. An easy place to get lost for an evening with prices below VND100,000.

58 Ho Bieu Chanh, Phu Nhuan
090 956 0105
www.facebook.com/ImagineCafeShop
09 0956 0105
nguyenmaihuan@gmail.com
8am - 10pm

Kebab Cafe

The healthiest kebab! Featuring an excellent homemade white sauce, fresh veggies and chicken or pork marinated without oil. The French owner also serves savory and sweet crepes and a home-made puree.

538/2/8 Doan Van Bo, D4
01648 805 915
contact@kebab-cafe.com
www.kebab-cafe.com
10am - 10pm

Kem My

This quiet ice cream shop is the perfect place for families and couples to indulge their sweet tooth. It offers a fresh release from the heat of Ho Chi Minh City.

11 Duong 41, D4
093730 3030
www.kemmy.vn
3.30pm - 11pm

Kesera

A cozy and friendly café/bar serving coffee, beer, wines, freshly-baked homemade cakes and delicious Western food.

26/1 Le Thanh Ton, DI
keserakesera.com

Kopi Beans

Kopi Beans Cafe is a favorite among high school kids. It's a small takeaway coffee shop with cheap espresso and iced coffees.

206 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

L'amour

A stylish bakery and cafe new to Hai Ba Trung, in the city centre, L'amour specialises in cakes and desserts and serves Illy Coffee. Eat in or take away.

24 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3520 8180
www.lamourbakery.com

LightBox Cafe

This stunningly designed cafe also doubles as an event and photography studio, so make sure you dress to impress at this location because you never know who might snap your picture. They also serve vegetarian cuisine with prices ranging between VND300,000 - VND500,000

179 Hoa Lan, Phu Nhuan
3517 6668
www.lightbox.vn

L'Usine

L'Usine is a retail, café and gallery space occupying two locations in the center of DI. Its retail space is dedicated to Vietnamese designers and more established brands from abroad as well as stocking a wide range of stationary and home ware items. The café in both locations serves international fare and a range of pastries and the ever popular Sweet & Sour Cupcakes.

151/1 Dong Khoi, DI
70B Le Loi, DI
www.lusinespace.tumblr.com
9am – 9pm

Le Tokyo Baum

Popular Japanese cake cafe with quiet seating area, specializing in orange cakes.

46 Nguyen Van Trang, DI
3926 0388

May Coffee

A superb, friendly, and inexpensive little café most notable for its perfect view of the Cathedral tower bells and close proximity to the post office.

1 Cong Xa Paris, DI
www.maycoffee.com

Minhu Coffee

This specialty cafe offers a wood furniture interior setting, which resembles the cabins you would expect to see in the western North American frontier. Live bands are a regular feature at the cozy cafe and prices are inexpensive.

149/35 Le Thi Rieng, DI
3601 9319

Mojo Cafe

This modern, chic café, restaurant and bar offers freshly baked homemade cakes, pastries, wood fired pizzas, light fare and superb coffee and smoothies for dine in or take away.

88 Dong Khoi, DI
08 3827 2828
www.mojosaigon.com

MTV Cafe

Providing a relaxing atmosphere after a hard day's work with some of the top hits out today, MTV cafe is the perfect place to unwind with that special someone or just a cup of coffee.

65 Vo Van Tan, D3
3930 2597
mtvcafe.com.vn

MZ Coffee

A cafe in a colonial villa that was built in the early 20th century. It boasts a broad selection of coffee, from fine Vietnamese condensed milk coffee to Italian Lavazza espresso, cappuccinos and lattes as well as wines and beers.

56-56A Bui Thi Xuan, DI
39255258
www.m-zing.com

NYDC

A fun, dynamic and cosmopolitan place for food, desserts, beverages and not forgetting the company of good friends. Prices range between VND100,000 - VND300,000.

Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, DI
3822 9992
www.nydc.com.vn

Paris Deli

A French style cafe serving some of the best pastries in Saigon, this cheerful spot is a real slice of Parisian life. Many European drinks and dishes.

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, DI
3821 6127

Passio Coffee to Go

Passio Coffee offers its guests fine Italian style coffee made from the finest ingredients. Since Passio's inception in 2006, this enthusiastic team of coffee brewers has become recognized by international coffee drinkers.

112 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

Phuong Cac Cafe

With indoor and outdoor lounge areas this cafe is a relaxing respite from the grind of Ho Chi Minh City. With live bands and drinks under VND100,000 it makes for the perfect getaway.

Bis 213 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3932 7484

Phúc Minh Coffee

Phuc Minh coffee is an airy, clean environment providing a varied menu and delicious coffee. The staff is attentive and quick with a friendly approach. Prices start around VN 25,000 for this simple cafe.

51 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
9am-10pm

Princess and the Pea

A fairytale-themed venue for the dreamers of Ho Chi Minh City, hidden away in a tiny alleyway off Pasteur. Discover it if you can.
63/18 Pasteur, D1

Retrobite Diner Cafe

Inspired by the concept of 1960s Americana, bi-level Retrobite Diner Cafe features an interior that includes booths, retro egg chairs, jukebox and classic radio players. The menu is mostly American food with sandwiches, hamburgers, pastas, steaks, milkshakes, waffles and more.
6 Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3521 0673
retrobite.vn@gmail.com
7:30am - 11pm

Soho Coffee

Two level local cafe chain serving light meals, coffee and local chilled drinks.
185 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3839 5038
7am - 11pm

Starbucks Coffee

Has a large, open ground floor space with ample seating in booths and tables, and a smaller space upstairs with views out on the busy Nga 6 Phu Dong roundabout. Also has outdoor seating. Expect to pay Western prices.
76 Le Lai, D1

The Blue Cafe

A spacious cafe divided into two different areas with a lush, outdoor garden seating lounge and an air conditioned in-door lounge. The Blue Cafe has live music with drinks under VND100,000.
701-703 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap
3588 6824

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

Offering over 22 varieties of coffee and 20 kinds of tea, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf has been serving the best coffees and teas from around the world for more than 40 years in its cozy, handcrafted oak paneled stores.
www.coffeebean.com.vn
7am - 11pm
39 Le Duan, D1
Ground Floor, Crescent Mall
Ton Dat Tien, D7
157-159 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
39 Le Duan, D1
12-14 Thai Van Lung, D1
94 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1
235 Dong Khoi, D1
1-5 Le Duan, D1
60-62 Cach Mang Thang 8, D3
1-3 Phan Chu Trinh, D1

The Library

The Library provides a welcoming atmosphere for those in search of tranquility, comfort and great drinks in the heart of Saigon
Ground floor - InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Tram Coffee

A unique romantic cafe experience hidden well off the beaten track, but close to District 1 in neighbouring Phu Nhuan District. Sip a coffee, juice or beer or indulge in good cafe food over candlelight in a dark, intimate environment hidden amongst trees and trickling streams. Relax in an air conditioned room or dine alfresco amongst the greenery. The perfect spot to impress a date with your local knowledge.
100 Tran Huy Lieu St, Phu Nhuan
2240 5306

The Myth Cafe

Escape the daily grind of Ho Chi Minh City with a trip into the mystical setting of Myth Cafe. With live bands and prices under VND100,000 it's no wonder The Myth cafe is one of the best around.
176 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3820 9735
thuyhangmtv@yahoo.com

Trung Nguyen Cafe

One of the most ubiquitous coffee brands in Vietnam. With a burgeoning presence throughout the city, it's hard to go anywhere without tripping over a Trung Nguyen cafe - serving gourmet Vietnamese street coffee.
268-C Le Loi, D1

The Serenata Cafe

The Serenata Cafe is a peaceful, relaxing oasis in a French Colonial house. This cafe embraces nature with plants, fishponds, and small fountains, and offers music in the evenings.
60 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
3930 7436

Vecchio Cafe

The interior features Italian ornate decor, dim lighting and antique furniture, enhanced by Italian music. Offerings include pasta, soup, chicken dishes, salad, beef dishes, gelato and beverages such as smoothies, fresh fruit juices and tea.
39/3 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3

Windows

A highly fashionable cafe near the cathedral. For many years, this eye-catching venue has remained a place to see and be seen, often frequented by the famous, the well-to-do, and the ne'er do well.
12 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1
38238408

Yogen Fruz

Serves frozen yogurt with 20 different kinds of fruits for you to choose from. This place also provides an environment where customers can relax and be social.
B3-15B Basement Vincom Center B, 72 Le Thanh Ton, D1
www.yogenfruz.com.vn

Zoom Cafe

This distinctive Vespa-themed Cafe has been a popular fixture in D1 for ten years. Today, the cafe serves as the place for Vespa enthusiasts and tour veterans to swap stories over ice-cold beers and what many claim is the best selection of mouth-watering burgers, paninis, and baguette sandwiches in town.
169A Bui Vien, D1
3920 3897

chinese

Dragon Court

Dragon Court is a large restaurant opposite the Opera House in Saigon's bustling District 1. Enjoy Chinese dishes from many regions with dishes like glass noodles, hot pot, and a large dim sum collection.
11-13 Lam Son Square, D1
3827 2566

Dynasty

New World hotel's in-house Chinese restaurant is certainly a venue of fine contemporary Chinese dining. The chef offers a variety of authentic Cantonese dishes along with classic dim sum under a high lantern/chandelier-lit ceiling, in a broad dining room decorated in classic Chinese

style. VIP guests can dine in one of four semi-private or three totally private rooms.

New World Hotel
76 Le Lai, D1
3822 8888
www.saiгон.newworldhotels.com

Hung Ky Mi Gia

Hung Ky Mi Gia is a famous and long-standing restaurant with more than 13 years of operation. It serves traditional Chinese cuisine with authentic dishes such as roasted chicken, duck, and pork.
20 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3822 2673

Kabin

Kabin is a Cantonese restaurant specializing in exotic dishes such as baked duck tongue, grouper cutlet, and lobster soup. Located in the five star Renaissance Riverside Hotel, this restaurant offers a wide variety of dim sum.
Renaissance Riverside Hotel,
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 0033

Li Bai Chinese Restaurant

Located in the Sheraton Hotel, Li Bai offers a selection of over 50 dim sum dishes as well as traditional Chinese and Cantonese specialties. Diners will enjoy the relaxed, upscale ambiance provided by the wood paneling and oriental art.
Level 2, 88 Dong Khoi, D1
3827 2828
www.libaisaigon.com

Ming Court

Since the Nikko Hotel graced the Saigon skyline, the venue has managed to set the standard for classy, five-star dining with its bold grey modern decor and Japanese-style efficiency. Ming Court, on the hotel's third floor, is a large Chinese restaurant with all the expected graces of the Orient belonging to the exotic fantasy of the dynastic era.
3rd floor, Nikko Saigon Hotel
235 Nguyen Van Cu, D1
3925 7777

Ocean Palace

A place for those who love Chinese food. The large dining room on the ground floor can accommodate up to 280 diners. Up on the first floor are six private rooms and a big ballroom that can host 350 guests.

2 Le Duan Street, D1
3911 8822

Seven Wonders (Bay Ky Quan)

It's worth traipsing out to D6 for this one. Not only are the Dim Sum, Peking Duck, and pan-China home-style cuisine exemplary, but the venue design, with its architectural flourishes from the seven wonders of the world (including the Great Wall, the Taj Mahal, and the pyramids) makes for a highly distinctive dining experience.
12 Duong 26, D6
3755 1577
www.7kyquan.com

Shang Palace Restaurant

The slightly off-centre, high-class Norfolk Mansion Hotel on Ly Tu Trong is home to one of Saigon's most well-respected Chinese restaurants outside of Chinatown. Located on the 1st floor, Shang's dark intricate wooden tables and chairs with white linen and deep red carpeting make for an atmosphere of moody opulence; there is seating for over 300 guests, and private rooms are available.
1st Floor, Norfolk Mansion
17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, D1
3823 2221

Shi-Fu Dim sum

Shifu Dim Sum House is a restaurant

specializing in dim sum, with modern Chinese decor and over 68 dim sum dishes.

139A Nguyen Trai, D1
3925 1111
www.dimsumhouse.vn

Yu Chu

Yu chu is renowned for the quality and presentation of its authentic Cantonese and Peking cuisines along with its elegant decor. Watching the chefs prepare signature dishes such as hand-pulled noodle, dim sum and Peking duck right in the kitchen is a prominent dining feature here.

First floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan
3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

french

Annamite

Annamite specializes in French cuisine within a modern setting.
21 Tu Xuong, D3
6277 8332
www.annamite-restaurant.com

Au Manoir de Khai

Au Manoir de Khai is an authentic, first class French restaurant. Guests can enjoy traditional French cuisine in this classic 100 year old villa. Their menu is extensive and features dishes like Kobe beef, foie gras, red grouper, and truffle mushrooms.
251 Dien Bien Phu, D3
3930 3394

Augustin

Augustin is a romantic and charming French restaurant located just steps away from the Rex Hotel. Serves lunches and dinners and offers 10 percent discount on a la carte menu items.
10D Nguyen Thiep, D1
www.augustinrestaurant.com

Bon Appetit

A small French-Vietnamese fusion bistro on Pham Ngoc Thach with a simplistic charm enhanced by a fine selection of old-style French music.
78 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
090 789 8345

Bonjour Restaurant

Bonjour serves up international dishes with a French flair. The large menu of main courses feature roast duck, salmon, lamb and steak with specialties being ostrich and venison.
150/26 Nguyen Trai, D1
3926 0699

Cocorico - Ca Nuong Phap

Serves an eclectic menu of roasted chicken (French style), pastas and Asian dishes.
127 Dien Bien Phu, D1
6292 0606
www.cocorico.com.vn

Cordon Blue

A unique French venue decorated with blue and green shades serving high-quality French cuisine on the outskirts of the inner city.
38 Mac Dinh Chi, D1
3822 5216
www.cordonblue.vn

La Cuisine

This ultra-fine little bistro is an exercise in minimalism with its twenty seats and bare, chic-rustic interior of wooden furnishings and black & white photographs on whitewashed walls. Its warm lighting and clean atmosphere belies a certain sophistication, however, and the price of the fare is significantly damaging enough to make this a rare

treat for those not in the restaurant's fabulously wealthy target market.

48 Le Thanh Ton, D1
2229 8882
www.lacuisine.com.vn

La Creperie

La Creperie is the first authentic Brittany French restaurant that serves savory galettes, sweet crepes with tasty seafood and the best apple cider in Saigon.

17/7 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 7070
infosgn@lacreperie.com.cn
Mon-Sun 11am-11pm

La Fourchette

Small and cozy, La Fourchette is a favorite amongst the French expat community. The vintage posters and wood paneling add to the charm of this French eatery located downtown, a stone's throw from the Saigon River.

9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 8143
www.lafourchette.com.vn

La Nicoise

A small, friendly French bistro with about a dozen tables, La Nicoise serves up typical French dishes under the watchful eye of its French-Vietnamese owners.

56 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3821 3056

L'essentiel

L'essentiel offers a quiet intimate dining experience downstairs with space for private functions and alfresco dining on an upper floor. The menu changes weekly, the food is fresh and the wine list carefully collated.

98 Ho Tung Mau, D1
0948 415 646

Le Bordeaux

Set in a French colonial-style mansion, Le Bordeaux serves southwestern French cuisine in a beautiful setting. Known for its foie gras and large selection of wines, Le Bordeaux is worth the trip to Binh Thanh district.

72 D2 Street, Binh Thanh
3899 9831
restaurant-lebordeaux.com.vn
11.30am - 1.30pm; 6.30am - 9.30pm

Le Bouchon De Saigon

Red and white checked tablecloths and closely set tables make Le bouchon de Saigon the place to go for a casual, classic French bistro experience under the eye of iron chef Vietnam winner David Thai.

40 Thai Van Lung, D1
www.lebouchondesaignon.com

Le Chateau De Saigon

Situated in a small but romantic French villa, Le Chateau De Saigon Restaurant is designed to accommodate any kind of event. Whether it is dinner with family and friends, or a passionate evening with your loved one, Le Chateau De Saigon will provide a sophisticated and memorable dining experience.

45A Le Quy Don, D3
www.lechateauadesaignon.com

Le Jardin 🍷 Oi's Pick

Le Jardin is a gorgeous enclosed garden space that allows eaters to follow the example of the French colonists a century ago and pretend they're actually in Paris. Whether dining outside under the shaded terrace or within the old, warmly-lit villa, the cuisine, decor, and general mood of the place is like a Stargate direct to France.

31D Thai Van Lung, D1
3825 8465

Le Steak de Saigon

Drawing inspiration from French steakhouses, Le Steak de Saigon serves imported and local meats, with beef fondue and table-side beef tartare as the most recommended. Aside from table service, the restaurant offers take-out and delivery as well.

15 Dong Du, D1
3822 4593
www.lesteakdesaignon.com

L'Olivier

L'Olivier is a restaurant serving authentic Mediterranean cuisines, located on the 2nd floor of the Hotel Sofitel.

Sofitel Saigon Plaza, 17 Le Duan, D1
3824 1555
www.sofitel.com

Le Rendez-Vous de Saigon 🍷 Oi's Pick

A new wine bistro that offers a warm and friendly atmosphere. Unwind either in their stylish downstairs bar, or lounge on cozy leather seating in the upstairs section with a balcony overlooking a courtyard in an alley. The venue offers a tasty selection of wines from France to South Africa, and a delectable menu of French cuisine.

9A Ngo Van Nam, D1
www.lerendezvousdesaignon.com
6291 0396

The Refinery 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Parisian bistro hidden away in its enclave on Hai Ba Trung is an exceptional venue, making for an elegant repatriation of the sins of the past. It was here in French Colonial days that opium was manufactured, bringing ruin to the people of Asia; it is here that a far softer side of the French culture now exercises its influence over present-day Saigon, serving modern European cuisine in its tastefully decorated dining area and airy outdoor patio.

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 7667
www.therefinerysaigon.com

Ty Coz 🍷 Oi's Pick

An unpretentious venue focused only on serving great cuisine. Ty Coz provides a fine balcony view of the cathedral, intimate atmosphere, and affordable prices.

178/4 Pasteur, D1
3822 2457
www.tycozsaigon.com

Vatel Saigon Restaurant

This is a fine, well-managed, and even luxurious dining venue serving authentic French cuisine in a Franco-Viet design space. There's red carpet along the entrance way, gallery-standard art on the walls, and an overall atmosphere of refinement and good service.

120 bis Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
08 5404 2220
vatelsaigon.com

indian

Ashoka

Ashoka is one of the city's most popular and enduring Indian restaurants with a reputation for good food with a wide range of North Indian culinary dishes at a reasonable price. Large space for private parties, outdoor catering and free home delivery also available. Special set lunch veg/non-veg from VND90,000 upwards. Promotion (free trip to Cambodia) and discount available for people booking in groups.

17/10 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 1372
www.ashokavietnam.com

Baba's Kitchen 🍷 Oi's Pick

Baba's Kitchen, also known as the best

Indian restaurant on Bui Vien, is familiar among expats and locals alike, rating 4.5 out of five stars on Trip Advisor. Their vindaloo is a must try.

164 Bui Vien, D1
3838 6661
www.babaskitchen.in
11am - 11pm

Bombay Indian Restaurant

Located in D1 near the Ben Thanh Market area, serving Indian & Halal cuisine. The ambiance is relaxed thanks to Bombay's easy-going, family kitchen vibe.

57-59 Ham Nghi, D1
9am - 10.30pm

Ganesh

Ganesh serves authentic northern Indian tandooris & rotis along with the hottest curries, dandas, and vada from the southern region.

15B4 Le Thanh Ton, D1
8223 0173
www.ganeshindianrestaurant.com

Indus Indian

Indus Indian is a relatively new Indian restaurant in Saigon providing all the classic Indian favorites. Operated by a dedicated husband/wife duo, this restaurant specializes in Halal food.

2G Thi Sach, D1
3521 0324

Mumtaz

With bona-fide Indian owners and chefs, authenticity at Mumtaz is guaranteed. While the service and setting is relatively basic, the food is amongst the best of its type in the city in terms of taste alone. The brand has a second branch in Da Nang city if you're ever on holiday and missing your curries.

226 Bui Vien, D1
3837 1767

The Punjabi

Authentic North Indian cuisine prepared in a home-made tandoori oven makes Punjabi a popular spot for budget conscious eaters who crave Indian standbys like spinach naan and chicken tandoori.

40/3 Bui Vien, D1
3508 3777

italian

1960 Presidential Club

1960 Presidential Club is a member-only restaurant with an interior design inspired by Saigon in the 60s. You will experience more traditional style of Italian cuisine with an extensive menu led by chef Franco Buressi.

Floor 22 Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1
www.club1960.vn

Basilico Restaurant

Trattoria-style Italian eatery Basilico specializes in homespun recipes. Contemporary décor, casual ambience, and casual yet attentive Bistro-style service makes it a relaxing dinner venue.

Ground floor, on the Corner of Nguyen Du & Le Van Huu, D1
3520 9099
6.30am - 10.30pm

Capricciosa

You'll find the standards here – pizza, pasta, soups, salads, with a few special dishes such as calamari and onion in squid ink sauce. They're all prepared according to strict Japanese standards, and the result is actually really good.

Booth B3-03A, Level B3
Vincin Tower, 70 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3993 9786
www.capricciosa.com.vn

Casa Italia

Italian owned & run, Casa Italia's menu ranges from home-style cooking that includes steaks, seafood, a large variety of homemade pastas, jumbo salads, appetizers and the best pizzas.

86 Le Loi, D1
3824 4286
www.casaitalia.com.vn



Ciao Bella 🍷 Oi's Pick

Hearty home-style Italian food served with flair and excellent service. An extensive menu is complemented with daily specials. Arriving guests are greeted with a free glass of Prosecco. Diners sit in a cozy setting upstairs or on the ground floor for people watching. Big groups should book in advance.

11 Dong Du, D1
3822 3329
15 Dong Du, D1
3823 3597
tonyfox56@hotmail.com
www.saigonrestaurantgroup.com/ciao



Chef Mamma's

Chef Mamma's is located at Saigon's Superbowl Center offering a variety of Italian and Asian food. The restaurant opens from early in the morning until late at night serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.

A43 Truong Son, Tan Binh

Da Vinci's

Da Vinci's is an Italian-American style pizzeria delivery offering pizzas, lasagna, spaghetti, calzones, salads and desserts. Their full menu is online at www.davincisvietnam.com. Free delivery to Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and Phu My Hung.

Open 11am - 10pm.
Call 083 943 4982 or
SMS your order to 093 328 4624

Good Morning Vietnam

Italian restaurant with a unique menu including traditional Italian dishes. The restaurant is conveniently located in a beautiful old house in the heart of Saigon, well integrated in the local architecture.

197 De Tham, D1
3837 1894
www.thegoodmorningvietnam.com



La Bettola

Chef/owner Giuseppe Amorello's combines sleek decor with traditional homecooking in this two-story centrally located Italian eatery. Expect creative dishes such as rucola e Gamberi, and La Bettola that includes shaved porchetta, focaccia and homemade mozzarella. There's a wood-burning oven on the premise and they try to handmake all their ingredients. They also deliver.

84 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4402
www.labettolasaigon.com

La Hostaria

📍🍴
Designed with an intimate atmosphere invoking something like an Italian town, this venue focuses on traditional ethnic Italian cuisine (rather than the ubiquitous pizza and pasta), creations of the skillful executive chef – straight out of Venice. The place lights up on romantic Thursday evenings with candlelight and light music.
17B Le Thanh Ton, DI
3823 1080
www.lahostaria.com

Lucca

📍🍴
A Brooklyn-style Italian eatery upstairs with an adjoining bar. Downstairs is a relaxing cafe offering generous breakfasts, simple cafe fare for lunch and some of the best espresso coffee you'll find in the city.
88 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3915 3692
8am - 11pm

Margherita

📍🍴
Well-reviewed overseas, Margherita is a familiar place to tourists trawling the nooks of Ho Chi Minh City. This is partly a result of its agreeable price, sumptuous Western-style pizzas, English-speaking staff, and more than average customer service.
175/I Pham Ngu Lao, DI
3837 0760

Opera

📍🍴
Located at Park Hyatt Hotel, Opera is a contemporary, casual trattoria-style restaurant that specializes in authentic pizza made fresh from a wood-fired oven, pasta and homemade Italian dishes prepared from one large open kitchen.
Park Hyatt Hotel, 2 Lam Son Square, DI
3520 2357

Pendolasco

There leafy garden is perfect for all those people looking for some fresh air away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It also has a fully air-conditioned dining room. Offers large selection of Italian wines and Italian dishes such as wood fire oven pizzas, pastas, grilled food, among others.
87 Nguyen Hue, DI
www.pendolasco.vn

Pizza 4P's 🍕 Oi's Pick

A little treasure hidden away at the top of an out-of-the-way alley off Le Thanh Ton, this Japanese pizzeria is a major hit with those in the know. Highly attractive premises and some extraordinary toppings catering to all tastes make this an unmissable pizza experience.
8/15 Le Thanh Ton, DI
012 0789 4444
www.pizza4ps.com

Pomodoro

📍🍴
In this family-style, simply-decorated trattoria restaurant with an arched ceiling and an all-brick interior, a fine Italian menu pleases diners with 12 different pizzas along with pasta dishes, parma ham with a spicy tomato chutney, and a highly-recommended French onion soup. Ideal option for a simple, reliable, and thoroughly pleasant night out with no complications.
79 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8998
www.pomodoro-vietnam.com

Sarpino's Pizzeria

📍🍴
Sarpino's Pizzeria provides authentic Italian pizzas made from gourmet ingredients.
125 Ho Tung Mau, DI
www.sarpinos.vn

Scoozi

An Italian restaurant that offers pizza, pasta, salad, special desserts and a wide variety of drinks. Provide dine-in, take away and home delivery services.
6 Thai Van Lung, DI

japanese



Achaya Cafe

📍🍴 CHAYA CAFE
Achaya Cafe have two floors providing a nice atmosphere for meeting, relaxation or party. The menu is extensive with drinks and Western, Japanese, Vietnamese food from sandwiches, spaghetti, pizzas, steak and special Japanese sweet desserts.
90 Le Loi, DI
093 897 2050
11am - 10:30pm

Aka Taiyo

📍🍴
Aka Taiyo serves traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine with an extensive menu featuring more than 200 dishes. Also stocks a surprisingly comprehensive range of Japanese alcoholic beverages.
74B Hai Ba Trung, DI
3824 4295
www.akataiyo.com

Ajisen Ramen

📍🍴
One of the more authentic Japanese venues in the area with ingredients imported from Japan, this restaurant is best-known for its tasty "white" soups. The restaurant serves at least 250 traditional dishes.
120 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, DI
3822 0522

Aki Japanese Restaurant

📍🍴
A small Japanese restaurant with a cozy and comfortable atmosphere, Aki serves over 100 authentic Japanese dishes.
15/9 Le Thanh Ton, DI
3827 9083

Baby Spoon

📍
Famous for its extensive omurice menu (fried rice wrapped inside an egg omelette), Baby Spoon offers contemporary Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Baby Spoon omurice (green bell peppers, bacon, tomato sauce omurice) is the house specialty.
47 Phan Chu Trinh, DI



Blanchy Street 🍕 Oi's Pick

📍
Once hidden upstairs at the Blanchy's Tash bar, Blanchy Street now has its own location in the courtyard of eateries on Hai Ba Trung, offering authentic Japanese food mixed with fusion cuisine and the occasional additional Southeast Asian dish. Run by an ex Nobu (London) chef with his own signature dishes, it has wide appeal. Food is designed to be shared and is backed by an extensive list of sakes and wines.
74/3 Hai Ba Trung, DI
3823 8793
www.blanchystreet.com
11am - 10:30pm

Dragon Hotpot

📍🍴
Dragon Hotpot blends fine taste with the healthy ingredients of Japanese cuisine. Drinks include Japanese favorites along with fine international wines.
122-124 Ho Tung Mau, DI
3825 8842

Dragon Noodle

📍🍴
A rather small but pretty restaurant with warm tones and a nice series of murals depicting old Saigon, Dragon Noodle focuses on the Japanese staple – ramen noodle soups – although their version is a little less spicy than is traditionally served, increasing perhaps the international appeal of the dish. There are a total of four soup bases to accompany the noodles.
29 Dong Du, DI
3521 0008
www.ramen.vn

Dragon Steak

📍🍴
A striking Japanese restaurant tucked away off Saigon's central street, Dragon steak specialises in thick wagyu cuts and tenderloin that could well have been cut off a beast the size of a dragon. They're so enormous that the restaurant once ran a cheeky competition – guests who finished one within half an hour dined free.
138 Ton That Dam, DI
3821 0288
www.steak.vn

Ebisu

📍🍴
Ebisu serves neither sushi nor sashimi – instead, the menu focuses on a range of wholesome charcoal-grilled meals and on thick, white Japanese udon noodles – made from imported udon powder from Australia – and presenting an overall rustic cuisine with a variety of good sakes.
35bis Mac Dinh Chi, DI
3822 6971
ductm@incubation.vn.com
ebisu.vn.asia

Fuji Restaurant

📍🍴
The cuisine is exceptional – fresh seafood and vegetables flown in direct from Japan and Dalat. A preferred venue for those staying at the hotel, and worth trying if you're living local.
Ground Floor, Nikko Hotel Saigon
235 Nguyen Van Cu, DI
3830 8123

Hanayuki

📍🍴
A Japanese-style restaurant on Ton Duc Thang with a sushi bar on the ground floor and a fine mezzanine level, Hanayuki serves more than 200 exquisite Japanese dishes with more than 30 kinds of sushi and sashimi. Private, traditional Japanese VIP rooms are available on the top level.
21C Ton Duc Thang, DI
3824 2754

Ichiban Sushi 🍕 Oi's Pick

Ichiban Sushi Vietnam serves fine sushi and signature drinks/cocktails in a lounge setting.
204 Le Lai, DI
www.ichibansushi.vn

Inaho Restaurant

📍🍴
This unique venue specializes in traditional sushi & sashimi as well as hot pot dishes. Couples can retreat to the

upstairs area; it's far more private than the downstairs bar.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, DI
3829 0326

K Cafe

📍🍴
K Cafe Sushi is a large Japanese restaurant; an ideal place to gather for a business lunch or for a social dinner.
74A4 Hai Ba Trung, DI
38245355
www.yakatabune-saigon.com

Kissho

Experienced chefs prepare teppanyaki, sushi, and yakiniku dishes before your eyes. In addition, an extensive wine list is available as well as an array of fine sake to complement the exquisite flavors of premium imported meat and seafood.
14 Nguyen Hue, DI
www.kissho.wmctvietnam.com

Kuru Kuru Shushi

A Japanese restaurant that features a rotating conveyor belt for the buffet, offering 50 different selections. It also offers an a la carte menu.

129 Nguyen Du, DI
www.kurukuru.com.vn

Kokekokko Pandora

📍
Kokekokko is a combination of modern style fast food with the essence of ancient Japanese cuisine. The restaurant space is designed with high quality materials and features youthful and modern dynamic subtleties. With prices under VND100,00 Kokekokko is a must see.
4th Floor Pandora, 1/1 Truong Chinh, Tan Phu
3849 6840
www.rokekoko.com.vn

La Fenetre Soleil

📍🍴
Glass tables with mosaic tiles and wooden floors set off large comfy sofas and high ceilings, and diners can look out over the busy Ly Tu Trong though 11 large French windows. Its sense of personality attracts artistically-inclined expats to return often, and many of these profess it as their favourite hangout in Saigon. Cuisine is Japanese-Vietnamese fusion.
44 Ly Tu Trong, DI
3824 5994

Mus Mus

📍
Customers choose a total of twelve ingredients from the selection on offer, which are then added to a bowl of boiling broth on the tabletop. Flavours are essentially Japanese seafood.
117 Vo Van Tan, DI
3930 9185
www.musmus.net

Osaka Ramen

📍🍴
Traditional Japanese noodle restaurant offering traditional Ramen dishes as well as Japanese/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.
67 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, DI
10am - 10pm

Robata Dining An

The restaurant has a downstairs bar and a second floor with private rooms that have sunken tables, sliding fusuma doors and tabletop barbecues. Popular with the Japanese expats, the menu serves up healthy appetizers, rolls, sashimi and An specialty dishes like deep fried chicken with garlic salt sauce An style (VND100,000).
15C Le Thanh Ton, DI
www.robata-an.com

Sakura Vietnamese-Japanese Restaurant

📍🍴
Cozy, friendly and modern Japanese

restaurant near all of the attractions in the city center.

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
6291 1036
sakurasaku.vn

Sumo BBQ



Sumo BBQ is a rising star amongst Japanese venues in Saigon, offering smokeless table BBQ and a unique buffet/a la carte concept: get whatever you want from the menu, as much as you like. Free birthday beer specials on arrangement.

300 Le Van Sy, Tan Binh
3991 4757
sumobbq.com.vn
10.30am - 10.30pm

Sushi Bar



There are plenty of dining spaces – large and small rooms, floor-level Japanese dining on tatami mats, private areas, and the eponymous large sushi bar on the ground level.

2 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3823 8042
www.sushibar-vn.com

Sushi Dining Aoi



Sushi Dining Aoi is one such restaurant, where the whole atmosphere of the place evokes the best of the culture. With its typical Japanese-style decor – the smooth earthen tones of the wooden furniture and surrounds, the warmth and privacy of the VIP rooms – it's possible to believe you're in a more elegant realm.

53-55 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3
3930 0039
www.sushidiningaoi.com

Sushi World



A four-storey restaurant in a Japanese-style, the first and second floors feature an open sushi bar, while the upper levels contain 15 VIP rooms decorated in a traditional Japanese style with tatami matting.

28 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3911 0147
www.sushiworld.com.vn

Tokyo Deli



Tokyo Deli's menu consists of a wide range of distinctive and delicious meals, prepared by specialists to create pure Japanese flavor. The menu is always being changed and improved.

240 Le Thanh Ton, D1
5404 2244
tokyodeli.com.vn

Uraetoi BBQ Restaurant



Uraetoi serves yakiniku grill, a variant of the popular Korean dish bulgogi. The restaurant itself is attractively done, with a nod to feng shui in its selective placement of ponds and rocky pathways outside.

6673 9373

Vicki's Teppanyaki & BBQ



It provides a fusion of Asian cuisines with dishes from Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. Their menu is interesting and diverse, with many delectable seafood options.

42 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3823 3232
vickis.com.vn

Vietnam Monde

Good for receptions, team meetings, relaxation, family dining, banquet

and other special occasions. The recommended dishes include Kobe beef imported from Japan, Tepan Steak, Sashimi and Sushi. Average price per person is between VND100,000 to VND300,000.

7bis Korea Sailing, Ben Nghe Ward, D1
0838220187

Vui Vui

Vui Vui is a Japanese restaurant specializing in barbecue and Japanese-style hot pot. Offers a variety of set lunches including Yakiudon, Kimuchi Pokka, Sukiyaki and Purukogi. The restaurant has two floors with each floor accommodating approximately 100 guests.

125A Tran Quoc Thao, D3
www.vuivui.net.vn

Wainosuke

Wainosuke is a Japanese and Italian style restaurant. It serves food such as pastas, salads and steaks to name a few and wine from traditional Japanese to premium Italian wine.

37 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3821 4016
www.wainosuke-vn.asia

Yoshino



The decor is straight out of the set of Shogun, with black wood, tatami mats, stencilled cherry blossoms and all the trappings of Japanese exoticism – tastefully done. While Ho Chi Minh City is certainly not short of fine Japanese eateries, this one is particularly impressive.

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D1
3823 3333

Yuki



Yukie is a popular Japanese restaurant located in the backpacker area of District 1. Offering authentic Japanese cuisine at affordable prices.

99 Nguyen Thai Hoc, D1
3824 2754

korean

Dae Jang Gum

All the theatrics of a traditional Korean experience are part of the service at Dae Jang Gum, named after an historic figure, but more pertinently after a wildly popular Korean drama focusing on her life – photos from the series appear throughout the venue. From waitresses in hanboks to vast plates of kimchi, this is the most authentic introduction to the cuisine available outside of District 7.

1st Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza
39 Le Duan, D1
3825 7974
www.daejanggum.vn

Hana Restaurant



Japanese-Korean fusion in the heart of D1. Hana has contemporary decor with a private, open feel. Its broad menu includes both cooked and raw fish in addition to traditional hot pot with fish eggs, rice and vegetables.

8 Cao Ba Quat, D1
3829 5588
9am - 10pm

Mi Han Quoc



This franchise has gained popularity in Ho Chi Minh City for having successfully adapted the spiciness of Korean cuisine to the local Vietnamese palate, serving perfectly balanced noodle dishes.

92 Ham Nghi, D1

3914 1565

www.mihanquocvn.com
8am - 11pm

Mr. BBQ – Korean Chicken & Hof



This unusual Korean import famous for extraordinarily spicy chicken is an odd phenomenon on the HCMC culinary landscape, serving up a version of KFC that's actually painful. Lovers of spicy food rejoice. The restaurant itself is clean and modern in design, and there are another 50 Korean dishes on offer beyond the signature dish, including some tasty bibimbap mixed rice dishes.

20 Ho Huan Nghiep, D1
3823 9000

Seoul House



Seoul House is a well-known two-story Korean restaurant with a simple, cozy atmosphere. Its menu contains Korean favorites like Banchan, hotpots, grilled meat, clay pot mixed rice, and kim chi tofu soup.

33 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3829 4297

steakhouses

Au Lac do Brazil



Serving Saigon for more than 10 years, Au Lac do Brazil is the very first authentic Brazilian Churrascaria in Vietnam, bringing a new dining concept - an "All you can eat" Brazilian style BBQ where meat is brought to your table on skewers by a passador and served to your heart's content. They have an extensive selection of fine wines as well.

HO CHI MINH CITY

Au Lac do Brazil I
238 Pasteur, D3
(08) 3820 7157
HA NOI

Au Lac do Brazil II
6A Cao Ba Quat, Ba Dinh
(04) 3845 5224

For Banquet & Catering
Call or email
pr@aulacdobrazil.com
090 947 8698
www.aulacdobrazil.com
www.facebook.com/aulacdobrazil

Corso Steakhouse and Bar



Corso Steakhouse and Bar operates under an open kitchen concept, bringing together an exciting menu of Asian and European dishes with a focus on grilling. Guests can choose from a wide variety of wines and spirits.

117 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3829 5368
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

Dragon Steak



Specializing in generous portions of Wagyu cuts; they're so enormous that the restaurant runs a cheeky competition - finish one within half an hour, and it's free.

138 Ton That Dam, D1
3821 0288
www.steak.vn
11am - late

El Gaucho

Serves great Argentinean steaks, hamburgers and more. A great place to entertain clients or friends from overseas. With outlets in Hanoi and Bangkok too.

5D Nguyen Sieu, D1
38251879
www.elgaucho.asia



Indaba Restaurant

Indaba Steakhouse combines German style steak and Italian coffee under one roof. Expect a fusion dishes like Indaba Spring Rolls, Mexican BBQ Spare Ribs, and Grilled Duck Breast served with sesame sauce, steamed rice and salad. The quaint and cozy restaurant is decorated in soft hues of red and black, complemented with soft jazz music. A German Viet Kieu with experience in restaurants in Germany helms the kitchen.

35 Ly Tu Trong, D1
www.facebook.com/indabacafe
Contact them at 3824 8280 or visit
www.facebook.com/indabasteakhouse

New York Steakhouse



While situated in a fairly laid-back area, New York Steakhouse is definitely in the upmarket category and serves exclusive American imported beef dishes, with a whole range of steaks from rib eye, New York strip steak, and tenderloin being popular options.

25-27 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
3823 7373
www.steakhouse.com.vn

Pho 99 🍴 Oi's Pick



Not a traditional steakhouse per se, but Pho 99 is known for its excellent filet mignon steaks made out of Cu Chi beef. Also serves great pho.

139 Nguyen Trai, D1
3925 2791

Samba Brazilian Steakhouse



This is certainly Saigon's most visible and colourful restaurant serving the popular Brazilian buffet style, where enormous skewers of meat are circulated around the tables for diners to enjoy as much of as they can.

10C Thai Van Lung, D1
3822 0079
www.samba.vnnhahang.com

Wild Horse Salon



Cowboy-themed western steakhouse with an impressive exterior on trendy Thai Van Lung, Wild Horse serves high-quality Tex Mex/American cuisine with enormous servings.

8A/1D1 Thai Van Lung, D1
3825 1901

thai

Golden Elephant



A cozy and relaxing Thai style restaurant, serving an extensive collection of Thai specialties including noodles, curries, rice, stir-fries, soups, and a good range of seafood.

34 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3822 8554

Jasmine Thai



A quiet, candle-lit affair complete with the ethereal tones of traditional music,

guests can enjoy variations on dishes prepared in the Thai culinary tradition.

85 Quoc Huong, D2
35190038
5pm - 9.30pm Tue-Sun

Koh Thai



Stunning Thai-chic decor and unique Siam cuisine make Koh Thai one of Saigon's most authentic and memorable Thai restaurants. Located in the Intercontinental complex, Koh Thai serves Asian inspired cocktails in a trendy lounge environment with chill music.

1st floor, 39 Le Duan, D1
3823 4423
091 233 9138
www.kohthai.com.vn
11am - 10pm Daily

Lac Thai



Lac Thai is a large, three-floor restaurant offering a wide range of Thai cuisine with signature dishes like Pad Thai, Tom Yum Koong, Chicken Satay and many others.

71/2 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 7506

Mai Thai



Mai Thai is a Thai restaurant offering an extensive menu with many Thai favorites. This two-storey restaurant features traditional decorations and friendly service.

13 Ton That Thiep, D1

Malee Thai



A cute, central Thai venue decked out in royal purple decor, Malee is an intimate restaurant serving a wide range of consistently tasty dishes, although without the full effect of Thai cuisine's signature burn.

37 Dong Du, D1

Spice



Spice Thai restaurant has been a favorite among the locals in Saigon since 2003. This multicultural eatery offers Thai food & seafood in a décor fusing Oriental & Mediterranean artifacts.

27C Le Quy Don, D3
www.spicevn.com

Thai Express



Thai Express is the world's largest Thai restaurant chain. Enjoy fantastically authentic Thai cuisine at reasonable prices in a relaxed, contemporary atmosphere.

8A Le Thanh Ton, D1
6299 1338
www.thaieexpress.com.vn

vietnamese

3T Quan Nuong



With hanging oil lamps and wooden statues lining the stairs, this venue above the Temple Bar has a touch more atmosphere than most of its kind, but the otherwise simple décor with bamboo tables and chairs are fitting enough. The broad barbecue grill menu features classics of its kind.

Top Floor, 29 Ton That Hiep, D1
3821 1631

An Khue Quan



Serving a well-selected series of dishes from both northern and southern regions of Vietnam in an area where international diners are likely to be in abundance – and therefore well attuned to the foreign palate.

92B Le Lai, D1

An Vietnamese Bistro



An Restaurant offers exquisite dishes

from the North, Central, and South of Vietnam, served by well-trained waiters and waitresses dressed in traditional Southern clothing.

71/5-6 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

Banh Xeo 46A



Although known for a wide range of Vietnamese specialties, the local pancake stuffed with herbs and prawns is its tastiest dish.

46A Dinh Cong Trang, D1

Banh Xeo An La Ghien



The fare on offer is traditional Vietnamese, specialising in the Banh Xeo filled egg pancake, a favourite with foreigners with its light crispy shell and fragrant herbs and meats inside the pancake pocket.

74 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
www.banhxeoanlaghien.com.vn/en

Barbecue Garden



The venue features all open-air dining and the atmosphere is distinctly festival-like, relaxing, and casual, becoming congenially boisterous in the evenings. The restaurant specializes in Western-Vietnamese fusion dishes such as beef with cheese, 5-spices beef, squid with satay sauce, and shrimp kebabs.

134-136 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3823 3763
135A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3823 3340
www.barbecuegarden.com

Beefsteak Nam Son

This local steak restaurant specialises in Vietnamese-style iron-plate meat dishes rather than the American steaks often popular with expats – but while these two varieties have their differences, the local version of the dish has a fresh, light character and is served with some good, delicate Vietnamese sauces.

188 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3930 3917
www.namsonsteak.com

Binh An Village

Open every day for dining and other banqueting services, Binh An Village serves traditional country cuisine such as in house fried spring rolls, fresh lotus shrimp salad, selective grilled seafood and meats served with sticky pineapple rice. A jazz band is available for booking for private functions. It also offers special arrangements such as a Saigon boat cruise, DJ, traditional Vietnamese folklore music and more.

1163 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh

Bonbon

Offers authentic Vietnamese cuisines as well as a modern global menu. It boasts hand-selected steaks and a world-class wine list. The restaurant is designed to be multi-functional, with the ability to continually change the layout and atmosphere for high-end group events, intimate romance or casual dinners.

Kumho Building, 39 Le Duan, D1

Bo Ne Le Hong



Bo Ne Le Hong is a popular Vietnamese restaurant specializing in beefsteak. It has a rich, diverse menu, and also offer fresh fruit juices.

489/27/39 Huynh Van Banh, Phu Nhuan

Bo Nong

This performance venue features a traditional cultural show with Vietnamese cuisine. Established by Frenchmen Thibault Detraz and Jeremy Gremillet, who aim to bring the French passion for fusing live entertainment with dining.

143 Nguyen Trai, D1
www.bo-nong.com

Bun Sai Gon



This franchise positions itself firmly in the local market with the slogan 'the bun noodles of the Vietnamese people' – indicating a concerted dedication to the authenticity of its noodle soup staples.

73 Ly Tu Trong, D1
6276 2609
www.bunsaiгон.com.vn

Cha Ca La Vong

This venue only serves Cha Ca, a traditional Hanoian dish. Cha Ca is a salad made out of pieces of fish and spring onion stir-fried in a hotpot.

36 Ton That Thiep, D1

Cuc Gach Quan

This Vietnamese venue serves traditional, country-style foods, a mixture of street food dishes made with fine ingredients together with a selection of more contemporary options.

10 Dang Tat, D1
3848 0144

Five Oysters

Serves local cuisine with an emphasis on seafood and beers starting at VND10,000. Open daily from 9am until late.

090 30 12123
www.facebook.com/FiveOysters

Ganh



With green suspended lanterns, simple and elegant furnishings, all touched off with bamboo baskets of fruit, flowers, and reed grass, the atmosphere is just as smooth and well-defined as a more modern-styled venue.

58/4 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 5243
www.nemnuongganh.com
Gold Fish



Gold Fish offers a slice of authentic Vietnam with a genuinely rural cuisine.

73 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
www.goldfish.vn

Grillbar - Eatery & Cafe

A new trendy kitchen and cozy restaurant with the concept of taking traditional Vietnamese charcoal grilled street food and serving it in a New York style cafe.

122 Le Thanh Ton, D1
www.grillbar.com.vn

Highway 4



The menu reflects the ambience of the north and wider Vietnam, although dishes are carefully selected to meet a more universal palate.

101 Vo Van Tan, D3
www.highway4.com

Hoa Tuc



Set in what used to be Saigon's opium refinery, Hoa Tuc serves up contemporary Vietnamese cuisine in a Parisian, art-deco atmosphere.

74 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3825 1676
www.hoatuc.com

Hoang Yen

Try some of the country's delicacies in a modern yet inviting atmosphere. The eatery's various clay pots are flavorful; some feature mam, a delicious fermented fish paste.

7-9 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
148 Hai Ba Trung, D1
Parkson Hung Vuong, Third Floor, Hung Vuong Plaza, An Duong Vuong, D5
CRI- 12, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.hoangyencuisine.com

Hum

Hum is a vegetarian restaurant where food are prepared on site from various fresh beans, nuts, vegetables, flowers,

and fruits. Food are complemented with special drinks mixed from fresh fruits and vegetables.

2 Thi Sach, D1
3823 8920
www.hum-vegetarian.vn

Khoai Restaurant

Specializes in dishes from Nha Trang.

3A Le Quy Don, D3
www.rhoairestaurant.com

Lang Viet 🍷 Oi's Pick

Lang Viet combines water puppet theater with Vietnamese northern cuisine. There are two performances in the evening (5pm and 6:16pm) and last for 45 minutes, with an option of a la carte dining, set menu or buffet afterwards. During the day, the restaurant serves breakfast and lunch, starting at 10am to 2pm. Their sister restaurant, Pho Xua, was once visited by Former President Bill Clinton in 2000.

36 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
3829 9266
www.langvietxua.com

Lemongrass



The vibe aims at a harmony between modern styling and the Vietnamese traditional arts, and the dining room with its tile floors and wooded wainscoting effects a comforting natural environment.

4 Nguyen Thiep, D1

Luong Son



Exotic beer garden style eatery famous for its barbecue beef. Luong Son also serves fear factor items such as scorpions, grubs, ostrich meat and crickets.

31 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3825 1330
www.facebook.com/LuongSonQuan

Nam Phan

Nam Phan is a 200 seat restaurant that is accents Vietnamese cuisine with live classical music.

34 Vo Van Tan, D3

Nam Phat Restaurant



A Vietnamese restaurant that specializes in hosting social events such as weddings and business conferences. Traditional Vietnamese cuisine is the specialty with prices ranging from VND100,000 - VND300,000. The setting is of an elegant banquet hall.

21 Nguyen Trung Ngan, D1
3910 6488
nhahangnamphat@gmail.com

Marina Saigon



Marina Saigon is one of the leading seafood restaurants in Ho Chi Minh City. This restaurant provides a luxurious environment with French/Vietnamese fusion cuisine.

172 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3930 2379

Maxim's Nam An



Large and lavishly decorated, Maxim's Nam An restaurant serves Vietnamese cuisine in style. The carved wooden booths, completed with silk curtains, are a romantic hideaway for couples or small groups.

13-15-17 Dong Khoi, D1

Mitau

Mitau creates a gathering place for those who love Hue cuisine. The interior includes memorabilia, statues, bric and brac and golf trophies.

52 Hai Ba Trung, D1
3823 0767
www.mitauhue.com

Nghi Xuan



Decorated as a high-class traditional Vietnamese mansion, Nghi Xuan is

perfectly fitting for a venue serving the finest of Vietnam's classical cuisine – the imperial dishes of Hue. Service is courteous, fast, and quintessentially elegant.

5/9 Nguyen Sieu, D1
3823 0699
nghixuanrestaurant.com

Nha Hang Ngon

Famous restaurant serving easy Vietnamese cuisine to foreigners and tourists with more than 400 traditional dishes.

160 Pasteur, D1
3827 7131
www.quananngon.com.vn
8am - 10pm

Papaya Restaurant 🍌 Oi's Pick

A petite, clean, and brightly-coloured Vietnamese restaurant with simple décor serving a light, healthy, northern-style cuisine. There's no fuss in the layout here – green walls with black & white artworks, brown wooden furnishings, and lanterns above every table make for a very pleasant atmosphere – and it's casual without being messy, and refined without any trace of pretentiousness.

68 Pham Viet Chan, Binh Thanh
6258 1508
papaya@chi-nghia.com
www.chi-nghia.com

Pho 2000

Pho 2000's Ben Thanh Market branch was famously visited by former US President Bill Clinton in 2000. The chain serves up variations on pho as well as noodle and rice dishes.

4 Phan Chu Trinh, D1
3822 2788
6am - 10pm

Pho 24

PHO24 is a popular Vietnamese noodle restaurant chain with 70 outlets across Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia.

71-73 Dong Khoi, D1
3825 7505

Propaganda Bistro

Offers Vietnamese cuisine such as spring rolls and Vietnamese street food with a Western twist. Serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The restaurant features hand-painted wall murals.

21 Han Thuyen, D1
3822 9048
www.facebook.com/Propaganda-Saigon

Quan Bui Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine

Leafy green roof garden, upmarket restaurant with reasonable prices and a wide menu of choices. Open style kitchen advertises its cleanliness. Designer interior with spot lighted pictures and beautiful cushions give an oriental luxurious feeling – augmented by dishes served on earthenware crockery.

17a Ngo Van Nam, D1
3829 1515
(deliveries: 3602 2241 or 091 400 8835)

Quan An Ngon

Quan An Ngon appeals easily to tourists and local people alike in its unique concept: presenting the diversity of Vietnamese cuisine from different regions in a village market style. The restaurant is set in a large new building, which from its external yellow appearance is reminiscent of an old European villa; but inside its space is designed as an ancient Hue ruong house.

138 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D1
3827 9666
www.quanngon138.com

Royal Revolving Restaurant

The Royal Revolving Restaurant is a unique restaurant experience. Experience

stunning views of the city while you spin around in the sky. The restaurant offers more than 50 Hong Kong inspired dishes and a bar that serves coffee and cocktails.

9th Floor, 12D Cach Mang Thang Tam, D1
3823 2232

Saigon Vegan

Saigon Vegan is located in a casual and inviting space with high ceilings, dark wood tables, and lots of natural light. Guests can choose from over 100 vegan dishes, all of which are either soy or vegetable based.

378/3 Vo Van Tan, D3
3834 4473

SH Garden restaurant

Established in the 1930s, the Terrace restaurant is located at the corner of two of the oldest boulevards of Saigon, Nguyen Hue and Le Loi, where romantic memories of Saigon float around. This restaurant offers a variety of delicious traditional Vietnamese dishes.

4th floor, 98 Nguyen Hue, D1
6680 0188
shgarden.com.vn

Song Ngu

There are eight different rooms capable of seating a total of 350-400 guests, each warmly-lit with dark wooden furnishings. On a small stage, a traditional chamber orchestra with ladies wearing classical Ao dai costumes perform Vietnamese music on genuine old instruments.

70 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
3832 5017

Temple Club

Usually regarded as one of central Saigon's most authentically Vietnamese venues, this historic and good-looking features classic Indochinese decor, broadly interpreted as a blend of the old French colonial style with pan-Asian graces that appeal more to Asian exoticism than reflect actual Vietnamese styles. With antique furnishings and ceiling fans, the atmosphere is certainly pretty.

29-31 Ton That Thiep, D1
3829 9244
templeclub.com.vn

Thanh Nien Restaurant

With its attractive home-style layout, pretty garden for outdoor dining, and warm, yellow-toned interior for the buffet, it's a charming venue for tourists and a familiar favourite for long-timers. It's intentionally decorated like a private home, walls decorated with floral artworks, and the garden surrounded by bamboo.

11 Nguyen Van Chiem, D1
3822 5909
www.vnnavi.com/restaurants/thanhvien

Thang Bom Quan

Serves hot pot and special style BBQ.

49 Phu Duc Chinh, D1

Tib Restaurant

This fine Vietnamese Hue-style restaurant looks almost like a temple, and it's considered one of the city's premier settings serving imperial cuisine.

187 Hai Ba Trung, D3
3829 7242
www.tibrestaurant.com.vn

Tin Nghia

A charming little venue serving vegetarian cuisine. Its quaint appearance hides the fact that it was the first international vegetarian restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City and an important center of the city's vegetarian culture.

9 Tran Hung Dao, D1
3821 2538

Vietnam House

Vietnam House is a high quality restaurant specializing in both local Vietnamese and international cuisine. This restaurant is set in a restored French colonial house offering stunning views of the street.

93-95 Dong Khoi, D1
3829 1623
www.vietnamhousesaigon.com

{other} asian

Crawfish King

Crawfish King serves special menus with crawfish, lobster, mantis shrimp, American-style chicken wings, oysters, fruit beer, sea urchin and more. Offers free delivery for customers in D1 and D3.

63 Truong Dinh, D1
6272 7888
www.facebook.com/crawfishking63
7am - 12am

Lion City

This is a Singaporean franchise to watch with interest – since its humble beginnings in 2006 with the rather more unpleasant name Singapore Frog Porridge, it has risen in strength to become the most prominent representative of the cuisine in the city, and its growth has continued to be remarkable.

45 Le Anh Xuan, D1
3823 8371
www.lioncityrestaurant.com

Little Manila

An eatery with indoor and outdoor seating serving your craving for Filipino cuisine such as the famous adobo, pansit (dried noodles), breakfast combinations like Longsilog (combination of longanisa (Filipino sausage), egg and fried rice), Tosilog (tocino, egg and fried rice) and more.

Ground Floor, Citiplaza, 230 Nguyen Trai, D1

S2-1 Hung Vuong 2, Phu My Hung, D7

5410 0812

Long Monaco

Long Monaco operates throughout the city under various brand names – this outlet is a standalone restaurant in the busy Etown office complex in Tan Binh district. You'll probably only visit if you're working nearby or visiting on official business, but you'll find the restaurant serves some great Asian business lunches.

Ground Floor, Etown 1
364 Cong Hoa, Tan Binh
www.longmonaco.com.vn

western/international

27 Grill

27 Grill is an open kitchen run by Danish chefs Casper Gustafsen and Camilla Bailey and is known for its steaks. It also offers a spectacular view of the city.

Opens from 5:30pm - 11pm.
Rooftop, AB Tower, 76A Le Lai, D1
www.chillsaigon.com

Al Fresco's

Offering a mix of Tex-Mex, Italian, and Australian food along with cold local & imported beers and a wine list featuring Australia's finest whites along with affordable South American reds.

16 Nguyen Thi Nghia, D1
3926 0036
www.alfrescosgroup.com
8.30am - 11pm

Au Parc

It's only fitting that this Mediterranean-styled restored villa with its original tiles, old window frames, plush cushions, and opium-themed art collection sits in one of the most gorgeous streets of central Saigon. Au Parc is an unforgettable venue with a décor that manages to simultaneously capture the grace of the old Colonial architecture and the mood of west-Asian exoticism that transfixed Europe in the Romantic period.

23 Han Thuyen, D1
3829 2772

Bahdja

Algerian restaurant serving north African delights such as couscous, tajines and desserts. Unique Mechoui set dinner is a popular choice and perfect for groups (available with prior notice).

87-89-91 Ho Tung Mau, D1
093 787 2010 (French, Arabic, English, Finnish)

Ben Style 🍌 Oi's Pick

Every sandwich comes wrapped with a label that displays its calories, protein, fat and carbohydrates content. A 544-calorie Cheesy tofu meatballs sandwich costs VND80,000 while a 281-calorie Chicken salad sets you back VND50,000. The chicken jumbo sandwich comes with a massive 638 calories, 59 grams of protein and 62 grams of carbohydrates, but only 16 grams of fat. Ben also offers meal plans for those who want to get fit and bulk up.

302 Co Bac, D1
090 691 2730

Beirut

Offers Lebanese and Mediterranean food with belly dancers every night from 8:30pm to 10pm and Latino dancers from 10pm to midnight.

74/13D Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.beirut.com.vn

Black Cat Restaurant

Originally envisioned as a fast food Vietnamese sandwich place, Black Cat Saigon now serves international food with a focus on burgers, most famously its "Big Cheese" featuring 500g of beef.

13 Phan Van Dat, D1
3829 2955
www.blackcatsaigon.com

Chuck's

Chuck's offers American comfort food like pancakes, omelets, burritos, fries, tacos, burgers and hotdogs.

27 Tran Nhat Duat, D1

Crab Pot

Crab Pot is a beer and seafood restaurant serving breakfasts, lunches and dinners of American, French, Seafood and Vietnamese cuisines, with delivery and catering services also.

65 Pham Ngoc Thach 6, D3

Gartenstadt

Gartenstadt serves German cuisine including sausage, sauerbraten, and pork knuckle. Known amongst locals and expats for its long teakwood bar, Gartenstadt is home to imported Schneider Weisse and Krombacher beer, as well as a large collection of choice schnapps. Private dining options are available on the second floor, including balcony seating overlooking scenic Dong Khoi Street.

34 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 3623

Hog's Breath Café

An Australian family diner and bar

concept. Renowned for quality steaks, seafood and other western fare served in an informal environment. Smoke-free indoors.
Ground Floor, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu, D1
www.hogsbreathcafe.com.vn

Jaspas Wine & Grill 🍷 Oi's Pick

Jaspas Wine and Grill provides an extensive wine list along with many "reinvented" Jaspas dishes, new creations, and mouthwatering steaks. Japas also offers a wide array of delectable dessert options.
74/7 Hai Ba Trung, D1



MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Khoi Thom

Khoi Thom - "fragrant smoke" in English - is a unique venue, set in a bright, colourful al fresco decor inspired by renowned architect Ricardo Legoretta. A long way from Mexico, Chef Alejandro Torres's menu blends "Cocina Potosina" and timeless Mexican classics.
29 Ngo Thoi Nhiem, D3
www.khoithom.com

La Fenetre Soleil

La Fenetre Soleil, literally means 'window to the sun', showcases a fusion of Old World fittings such as exposed bricks, antique furniture and chandeliers with New World elements such as fur cushions and mosaic tiled and glass tables. Serves a range of cocktails, imported beer, coffee and smoothies together with a Japanese-Vietnamese fusion menu.
4 Ly Tu Trong, D1

La Habana

Offering authentic Spanish cuisine and a wide choice of tapas, as well as Cuban cocktails, La Habana is a den of Cuban-Spanish inspired architecture located on inner-city Cao Ba Quat.
6 Cao Ba Quat, D1
www.lahabana-saigon.com

Ly Club

Often used as a venue for gatherings, networking meetings, and events where an air of wealth and sophistication is useful, Ly Club is a sure bet for making an impression on a date or business lunch. Built into a traditional French villa with wide elliptical arches, the atmosphere of naked opulence persists throughout the property.
143 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
www.lyclub.vn

Margherita

For some, Margherita doubles as an unofficial expat rendezvous, partly a result of its agreeable prices and sumptuous Western-style pizzas and foods.
175/1 Pham Ngu Lao, D1

Market 39

Market 39 showcases seven interactive live show kitchens, featuring a la carte all-day dining and an extensive buffet selection served daily during breakfast,

lunch and dinner
 Ground floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan 3520 9099
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Mogambo Bar & Grill

Mogambo is a dark, African-styled restaurant with some of the finest US & Tex-Mex and exceptional burgers.
50 Pasteur, D1
3825 1311

MZ Wine & Restaurant

MZ has a wine cellar featuring wines from the Old World to the New World. The restaurant serves Asian and Western cuisine with beefsteak and lamb dishes as the most suggested ones. Piano and violin artists perform daily from 7:30pm-9:30pm. Special arrangements like a live band and decorations are available upon requests.
56A Bui Thi Xuan, D1
3925 5258
www.m-zing.com

Pacharan - Tapas & Bodega

The city's best-known Spanish restaurant with a sports bar on the ground floor, two floors of dining space, and an open rooftop deck for cocktails and live music. Serving tapas, paella, and an extensive Iberian wine list.
97 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Parkview

Located within New World Saigon Hotel, Parkview is a sophisticated restaurant with a view of the adjacent 23 September Park. Their buffets feature both Asian and international favorites along with local and imported fish, oysters, prawns, shrimps and snails. Every Sunday, the brunch buffet offers a fine fare including rotisserie and steak specialties, with an ice bar serving up sushi and sashimi.
New World Saigon Hotel
76 Le Lai Street, D1
3822 8888
saigon@newworldhotels.com
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Pasha

Serving Turkish and Mediterranean cuisine, the kitchen is headed by Chef Ismet with over 30 years of experience in similar restaurants.
25 Dong Du, D1
www.pasha.com.vn

Quán Ut Ut

Quán Ut Ut is Saigon's newest restaurant hotspot. Specialties include American BBQ, cashew-smoked pork ribs and burgers alongside fresh draft and imported beer. Open daily from 4pm til midnight.
168 Vo Van Kiet, D1
www.quanutut.com
3914 4500

Reflections

Reflections Restaurant is a fine dining restaurant with a menu that draws inspiration from every corner of the globe. It holds events showcasing Michelin-star Chefs, wine pairing dinners and other culinary luminaries.
Level 3, Caravelle Hotel, 19-23 Lam Son Square, D1

Saffron 🍷 Oi's Pick

The first thing that will strike you when you enter Saffron is the terracotta pots. Located 50 meters from Ciao Bella, a popular Italian restaurant on Dung Du, this restaurant offers Mediterranean food, some with a distinct Asian influence added for further uniqueness. Guests are welcomed with

complimentary Prosecco, fresh baked bread served with garlic, olive tapenade and hummus.
51 Hai Ba Trung, D1
382 48358

Shri

Shri offers unparalleled panoramic views of the city. Menu offers a broad range of dishes to suit most tastes with modern European styled starters, mains and desserts as well as a wide selection of grills and salads. Wine list consists currently of over 270 bins with selections from both the Old and New World, with France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria as well as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA, Argentina and Chile all represented.
Level 23, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
www.shri.vn

Skewers

An open-air kitchen at the front of the restaurant and a small cigar lounge upstairs set off the atmosphere and mark this venue as one with a unique presence in Saigon. The purely Mediterranean cuisine is appropriately authentic.
9A Thai Van Lung, D1
www.skewers-restaurant.com

Subway

Subway is now in Vietnam, offering its internationally-renowned range of subs sandwiches and cookies. World travelers can expect the same high quality of ingredients regardless of what nation they are visiting.
121 Ho Tung Mau, D1
3914 4118

The Elbow Room

The Elbow Room on Pasteur is an American-style bistro with a long bar, exposed brickwork, white walls, and whirring ceiling fans – making for a casual, contemporary space with an international vibe. More of a diner than a restaurant, Elbow shoots at a cool, relaxed atmosphere, pleasantly decorating its warmly-lit walls with evocative black & white photos and subtle lighting.
52 Pasteur, D1
www.elbowroom.com.vn

The Hungry Pig

A sandwich bar that takes bacon very seriously, The Hungry Pig is a place where you can find bacon, wrapped in fresh-baked bagels and baguettes.
144 Cong Quynh, D1

The Legends Bar & Grill

A drinking and dining destination in Saigon's backpackers' area offering Tex-Mex specialties like nachos, fajitas, burritos, among others, soup, seafood, kebabs, salads, burgers and sandwiches, steaks, chicken dishes, and more. Wide selection of drinks complement the food.
236 Bui Vien, D1

Warda

Warda is a Middle-Eastern style bar and restaurant headed by a renowned Syrian chef. Guests can enjoy authentic middle-eastern cuisine indoors and outdoors while enjoying an almond cigar or shisha.
71/7 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

Xu Restaurant Lounge

The venue is well-known for its pork wantons, bun cha, seared beef crostinis, bo luc lac diced beef and 'Xu-style' chicken rice. Xu is an elegant venue that works as a restaurant or a high-class bar for the upper echelons.
71-75 Hai Ba Trung, D1
www.xusaigon.com

Zest Bistro & Cafe

A casual restaurant featuring an American, French and fusion menu. Located across from the waterfront, just minutes away from the Bach Dang pier, Zest offers diners one of the nicest views in the city.
5 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 5599

Zoom Cafe 🍷 Oi's Pick

Zoom cafe serves Tex-Mex and Vietnamese cuisine as well as running a Vespa tour service from within the cafe.
169A Bui Vien, D1
3920 3897
7am - 2am daily

>>The List District 2

BAKERIES

Sweet and Sour

Offers custom made cakes, pies, tarts, brownies and cupcakes. It welcomes visitors to an open kitchen where they can watch and be a part of what makes its sweets special. Provides catering for special occasions.

AVA Residences, 40/4 Nguyen Van, D2
3519 3167

Voelker

French bakery selling fresh breads, pastries and chocolate
39 Thao Dien, D2
6296 0066
voelker-vietnam.com

BARS

McSorley's

Recently opened Irish pub with a swimming pool and outdoor patio. Serves pub grub with events and theme nights happening regularly.
4 Thao Dien, D2
3519 4659
www.mcsorleys.vn

Papagayo Saigon

A resort-style design and French Mediterranean food are the make-up of this newly opened hangout.
18 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2

Buddha Bar

One of the long standing bars in the area, it has a pool table, darts, big screen tvs along with cheap beers and bar food.
7 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2080

CAFES

Agnes Cafe - Dalat Coffee & Flower Shop

At Agnes Cafe they offer fresh coffee, smoothies and juices along with a delicious breakfast and lunch menu. This quaint and cozy cafe is a perfect place to meet up with friends or just relax to get away from the bustling traffic outside. They offer free delivery.
11A-B Thao Dien, D2

Shalom Coffee

Shalom Coffee is available for all your coffee and chocolate needs, warm snacks, cold refreshments, breakfasts and lunches.
53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
www.coffeeshalom.com

RESTAURANTS

FRENCH

Le Bacoulos

Le Bacoulos is a French restaurant, bar and lounge that serves French cuisine, bar

food like burgers, fish and chips alongside vegetarian options like spinach soup and Greek salad. There's also a garden to unwind in with a glass of wine or enjoy a game of pool.

13 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
3519 4058
www.bacoulos.com

Gastro'home

New delicatessen shop offering western-fusion French food by French chef Stephane Courtin. Visit the shop or try their catering service.

100 Xuan Thuy, D2. 6281 9830

La Villa 🍷 Oi's Pick

This Colonial-style villa set in a quietly gentrified district 2 street is a cache of luxury with its beautiful poolside garden and cosy, scenic white-toned dining room area. Dine outside or in, on an off-the-cuff menu prepared by the French chef, based on the best market ingredients available on the day.

14 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3898 2082
www.lavilla-restaurant.com.vn

***Reviewed in Oi March 2013**

Trois Gourmands

Opened in 2004 and regarded as one of the finest French restaurants in town. Owner Gils, a French native, makes his own cheeses as well.

18 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
3744 4585

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is one of the city's most popular and enduring Indian restaurants with a reputation for good food with a wide range of North Indian culinary dishes at a reasonable price. Large space for private parties, outdoor catering and free home delivery also available. Special set lunch veg/non-veg from VND90,000 upwards. Promotion (free trip to Cambodia) and discount available for people booking in groups.

33 Tong Huu Dinh (Street 53), D2
3744 4177
www.ashokavietnam.com

ITALIAN

Pendolasco – Thao Dien

Expect excellent classic Italian cuisine – wood-fired pizza, spaghetti, and tiramisu – cooked with a focus on fresh flavours and featuring the finest imported ingredients from Italy.

36 Tong Huu Dinh, D2
62532888
www.pendolasco.vn

Sarpino's Pizzeria

Sarpino's Pizzeria is a famous pizza brand from Canada with three branches around Ho Chi Minh City that specializes in pizza, pasta and rice.

43 Thao Dien, D2. 3744 2132

JAPANESE

Tama River-Japanese Restaurant

Bottles of sake fill shelves along the wall behind the sushi bar, and unique Japanese paintings add a nice visual touch. Since opening four months ago, the restaurant has attracted a diverse clientele, from locals to expats.

14E1 Thao Dien, D2
3744 6782

Chisana Hashi

Serves authentic Japanese cuisine including sashimi, sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and shabu shabu.

River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
6683 5308

THAI

Baan Thai



Baan Thai serves authentic Thai cuisine using a considerable variety of tastes and spices prepared by Thai chefs. Generally speaking, the cuisine leans more towards being authentic in taste than serving the more internationalised versions of Thai cuisine available elsewhere.

55 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 5453
www.baanthai-anphu.com

Jasmine Thai



Expect here variations on dishes you'll find throughout the Thai culinary tradition with features more common to those restaurants serving in Western nations.

85 Quoc Huong, D2
3519 0038

VIETNAMESE

Baniam Tree

A fine dining Vietnamese restaurant. Offers a set lunch, set dinner and international breakfast.

River Garden, 170 Nguyen Van Huong, D2

Frangipani Hoa Su

Frangipani Hoa Su offers authentic Vietnamese cuisine with a variety of dishes from different parts of Vietnam ranging from pho, bun bo Hue to mi quang. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. It also has an open space and a VIP air-conditioned room together which can hold a maximum capacity of 500 people, making it an ideal venue for different types of events and functions.

26 Le Van Mien, D2
frangipani.restobar@gmail.com

WESTERN/ INTERNATIONAL

Boathouse 🍷 Oi's Pick

With a great view of the Saigon River, this restobar serves imported steak, healthy salads and much more in an alfresco environment.

40 Lily Road, An Phu Superior Compound, D2; 3744 6790
www.boathouse.com.vn

Blu Bar and Grill



Blu Bar provides a wide range of Asian and Mediterranean specialties for breakfast, lunch, and dinner along with many unique beverage options.

53 Vo Truong Toan, D2
3744 4111
7am - 11pm

Blue Crab 🍷 Oi's Pick

Blue Crab offers delicious seafood – prawns, scallops and lobster, crab, oysters, scallops and many more for rock-bottom prices. All of the seafood is sourced from the same supplier as a number of high-end hotels and restaurants in the city, ensuring the food is fresh and high quality. For meat-lovers there's also a wide range of dishes that include pork ribs and chicken wings. They offer weekly specials as well.

49 Quoc Huong, D2
3744 2008
www.bluecrabsaigon.com

Mekong Merchant

Set in a colonial house within an open-air courtyard surrounding, this restaurant serves delicious pizza, sandwiches, smoothies with an extensive wine list.

23 Thao Dien, D2; 3744 4713

Snap Cafe



By day, Snap Cafe is a community-centered, family-friendly cafe and restaurant. By night, guests can enjoy live music, sports on the big screen, quiz nights, pool, foosball, and more.

Serves international cafe fare, great food, icy-cold draught beer and wine by the carafe. The space is a large open-plan room with an attached garden and play area for kids. Holds regular movie screenings.

32 Tran Ngoc Dien, D2
35194532
www.snap.com.vn

The Deck



Located on the banks of the Saigon River, this restaurant offers great international and Vietnamese fare.

38 Nguyen U Di, D2
www.thedecksaigon.com

Vino

They offer professional advice on selecting and tasting wines. The outdoor terrace area is the perfect spot to sample a new vintage and brunches on the weekends.

NO.1, Street 2nd, D2
www.vinovietnam.com

>>The List District 7

BAKERIES

Dunkin' Donuts

This American doughnut and coffee franchise offers munchkins, croissants, donut sandwich and toasted sandwiches - along with the popular sugar raised, glazed chocolate mochi, glazed, chocolate coconut, cinnamon, Boston kreme, Bavarian Kreme, strawberry-filled or chocolate frosted donuts.

59 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

Savoure Bakery

Offering gourmet cakes and pastries with all the fine characteristics of the European gourmet tradition. Customers can choose from a wide array of baked goods including cakes, desserts, breads, cookies, wedding cakes, and moon cakes during the season.

Grand View, SD 4-1, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 2469
www.savourebakery.com

BARS

Peaches

A spacious, attractive restobar with comfortable, lounge-style seating and a bar area, this watering hole mixes three beers on tap and a large screen for live sports with a pan-Asian curry menu.

S52-1 Sky Garden 2, D7

Ruby Soho

A popular district 7 spot with excellent and cheap range of cocktails, good food and great music! Listen to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Ramones or Beck while downing an ice cold one.

S52-1 Sky Garden 2, D7

Sala Beer

Enjoy Asian and European dishes at Sala Beer and choose and enjoy more than 50 famous beer brands from around the world.

Ground floor White House Hotel
R2-25 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Phuoc 1, D7

The Tavern

The Tavern is a Western pub & restaurant where patrons can play darts & pool, watch football or enjoy reasonably priced food and drinks.

R2-24 Hung Gia 3, Bui Bang Doan, D7

CAFES

Baskin Robbins

With more than 7000 branches in more than 50 countries, Baskin Robbins is

the largest ice-cream chain in the world with flavors such as Baseball Nut and Lunar Cheesecake.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.baskinrobbins.vn

Bud's

Bringing the taste of American ice cream to Vietnam, Bud's Ice Cream has nine stores in Ho Chi Minh City. Apart from a variety of delicious ice cream flavors, Bud's also offers a wide range of Western and Vietnamese food.

SD - 04 Panorama Residential Complex, D7
www.budsicecream.com.vn

Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf serves some of the best coffee and tea from around the world. It also has a full line of baked goods made from high quality ingredients, most of which are from their own proprietary recipes.

Ground Floor, Crescent Mall, Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.coffeebean.com.vn

FB Deli Coffee



FB Deli Coffee features a unique black and white design and signature coffee beans imported from Italy. Guests can also enjoy many varieties of homemade cakes, along with Tiramisu, muffins, and sandwiches. All cakes 50% off from 7 to 10pm.

SE-1 My Khanh 2 Apartments, D7

The Fountain Coffee Ice Cream

Known for its Swiss ice cream with all the fixings, Fountain Coffee also serves Western dishes in a spacious lounge area.

SB4-1 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7

MOF Japanese Sweets & Coffee Crescent



Sourcing the majority of their dessert ingredients from Hokkaido, Japan, MOF serves up premium desserts and a Japanese restaurant menu.

101 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.mof.com.vn/en

NYDC

Established in 1995 in Singapore, NYDC, The New York Dessert Café, aims to bring a piece of New York to Southeast Asia with their popular muddies and a whole range of Western comfort foods.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7

S'cottage Restaurant - Café

Inspired by the mysterious wooden house in the Hansel and Gretel story, S'cottage serves up home-style meals in a spacious, fairy-tale inspired space.

SB-02 My Duc Residential Complex, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5411 1186

CHINESE

Huong Vien Hunanese Restaurant

Serving China's little-known spiciest cuisine, the dishes of China's reddest province and the preferred taste of Chairman Mao, Huong Vien is well-decorated although a bit on the pricey side, with dishes averaging VND180,000 .

S59-S61, Sky Garden 2 Apartments, D7

Ming Dynasty

Ming Dynasty serves authentic Chinese food in a setting reminiscent of an old Chinese palace. Specialties include dim sum, shark fin and abalone and dishes from Quang Dong.

23 Nguyen Khac Vien, D7

INDIAN

Ashoka

Ashoka is a small chain of slightly more upscale Indian restaurants serving both Northern and Southern Indian cuisine including curries, naan and tandoori.

S9-1 Block R13, Bui Bang Doan, D7
5410 1989

Bollywood

Complete North & South Indian Cuisine. Special Chaat & Tandoori Dishes. Parties, Events & catering service available, Daily Lunch tiffin and Set menus.

Free Delivery (All Phu My Hung)
22131481 - 22450096
0938069433
Hotline: 0906357442(English)
bollywoodvietnam@gmail.com
facebook: bollywoodvietnamindiancuisine
(for complete menu)

Spice India

Spice India offers a wide range of dishes that cater to any palette. Enjoy your curry with a side of Bollywood.

S6-1 Bui Bang Doan, Hung Vuong 3, D7
093 841 6551
www.namaste-india.com.vn

ITALIAN

La Cucina

La Cucina has opened on Crescent Promenade in Phu My Hung, with an open-plan kitchen that can accommodate 180 diners. Enjoy top-end dining featuring the best of Italian cuisine and a wide selection of imported seafood, prepared from the freshest ingredients, in a relaxed, rustic atmosphere.

Reviewed in Oi April 2013
Block 07-08 CRI-07, 103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 7932

Sarpino's

Sarpino's Pizzeria serves authentic Italian pizzas as well as other Italian dishes such as oven-baked pasta, baked rice, wraps and salad, all at reasonable prices.
351 12-1 Grandview, Nguyen Cao Nam, D7
www.sarpinos.vn

Salt & Pepper Italian Restaurant

Located in the modern confines of The Crescent, this contemporary-styled Italian restaurant and pizzeria has an open kitchen and an outdoor terrace area. Serving up a range of pan-Italian cuisine, the menu includes a selection of salads, pastas, main courses, pizzas and desserts, all at affordable prices.
103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5412 4848
www.saltpepper.com.vn

JAPANESE

Osaka Ramen

This sleek, open-kitchen contemporary eatery serves up Japanese noodles starting from VND78,000. There are also set menus, individual dishes and a range of smaller, appetizing sides.
SD04, LO H29-2, My Phat Residential Complex, D7

THAI

Nathalie's Phu My Hung

Nathalie's Phu My Hung is situated in an ideal location on a central corner in the district 7 high-profile metropolitan area. Serving delicious Thai cuisine in charming and romantic surroundings, the restaurant has two floors with a unified, simple decor and warm colourful tones throughout.
S9 Hung Vuong 3 Apartments, D7
5410 0822
www.nathaliesrestaurant.com

Thai Express- Crescent Plaza

Thai Express's interpretation of Thai food exhibits the best of the cuisine but with the edges softened for a global palate unused to the extremes of Thai style cooking. Averaging from 40,000

VND to 200,000 VND per dish, its price can't be beat for the same quality and deliciousness.

105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

VIETNAMESE

Co Ba Vung Tau

Co Ba Vung Tau is a chain of traditional Vietnamese restaurants serving up their famous banh khot amongst an extensive menu of affordable Vietnamese food.

RI-72 Hung Gia 1, Bui Bang Doan, D7
5410 2027

Com Tam Ba Son

Com Tam Ba Son, Ba Son offers authentic Vietnamese broken rice (BBQ) and hu tieu sadec. The 35 year old recipes are handed down for more than 3 generations. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

SB10-1 Nguyen Luong Bang, Nam Khang, Phu My Hung, Q7
5413 3122

ASIAN

Cham Charm

Charm is more like a museum than a dining venue, filled with the artefacts and sculpture of the Champa people and with gorgeous artworks and colourful hangings on the walls. The upstairs area is a wide-open terrace with plenty of tables for a more relaxing atmosphere. The cuisine is pan-Asian.

2 Phan Van Chuong, D7

WESTERN/INTERNATIONAL

Berru 🍷 Oi's Pick

Berru is a family-run Turkish restaurant offering a variety of Turkish specialties on the menu including kebabs, koftas, mezzes and soups. This is one of the few halal restaurants that imports all of their halal meat.

SC 3-1 Nguyen Luong Bang, Nam Khang, Phu My Hung, D7

Boomerang Bistro Saigon

Located in The Crescent by the Crescent lake, the spacious Boomerang Bistro Saigon serves Australian and other Western food in the most pedestrian friendly part of town.

107 Ton Dat Tien, D7
3841 3883
www.boomerang.com.vn

Cham Charm

Famous for their extensive international nightly buffet featuring 8 types of oysters, American Angus beef and Australian filets, Cham Charm is devoted to Cham arts, culture and cuisine and is tastefully decorated with Cham artifacts and sculptural works.
02 Phan Van Chuong, Phu My Hung New Urban, D7

Deutsches Eck / German Corner

The six month old restaurant is fast becoming known for its sausage, beer, and their Schweins Haxe or pork knuckles (served with white cabbage and mashed potatoes). A number of German beer to select from including Bitburger, Koestritzer Black Beer, Benediktiner Weisse, HB-Hofbrau Weisse, Schwarzbrau Exquisit, and Schwarzbrau Weisse.

A001 Nguyen Van Linh St., Phu My Hung, D7
54106695

El Camino

A small bar & restaurant situated in the heart of Phu My Hung. Relaxing outdoor saloon featuring inexpensive Spanish tapas and small plates from gourmet ingredients. Affordable selection of Spanish & French wines.

137 SB-02 Khu My Phat, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
5412 4641, 3pm - midnight
www.facebook.com/elcaminovietnam

El Gaucho

El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse is an international chain of restaurants serving authentic Argentinian cuisine in a space reflecting modern yet rustic decor, giving it an inviting ambiance and genuine atmosphere.

Unit CRI-12, The Crescent, D7
3825 1879
www.elgaucho.com.vn

Harry Casual

A sports bar, with pool tables, dart boards and satellite sport. There is also live music and a wide food and drink menu to choose from.

RI/49, Hung Gia 3, Tan Phong Ward, D7

Le Taj

Le Taj offers French cuisine and features a luxury atmosphere of black and white design. Besides a wide variety of menu choices, Le Taj brings you to the ultimate luxury appetite garnished with 24k gold leaf. Le Taj also impresses its guests with a large wine cellar featuring 150 types of international wine that adds to the dining and entertainment variety.

06 Phan Van Chuong, D7
090 535 0221

Salt & Pepper

Salt & Pepper Restaurant mainly serves Italian dishes.
103 Ton Dat Tien, D7
www.saltpepper.com.vn

Scott & Binh's Restaurant 🍷 Oi's Pick

This unassuming little bistro is making big waves with visitors to the city and resident expats alike. With a menu replete with tasty sandwiches, burgers, pasta, and various other international dishes, this is an ideal guilty hideaway from Vietnamese cuisine for just one meal at least.

15-17 Cao Trieu Phat, D7

VIVA! Tapas Bar & Grill

Specializes in tapas dishes like Albondigas (meatballs in tomato sauce) and Gambas pil-pil (spicy chilli shrimp), priced individually at less than VND50,000 per plate. The restaurant is furnished in an eclectic style, from the modern blue glass and stainless steel bar, to the traditional wine barrels that serve as tables.

R4-28 Hung Gia 4, Tan Phong, Phu My Hung, D7
5410 6721

supermarkets

100%

100% Alimentation.Generale.De.Qualite is the latest high-end grocery store to grace the streets of An phu. With a rustic charm 100% provides customers with 100% safe, natural and local products all sourced and manufactured in Vietnam. The shop only offers products that reach international food safety requirements and runs food events at the store. All products are available to order online at www.100percentvn.com.
26b Thao Dien, D2

Annam Gourmet

An upscale deli and grocery chain offering gourmet groceries, cheese, organic products, gluten-free products, fruit and vegetables, gourmet deli, wine and other beverages. All locations, in District 1, 2 and 7, have a coffee lounge that serves breakfast, lunch, drinks and early dinner.

41A Thao Dien street. D2. 3744 2630
SB2-1 My Khanh 4, Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1

An Phu Supermarket

Large supermarket stocking a wide range well-known international brands of dry goods along with fresh groceries, frozen meat and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, wine, toiletries and more

43 Thao Dien, D2

Classic Fine Foods

Supplier of international brand foodstuff like Illy, Valrhona, Bonne Maman along with fresh vegetables, dairy, and meat.

No. 17, Street 12, D2
www.classicfinefoods.com

Le Cochon D'or

LeCochon D'or shop sells European and International meat that include ham, sausages, pate, terrine, and smoked specialties. A taste of home, because you and your taste buds deserve it! Customizes service available including door-to-door delivery.

64 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 3856
8am - 7pm

Metro

Wholesale suppliers of foodstuff, office supplies, furniture, clothes and more. Entry is reserved for business owners only but foreigners can obtain a one-day pass by showing their passports.

Residential An Phu, An Khanh Ward 2

Veggy's

A specialized grocery store carrying imported products, Veggy's offers a wide range of international food imported from abroad and fresh produce grown in Vietnam.

S54-1 Sky Garden 2, Pham Van Nghi, D7

wine & liquor

Bacchus Corner

Bacchus imports from most of the world's wine regions and supplies wholesale and retail customers. It encourages wine tasting in its Pasteur store using the unique Enomatic system, and staff are skilled in advising on wine matches with food.

158D Pasteur, D1

Beer Plaza

Beer Plaza has an extensive range of international beers in stock. Connoisseurs will be pleased to find all of their favorite varieties of beer along with unique glassware.

94-96 Le Lai, D1

Boutique Collar

All about wine, lots and lots of wine. Priding itself in being the sole distributors of premium wineries around the world.

11 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1

Shop Thai Duong

Beer, wine, & spirits importers. Previously known as Tan Mai.

54 Ham Nghi, D1

The Warehouse

A premium wine importer, distributor, and retailer supplying wines from all over the world, the Warehouse also offers spirits, wine accessories, glassware and refrigeration to complement their customers' choices.

15/5 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Vinifera

Established in 2002, Vinifera is one of the most reliable wine distribution companies in Vietnam. Offering prestigious wines from around the world at a great value.

15C7 Thi Sach, D1

Travel & Leisure

IMAGE BY ADAM ROBERT YOUNG



An Lam Villas Ninh Van Bay



Ship to Shore

Traveling the world as cruise ship crew

TEXT AND IMAGES BY CAROLINE COUPE

WORKING ON CRUISE ships is one of the most unique jobs there is, and one of the best ways to travel the world. And because it's such a unique lifestyle, people often ask me what it's really like. It's a tough life. I don't get to choose where I go, and sometimes I get stuck working the same few ports over and over, for weeks or months at a time. I'm at the mercy of my ship's itinerary, my manager's scheduling and endless safety drills. But my ship career lasted eight years and took me to over 60 countries - making it all worthwhile.

My position on board was a key factor in determining how I would experience the places we would go. I worked in the Youth Activities Department, which is a great position to have if you love the travel side of the job as much as I do. I often had

full days off while in port to explore or go on an excursion. Other days I stared miserably out the window while manning an empty Youth Centre. I missed out on Paris and Machu Picchu, had only one hour to explore Malta my only time there, and because of recurring safety drills, all I saw of incredible Kauai through an entire season in Hawaii was the hotel beach right next to the ship. I spent six months on a ship sailing out of the Los Angeles area and never got to see the city itself because US Customs and Border Patrol were so strict that there just wasn't time for our crew to get there and back before we had to be back on board again. But it works both ways, and sometimes luck was on my side. I spent an entire season in the sunny Mediterranean, cruised Antarctica, and managed to spend the day in Bora Bora

(the most coveted of all ports) both times I was there. As many do, my cruise line offers free or heavily discounted excursions for crew, and I was lucky enough to ride an elephant in Bali, snorkel the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, feast on freshly-caught crab in Alaska and much more - all for free.

With so many restrictions, and so little time, I learned to be a smart traveler. I did my research and I hit the ground running to try and get the most I could out of every moment. My greatest triumph was Shanghai. I was working in the morning and the crew had to be back on board extremely early because of strict customs officials, but I was determined. With only about three hours in a city where English is not widely spoken, I managed to get to Yu Gardens, explore the amazing Town God's Temple, walk along the Bund waterfront, and buy silk wall hangings for myself and a fan for my mother. It was rushed, it was stressful, and I was almost late on board, but it was worth it - I had seen China. As frustrating as it was to have such a short time there and in other ports, it was also incredible because it's somewhere I never would have ventured on my own. Sampling slivers of lots of different places helped me discover which ones I'd love to explore further - my brief experiences in Bali, Hong Kong and Malta have put them at the



top of my travel wish list when they had never previously been places I had thought to visit.

Striking Out on Your Own

It amazed me to see many passengers arriving for their cruise with no inkling of where they were visiting or what they were going to do in each port. With only one day to experience what a place has to offer, being prepared is crucial. It pays to know whether the sights are easily accessible or if a guided tour is the best option, such as in Rome where the ship docks 1.5 hours from the city, time is very limited, and it's not an easy city to navigate quickly if you don't know where you're going. But in so many places, it's incredibly simple and rewarding to strike out on your own – Barcelona, Hong Kong and Copenhagen. They're very walkable cities with efficient public transportation that's simple to navigate. It's easy to get to where you want to go, see exactly what you want to, and explore at your own pace.

Another thing that shocked me was the number of passengers who would tell me that they were not going out in a particular port because they had been there before. I've been here 10 times, I'd tell them, and I'm going. There's always something new to see and explore, it's a question of getting

off the beaten path. Take Livorno for example – from this humble port you can venture not only to Pisa and Florence, but to incredible Cinque Terre, medieval Lucca, and more. Anyone who quits after seeing the Leaning Tower is truly missing out, as Cinque Terre is one of the most gorgeous places I've ever seen. Sometimes the less obvious choice can be as inspiring as the places you've heard so much about. When we docked in Yokohama, Japan, I was pretty devastated when I discovered that all the excursions to Tokyo were leaving early in the morning and I couldn't go as I was working until noon. So I signed up for the only tour I could – an afternoon departure to Kamakura to see the Giant Buddha. The tour was fantastic, not only was visiting the 36-foot Buddha statue an amazing experience, but we also explored a temple and its grounds where a traditional Japanese wedding happened to be taking place in the outdoor pavilion. I had time to wander the side streets of Kamakura, buy a magnet for my collection, and eat a delicious steamed pork bun. I still want to visit Tokyo, but I got to experience Japan.

As crew, we're always looking for a place to get away, somewhere that isn't overrun by tourists. If you're ever on a cruise and want to find the best spots, ask the crew. Of course, they may not tell you, since that

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Town God's Temple, Shanghai; Giant Buddha, Japan; Penguin Colony, Falkland Islands; Bora Bora, French Polynesia

would defeat their purpose of escaping the passengers for the day. But they may respect that you're not a tourist trap sort of traveler, and let you in on their secret restaurant, where the nicest part of the beach is, or which café has great coffee and free WiFi (ship internet is incredibly expensive, even for crew). Sometimes it's as easy as keeping your eyes open and walking just that little bit further from everyone else.

In the somewhat rundown port of Ensenada, Mexico on the main street is a Papas & Beer franchise where you can eat Tex-Mex and do tequila shots upside down while listening to extremely loud music. It's always full of cruise ship passengers and other tourists who have no idea that right next door is Mexico Lindo Taqueria and the most delicious, authentic tacos and burritos for a fraction of the price. In Grand Turk, in the Caribbean, it's as simple as walking to the end of the beach – past

Working on cruise ships is an amazing way to travel and a great way to save money. It's also exhausting, stressful and frustrating



returning to the ship for lunch, or worse, heading to the nearest McDonald's! Food for cruise ship crew can be notoriously bad, but once outside you have the chance to taste an endless array of cuisines. I've eaten fresh pasta in Italy, crepes in France, Korean barbeque in South Korea, and in New Zealand a Maori *hangi* feast where the food was slow-cooked underground - there have been so many delicious meals. But of course, I've missed out on some things too. As a huge sushi fan, I didn't get to eat a single bite of it in Japan, and the closest I came to having the dim sum I dreamed of in Hong Kong was a single (though delicious) barbeque pork bun. But I discovered the world's best burger - at Burger Queen in Ketchikan, Alaska - and my all-time favorite ice cream flavor: Tutu's Anniversary, a delicious mixture of coconut, raspberry and passion fruit only available in Hawaii. I still think about that burger, and though I'll never be in Alaska again, I make sure others who are going know where to find that tiny burger shack so they can share in the deliciousness.

Working on cruise ships is an amazing way to travel and a great way to save money. It's also exhausting, stressful and frustrating. You go to work for six months at a time, working seven days a week, living, working and socializing with the same people, sharing a tiny room, eating a lot of bad food and never getting enough sleep. You need to have the right personality and the right mindset and be able to embrace an unorthodox lifestyle. If you do, you will love every minute of it and have some incredible adventures. I've settled down now, and am living the land life in Copenhagen, Denmark, but I haven't stopped traveling and I will never forget my incredible experiences exploring the world with a ship as my home. ■

BIO: *Caroline is a passionate traveler, photographer and aspiring travel writer. From Canada, she recently settled in Copenhagen, Denmark after spending eight years working on cruise ships and nine months working at a boutique hotel in Edinburgh, Scotland. Caroline has launched a travel blog, **LoveLiveTravel**, based on her experiences around the world. It can be found at www.lovelivetravel.co.uk, and is also on Twitter at @lovelivetravel.*

the cruise village and the ever-popular 500-seat Margaritaville restaurant a half-minute's walk from the pier - to Jack's Shack, a beach front bar and grill with awesome drinks, renowned jerked chicken and a famous swimming, hole-digging dog named Topher. It's a great place to spend the day on a gorgeous part of the beach, and so many people miss it because they plop down at the first spot they see.

Global Bites

Another perk of being in a different place each day is the food. You learn where to find great cuisine for good

value either by word-of-mouth or just by wandering around. You look for smaller and more authentic places, avoiding chain restaurants or those catering to tourists. Many cruise ship passengers fail to take advantage of these potential culinary and cultural experiences, either by being too cautious to try new things, or unwilling to spend money when they can eat 'for free' on board the ship's buffet.

In places like Greece and Turkey, where the food is not only fantastic, but can be very cheap (you can get a delicious gyro or kebab on the street for about two euros), it boggled my mind to see passengers

Capital Consumption

A 48-hour eating and drinking marathon in Hanoi's Old Quarter

TEXT AND IMAGES BY JIMMY DAU



AS AN AUSTRALIAN-born Vietnamese who has only visited the southern parts of Vietnam, I had limited understanding of Hanoi and how different it is to Ho Chi Minh City when it comes to cuisine. Southerners would claim that northern food is bland whereas those from the north would argue it's simpler and elegant thus requiring less use of spices and sugar, allowing the ingredients to speak for themselves.

For anyone on a flying visit, deciding on where and what to eat can be daunting at the best of times. Trip Advisor is usually the first port of call, but inconsistent reviews can cast a cloud of doubt over the legitimacy of the medium. Here is a list of my favorite things to eat if you're up for a short weekend of gastronomic indulgence. Start training and make some room. You will need it by the end of a weekend here.

Bun Cha

Bun cha is arguably Hanoi's most famous dish. This was the first dish that I was told by everyone I know to try and is now what I first introduce visitors to. It's almost impossible not to be distracted by the sweet scent of pork grilling on the sidewalk as you go about your business.

At Dac Kim Bun Cha on 67 Duong Thanh, I was guaranteed not to mess up my first-ever order of *bun cha* considering it's the only dish they serve here. At street level, the restaurant is deceptively small with few seating options both outside and inside on the ground floor, but climbing up the narrow spiral stairs reveals two additional levels that can accommodate up to 40 more locals and tourists who are seeking refuge from the infamous Hanoi heat.

Within seconds of ordering, the porky contents arrive in a bowl of liquid, lightly flavored with sugar and tamarind. The stars of the dish are the plump meat patties made from pork mince, shallots, garlic, sugar and fish sauce, along with the pork belly strips resembling thick cuts of streaky bacon. The soup is delicate, perfectly balanced between sweet and sour with a hint of smokiness courtesy of the grilled pork. Slivers of carrot and kohlrabi add a contrasting texture to the broth where vermicelli noodles are loosened by dunking them into the mixture and then devoured with a mountain of accompanying herbs. I finally had my first encounter with *bun cha* and it's been an intense love affair ever since.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Pho Bo, Bun Rieu Cua, Banh Cuon, Cha Ca La Vong

Pho Bo

Throughout the country, *pho* is eaten any time of the day and is put together in every kind of way, but in Hanoi it's made with the philosophy that less is more. Fewer spices are used in the broth and you won't find mountains of various leaves, beansprouts or hoisin sauce anywhere on the table. I have never been served *pho* this way and it required a couple of attempts to appreciate how the simplicity and lack of spices and condiments allows no room for error. A plate of fried bread called *gio chao quay* is optional for extra volume but my approach to eating *pho* is "all thriller, no filler". A dash of garlic infused vinegar provides enough zing to the dish.

Pho 10 on 10 Ly Quoc Su Street near Hoan Kiem Lake is a place where I find myself coming back to for breakfast after my morning run. It's one of the few places that has a broader range of *pho bo* on the menu and I often rotate between delicate *pho bo tai* (rare beef) and the braised and gelatinous textures of *pho tai nam* (flank steak). It takes 60 seconds for my order to reach the nearby kitchen station (in full view of hungry patrons), assembled by one of the three women behind a perspex wall until it arrives in front of me. The bowl is piping hot with flecks of transparent blobs on the surface indicating the perfect balance of collagen and fat flavoring the stock. The topping is simple with only spring onions for freshness and

Throughout the country, *pho* is eaten any time of the day and is put together in every kind of way, but in Hanoi it's made with the philosophy that less is more.

presentation, then ready for some serious slurping action.

Bun Rieu Cua

The complex *bun rieu cua* contradicts everything a simple Hanoi *pho* stands for in a dish. It's a noodle soup defined by the sum of its many parts: crab paste cakes, juicy ripe tomatoes to add sourness, fried tofu cubes to absorb the liquid and a healthy dash of *mam ruoc* (shrimp paste) on top to give the dish a boost of umami goodness. Unlike *pho*, a large handful of lettuce and cilantro is dropped into the bowl to add texture to the entire dish.

Bun Rieu Cua on 11 Hang Bac Street has been dishing out this colorful meal for over 50 years and has become an institution in the Old Quarter. Eating here is literally stepping into somebody's living room because every morning the owners shift their furniture to the side, fling open the front doors and set up a couple of large pots of soup out the front to bubble away. Space is limited and taller customers may find themselves sitting in a side saddle position to the table, and once seated a no-nonsense protocol is adhered to: Walk in, sit, order, devour, pay, then leave. Next! Much like the Soup Nazi, but friendlier.

Banh Cuon

I rarely skip meals but there are moments when I've eaten too much and require something that will not cause the onset of a food coma. This is when I rely on *banh cuon*, a dish of few components that is very light. Freshly steamed sheets of fermented rice batter envelops a trio of minced pork, wood ear mushrooms and shallots into a roll, and served with a side of sweet *nuoc cham* and a plate of mint. It's an incredibly easy dish to eat but if you feel like some extra meat then a side of *cha lua* (sausage) can be included. It's a perfect snack or for when you're not in the mood for a full meal.

The vendors and their unmistakable giant metal steamers can be found on most streets in Hanoi. However, with the temperatures reaching uncomfortable levels

Eating what the locals eat is the best way to know a country, its people and culture

chicken and it's difficult not to return, time and time again, to the visual spectacle of cooks barbecuing succulent chicken cuts streetside. I became a semi permanent fixture in the scene, often returning for the finger licking, perfectly grilled chicken thighs to satiate my chicken cravings.

There is nothing fancy about this street or the restaurants here. A variety of cuts are available, ranging from chicken feet and monster wings to succulent thighs that are lightly marinated in a sweet sauce with a hint of background spice on the palette. All of the cuts are skewered with giant-sized toothpicks and act as the perfect eating utensil although, inevitably, the skewers end up discarded as I wrestle each cut of chicken with my bare hands.

Ca Phe Trung

Egg Coffee can be described as the cross between coffee and eggnog. As the name states, it is made of coffee and an egg yolk with sweetened condensed milk. The egg yolk is ferociously whipped to lighten the protein load and served either hot or over ice depending on the weather and mood. For anybody who hasn't tried it before I would recommend trying it chilled on their first try.

My favorite spot for *ca phe trung* is at Giang Cafe on 39 Nguyen Huu Huan Street where they have been perfecting this beverage since 1946. Inside this time warped, moody and windowless café with miniature bamboo stools and tables, an old television entertains customers ordering from a limited coffee menu. Overlooking the room is an old family portrait proudly displaying the original founding grandparents; now their grandson has taken over day-to-day operations.

For the more daring caffeine addicts head to a Cong Caphe chain store for a yogurt coffee (*ca phe sua chua*). The crushed ice, coffee and sour yogurt combination delivers a layering of textures and temperatures that require a few minutes for the brain to process. They say that the eyes never lie and I get a huge kick from first timers as their eyes, pointed upwards, search around for the appropriate adjectives for this beverage. Never has there ever been a beverage as polarizing as this because it has never failed to ignite conversations around the coffee table.

Eating what the locals eat is the best way to know a country, its people and culture. ■

BIO: Jimmy is an Australian blogger and photographer who has been eating and photographing his way around the world since April 2013. Follow his adventures at jimmyeatstheworld.com



Chicken Street

in the summer, I avoid the food sweats by eating indoors at Thanh Van Banh Cuon on 14B Bao Khan. Every inch of space is used to seat customers and you'll find utensil holders attached to the wall, where polished white tiles run from floor to ceiling.

Cha Ca La Vong

Not trying Cha Ca La Vong while visiting Hanoi is sacrilegious. The dish is so famous they even renamed a street after it. Fried in turmeric oil in a heavy skillet, the boneless fish fillets are finished off with a liberal dose of dill, an ingredient not seen on many Vietnamese dishes, but one that works perfectly as a supporting ingredient and not just as a garnish.

At Cha Ca La Vong on 14 Pho Cha Ca, the

fish is cooked and assembled with robot-like precision at the table by the waiter. Once completed, the cuts of fish are served over cold vermicelli noodles and garnished with peanuts, onions, coriander for freshness and texture and finished off with *nuoc mam* and shrimp paste to round off the flavors. At first glance, the *nuoc mam* seems deceptively strong to the eye and heavy handed in the application but after it's served, I find myself adding more, ensuring each ingredient is given a proper dousing.

Chicken Street

KFC may dominate the Western world but in the capital you can't beat what is referred to as Chicken Street or Ly Van Phuc Street. Every restaurant pays homage to grilled



Back in Time

And into the yesteryears of the Central Highlands

THE HILL STATION of Dalat emerged out of a barren plateau in Vietnam's Central Highlands to become Indochina's premiere health and wellness center in the early 20th century, 'a veritable little paradise, in a setting of pine trees and gardens full of flowers from Europe.' — *Physionomie de Dalat en 1937*.

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat Resort & Spa revives Dalat's glory days of being part imperial playground part wellness retreat.

2PM — Located just on the outskirts of town, Ana Mandara has 72 rooms and suites housed in 17 fully restored French-era villas, each built between the 1920s and 30s. We check in to our accommodations, Villa Suite #304 which has lovely wooden floors, high ceilings and a surprise upstairs reading nook.

2:30PM — In search of the city's French influences, we hop into the back of the resort's 1936 Citroën convertible for a ride around town, exactly like the bourgeoisie of the day, visiting the city's art deco train station, waterfalls, flower gardens and

craft shops. It isn't hard to see what drew the colonists to this beautiful, temperate region.

7PM — What better way to honor Dalat's origins as a spa town, modeled after other restful colonial hill stations like Darjeeling in British India, than with a visit to the resort's award-winning La Cochinchine Spa? Set in its own villa, La Cochinchine is renowned for its full menu of treatments including body and beauty care and holistic healing as well as more traditional options, all while incorporating products made exclusively from natural ingredients.

8:30PM — After a quick freshening up, we walk to Le Petit Dalat, Ana Mandara's signature restaurant. As Dalat is the happy marriage of East Meets West, our dinner reflects fine international cuisine with an Asian twist. Hot seared sashimi and traditional Vietnamese spring rolls start us off, followed by mains of imported Australian beef tenderloin and a dish of grilled chicken marinated in lemongrass, ginger and oyster sauce, paired with a

bottle of red wine from the restaurant's extensive wine list. To finish, we share a quintessentially French crème brûlée but tinged with fragrant notes from Pandan leaf and topped with mulberry ice cream. We then retire to our gorgeously appointed room, the shutters having been thoughtfully closed, and the bed turned down, ready for a peaceful slumber amidst the rustling pine trees that beautify the grounds.

8AM — After a gorgeously laid-out buffet breakfast replete with homemade yogurts with fresh fruit and delectable hot items, we explore the extensive seven-hectare grounds. Only in the daylight can we truly appreciate the uniqueness of this resort. The Ana Mandara property features 17 fully restored villas, each wonderfully unique. We peek into the common rooms in each villa — gorgeous libraries, comfortable sitting rooms and even fireplaces for those cool Dalat nights. Our walk takes us past the a chef's garden, a mini-golf pad and a restful swimming pool area, where we spend the morning reading up on Dalat's riveting history as the cool-



climed Utopia for early colonists suffering from the heat and discomfort of life in the lowlands and deltas.

11AM — Part of Dalat's appeal for turn of the century colonists was its ability to grow fruits and vegetables reminiscent of Europe. A great way to work with the local produce is by taking a cooking class led by Executive Chef Huong. While waiting for the skewers of minced beef wrapped in wild betel leaves to cook, Chef Huong explains that instead of having regional specialties, "Dalat's cuisine is based mainly on the freshest ingredients found in Vietnam. People in the cities say they get vegetables from Dalat, too, but here

the air is cleaner, there are mountains... it's just more relaxing which makes the food taste better here than anywhere else." The ornamental artichoke flowers and potted cabbage that adorn the space accentuate his point, a reminder of Dalat's bounty. Maybe it is the fresh mountain air, but our dishes are simply loaded with flavor.

2PM — All too soon, we're packing our bags. True to its motto, *Dat Aliis Laetitia Aliis Temperiem* ("Offering joy to some, and temperate climes to others"), our stay in Dalat has been a joyous reprieve from Vietnam's stifling heat, a wonderful walk back into yesteryear.

Dalat Highland Retreat starts at VND2,690,000 net/couple/night in a Villa Room, Studio or Suite. Includes daily breakfast, daily morning yoga class, daily healthy & organic lunch or dinner or daily 60-minute refreshing spa treatment, use of outdoor heated swimming pool, walking trails, gym and other amenities, personal butler service, and complimentary WiFi in room and throughout the resort.

Valid until September 30, 2014. Minimum two-night stay and other conditions apply. For enquiries, email sales-dalat@anamanadara-resort.com, visit anamanadara-resort.com or call (84-8) 6291 3030/(84-63) 3555 888. ■

Pack Like a Pro: Part 2

List, check and bundle



Having visited nearly 60 countries as a travel writer and award-winning photographer, **James Pham** blogs about his adventures at FlyIcarusFly.com



IN LAST MONTH'S column, I talked about the joys of traveling with carry-on only, including what to pack (anything needed in transit and what you wouldn't want lost, damaged or stolen) and how to manage your carry-on in transit.

We're continuing with that theme and I'm joined by Ali Garland, author of the newly released e-book, *Packing Made Simple: A Simple Guide to Packing Light* (available on Amazon and via her website, www.travel-made-simple.com).

Choosing Clothing for Carry-on

I've known people who've traveled for more than a year with carry-on only. Even if you're not that hardcore, packing light does have its advantages. Sure, you may not look fabulous all the time, but it's the price to pay for being mobile. I've been on one week cruises where I've seen passengers come on board with two full suitcases each, ostensibly to have

something different to wear for every occasion, including dress-up nights. While that may be okay for trips where you're locked into one destination and don't plan on packing and unpacking multiple times, more active travelers see the beauty in not being saddled down. Ali says that "a big part of limiting the amount of clothing you pack is being OK with wearing the same thing two or even three times without washing it. I'm not talking about underwear, just shirts, shorts, and pants. You're the only person who will notice." She recommends making sure everything coordinates, like jeans and neutral-colored pants. On most trips, I wear Crocs (yes, I know they're far from stylish), but they're great for adventure trips while protecting your feet. I even have 'dress' Crocs that are comfortable while being appropriate when I need to meet with clients. Obviously, if you need bulky shoes, say for hiking or business, wear them on the plane with

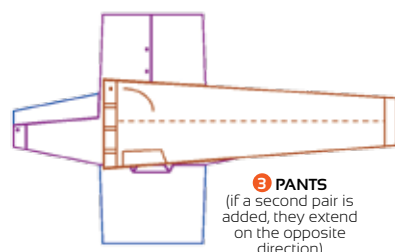
you while tucking your casual pair in your carry-on.

When traveling to places with unpredictable weather or different climates, Ali recommends packing clothing you can layer like a jacket with a removable liner and a water resistant outer shell. Personally, I love Patagonia down-filled jackets which can compress into a tiny stuffsack and merino wool t-shirts for cooler weather.

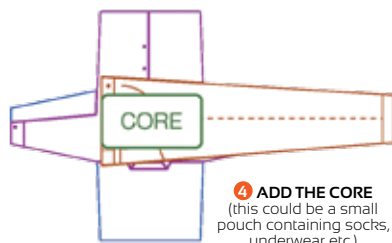
Even if you're traveling with checked baggage, you may want to think of packing an extra outfit into your carry-on. If your suitcase gets lost, at least you'll have a change of clothes while you wait for it to arrive or for the 24 hour rule to kick in before you can be reimbursed for essential purchases. This is even more important if you have a special event (like a business meeting or a wedding) to go to within the first couple of days at your destination, because no insurance is going to cover

Bundle Wrapping Instructions

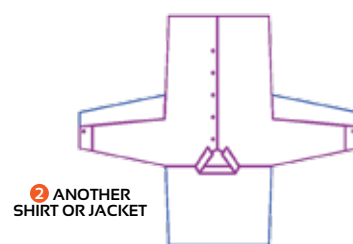
Best performed on a flat surface like a bed



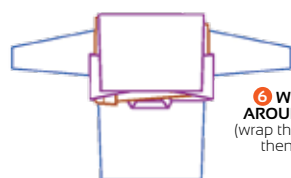
3 PANTS
(if a second pair is added, they extend on the opposite direction)



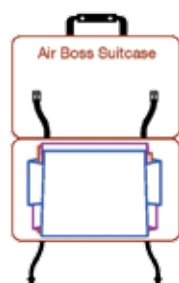
4 ADD THE CORE
(this could be a small pouch containing socks, underwear etc.)



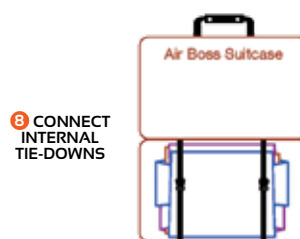
5 WRAP PANTS AROUND CORE



6 WRAP SHIRT AROUND BUNDLE
(wrap the sleeves first, then the body)



7 WRAP FINAL SHIRT/JACKET AROUND BUNDLE
(then place inside suitcase with straps free of bundle)



8 CONNECT INTERNAL TIE-DOWNS

BUNDLE WRAPPING DIAGRAM COURTESY OF DOUG DYMENT (ONEBAG.COM)

the cost of buying a suit or a gown in the unfortunate event that yours goes AWOL.

Ali's advice is: "Remember that the main focus of your trip is the travel and the vacation itself, not what you're wearing. You want to be comfortable and practical, but you don't need to win any best-dressed awards."

Packing with Checked Bags

"Traveling with less stuff means less weight to lug around, which gives you more freedom and flexibility, and this still holds true even if you're checking a bag," writes Ali. Just because someone else is carrying it through the airport and onto the plane, you'll still have to carry it once you arrive, she says.

Ali recommends packing a week's worth of clothing at most. Remember, hotel laundry services (or even finding a local laundromat) is always an option. I remember one African trip where we all washed our own laundry as we went, with the overland truck looking like a dry cleaner's with clothes desperately trying to dry in the humid weather. But for that type of trip where you literally couldn't carry anything more than what could fit in a small locker, packing multiple outfits wasn't an option. Choosing a smaller suitcase will also force you to be more judicious with what you pack. The old axiom holds true: Take twice as much

money and half as many clothes as you think you'll need.

How to Pack

Throughout the years, I've experimented with lots of different ways to pack, and it all boils down to what kind of trip you're taking and what kind of luggage you're using.

If space isn't a major consideration, I like using packing cubes. Not quite cubes, these are zippered fabric pouches, often with mesh panels, designed to keep your things organized. They come in different sizes, and the beauty is you can stuff your trousers / shirts in one, underwear in another, and toiletries in a third. When you get to your hotel, they move seamlessly from your suitcase to the dresser with minimal unpacking required. They're also great for keeping dirty and clean clothes separate, or if you're sharing a suitcase with someone, keeping clothes separate.

Then there's the roll vs. fold & stack debate. Popular wisdom says rolled clothing takes up less space than folding (and also good if you're using an unstructured bag like a duffel). Then again, round objects do waste the most space if you're talking identical sizes. I've also tried compression bags which seem like a good idea on paper, but are a pain to prepare and encourage you to pack

more than you need. Lately, I've been using the bundle wrap method, creating a central rectangular core (a packing cube, for instance) and then wrapping clothes around it, from least-to-most likely to wrinkle, in alternating directions, like moving around a compass. Because the clothes are wrapped and not folded, this method avoids wrinkles and creases while maximizing space. (Watch the great tutorial on bundle wrapping by NBCNews online.) On a recent trip to Bangkok, an unplanned shopping spree meant I had to take back double the amount of clothes I brought. With the bundle method, though, I managed to fit an unbelievable amount into my carry-on. Yes, it was heavy as a brick, but it held together.

My last bit of packing advice is to keep a packing list and use it from one trip to the next. Over time, it gets whittled down to the true necessities and makes packing a less labor-intensive experience, especially if it's on your computer where you can easily add items for special occasions or unusual weather.

Ali leaves this parting advice: "If you chronically over-pack, take it slow. Making a few changes with each trip will help you get used to packing lighter, and you'll see how much stuff you bring along that you don't really need. Before you know it, you'll be able to pack one small bag and be on your way!" ■

Surprising Sapa

Around every corner is something that you have never seen or maybe never experienced before



Bridget March is a professional artist and author of *A Week in Hoi An*. Currently she is the artist in residence at Sapa Rooms Hotel and Art Cafe in Sapa. Bridget is working on a project called Art for Community that will provide a sustainable income for the school in the poorest district in Sapa. She is also offering art classes and sketching tours in her Sapa studio until mid September. For more of Bridget's work including news of her upcoming book visit bridgetmarch.co.uk.



TO VISIT SAPA or the surrounding districts is to step into another world. Sometimes, it doesn't even feel like you are still in Vietnam. Elevated, ethereal, energizing, exotic, Sapa took me by surprise.

I imagined some kind of French style, alpine town nestling on the wooded slopes of the Hoang Lien Son Mountains at the eastern extremity of the Himalayas. And, to some extent, that is exactly what it is. There are now dozens of small hotels competing for the best possible view of the mountains that soar above the valley. Cloud systems move through the landscape, above and below you, changing the weather from moment to moment. It's very dramatic.

In the heart of the town is a colorful, traditional market with lots of foods and goods I had never seen before. Minority people from five different ethnicities come to sell their crops and fascinating antique textiles. It is a visual feast of all

kinds of treasures. I was lucky enough to get a guided tour from chef Quyen Trinh, a charismatic young man who has risen from shoe shine boy to head chef and got his first job cooking in a small hotel right next to the Sapa market. He knows local produce inside and out.

Our first stop was a traditional herbalist where I discovered medicinal herbs, local dried mushrooms and fungi of every kind, local corn, rice and apple wines, deep red goji berries, medicinal dried apples and many other delights. The shopkeeper gave us some local ginseng to sample and we left with a bag of interesting ingredients to cook for dinner.

On our way across to the meat and fish vendors, we stopped to buy a bunch of lychees from the new harvest. These fluorescent fruits are the most colorful crop at this time of year and stalls are loaded with them.

In the meat stalls we found some

black skinned chickens. The flesh is blue/black as if they have been dipped in indigo but apparently it is a special local breed! In the next stall, every part of the pig is for sale, laid out fresh and pink on scrubbed, black wooded chopping boards. Everywhere are baskets and bunches of vibrant green herbs and leaves, harvested at dawn and rushed to the market for sale. On a corner, a tiny charcuterie of French influence offers garlic sausage, delicate slices of pork in aspic and smoked meats. In the middle, a busy kitchen has smoke and steam rising from pots and grills as they prepare for a busy lunch hour.

The whole market is an intoxicating experience. Quyen is passionate about Sapa foods and is well-known for his fresh, colorful cuisine. That evening we had stir-fried chicken with goji berries and the dried apples served with local rice and steamed *cho ko* leaves - such delicious new flavors! ■



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hotels

HO CHI MINH CITY

TWO STAR

Bali Hotel

Ideally-located for attendees to any exhibitions held at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, Bali Boutique is flash and modern in style - with a little touch of the plush thrown in for good measure.

39 - 41 Hung Phuoc Villas, D 7
54104747

Cat Huy Hotel

Cat Huy is the best-kept secret of the backpacker district, located in a peaceful and very local-looking alley close to the downtown area of Ho Chi Minh City, but culturally part of deep suburban Saigon.

353/28, Pham Ngu Lao, D 1
39208717

THREE STAR

EMM Hotel Saigon

The 56 air-conditioned guestrooms at EMM Hotel Saigon include laptop-compatible safes and minibars. Complimentary wireless and wired high-speed Internet access and in-room refrigerators are provided. 32-inch LED TVs are equipped with premium cable channels. All accommodations provide desks, safes, and direct-dial phones.

157 Pasteur, D3
01663221322

Ibis Hotel Saigon South

The 3-star Ibis Hotel Saigon South is located in front of Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre and only 15 minutes from the city centre. It features 140 rooms with free Wifi internet access, a restaurant/bar and 3 meeting rooms. There is a free Ibis shuttle available to and from the hotel to major corporate offices and the city centre.

73 Hoang Van Thai, D7
www.ibis.com

Sunland Hotels

Located about 35 minutes from Tan Son Nhat Airport, Sunland is a three star hotel with 90 rooms and suites. The hotel also comprise a Sky Bar and Sun Coffee Lounge.

302-304 Vo Van Kiet, D1
9922 3833
www.sunlandhotel.vn

Tan Hai Long Hotel & Spa

Three-star Tan Hai Long Hotel offers 106 rooms and suites, all boasting a view of the city and Ben Thanh Market. Its conference room can accommodate up to 110 people with modern facilities. It also houses two dining venues, the La Terrasse Restaurant and L'emotion Lounge Bar & Coffee.

14-16 Le Lai, D1
www.tanhailonghotel.com.vn
3827 2738

FOUR STAR

Hotel Continental Saigon

One of Saigon's oldest hotels, most graceful colonial properties, and historic places to stay, it is perhaps most famous as the location where much of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* was written in room 214.

132-134 Dong Khoi, D 1
3829 9201
www.continentalsaigon.com

Norfolk Hotel

Chic, warm exterior with boutique charms within, this property is an ideal escape for business travellers from the plasticity of chain hotels.

117 Le Thanh Ton, D 1
3829 3415
www.norfolkhotel.com.vn

Novotel Saigon Centre

One of HCMC's newest hotels, Novotel is located on busy Hai Ba Trung St, just within walking distance of downtown attractions. It's everything you'd expect from the international brand with 24-seven guest services and a broad dining offer.

167 Hai Ba Trung, D 1
3822 4866
www.novotel.com

Park Royal Saigon Hotel

Park Royal Saigon Hotel is an ideally placed conference hotel which caters to all MICE needs. The hotel offers a wide array of banquet services and can accommodate 30 to 300 guests.

309B-311 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh
www.parkroyalhotels.com

FIVE STAR

Caravelle Hotel

Part of the city's modern history since 1959, few properties in Saigon are quite as iconic. A major center for foreign correspondents during the war, it has emerged as a plush and vibrant luxury hotel in the present era. Caravelle Hotel is one of the city's classiest icons and represents a true slice of Saigon's history while remaining one of its most luxurious places to stay.

19 Lam Son Square, D 1
3823 4999
www.caravellehotel.com

Equatorial Ho Chi Minh City

An international hotel located where the borders of the city's four main districts meet. The city's major commercial and entertainment area is only an 8-minute drive away.

242 Tran Binh Trong, D 5
38397777
www.equatorial.com/hcm

InterContinental Asiana Saigon

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, the InterContinental Asiana Saigon is dedicated to providing local, authentic, and enriching travel experiences. Decorated in tasteful oriental flair, the hotel is dedicated to representing the charms of Asia and evokes the mystique of this beautiful continent and its cultures. Right next to Saigon's key landmarks, this hotel is ideally placed for high-class travellers and groups seeking a high standard of accommodation. Full MICE areas and facilities are on-site.

Corner Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
3520 9999
saigon@ihg.com
www.intercontinental.com/saigon

Lotte Legend Hotel Saigon

Classic hotel offering 5 star amenities along with a scenic view of the Saigon River, and providing a unique culinary experience with many options for fine dining.

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang, D 1
3823 3333
www.legendssaigon.com

Majestic Saigon

One of HCMC's oldest and most characteristic hotels, the Majestic on the Saigon River with its grand French architecture is just a few steps away from Saigon's premiere attractions.

01 Dong Khoi, D 1
3829 5517
www.majesticsaigon.com.vn

Moevenpick Hotel Saigon

An international hotel chain with Swiss roots, this comfortable hotel caters to both businesspeople and families with fine dining options, a fitness centre, and multiple conference rooms.

253 Nguyen Van Troi Apartments, Phu Nhuan
3844 9222
www.moevenpick-hotels.com

New World Saigon Hotel

One of the most impressive business hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, with stunning views and 5 star amenities. 533 luxury rooms and suites offering the perfect ambience for concentrated work and undisturbed relaxation.

76 Le Lai, D 1
3822 8888
saigon@newworldhotels.com
www.saigon.newworldhotels.com

Nikko Saigon

One of the city's newest accommodation jewels, this lavish hotel is designed to make the maximum impression of austere Japanese-style class from the lobby upwards. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in HCMC, with classic, precise and elegant decor.

235 Nguyen Van Cu, D 1
3925 7777
www.hotelnikkosaigon.com.vn

Park Hyatt Saigon

Without a doubt the city's most luxurious hotel, Park Hyatt Saigon features French colonial inspired rooms, two award-winning restaurants, an outdoor pool and a stylish contemporary bar. The exterior is the result of meticulous research into the colonial architecture of the region.

2 Lam Son Square, D 1
3824 1234
www.saigon.park.hyatt.com

Pullman

The 306-room hotel features a contemporary design, a wide range of technological facilities, four bars and restaurants and five meeting venues. Offers signature services including Welcomer, optimal connectivity with the Connectivity by Pullman concept (free high-speed wifi throughout the hotel, Quadriga's Personal Media Network mobile application), the Co-Meeting offer for business event and functions

and Fit and Spa Lounge by Pullman.
148 Tran Hung Dao, D1

Renaissance Riverside Hotel

A five-star hotel located in the heart of Saigon's business and entertainment district. The hotel's 336 rooms and suites offer an incredible view of the Saigon River as well as over the city. Each guest room is designed and furnished with discerning business and leisure travelers in mind. Choose a deluxe room or suite with large desk and ample lighting, in-room coffee and tea service, high speed internet, safe, well-stocked mini-bar as well as the jack bag (connectivity kit).
8-15 Ton Duc Thang, D1
3822 0033
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sgnbn-renaissance-riverside-hotel-saigon

Rex Hotel Saigon

Rex Hotel has consistently won awards for being one of the best hotels in Asia. Impeccable dining options, great location, and 5 star amenities make this recently refurbished hotel a preferred destination for travellers with generous budgets.

141, Nguyen Hue, Ben Nghe, D 1
38292185
www.rexhotelvietnam.com

Saigon Domaine Luxury Residences

High-class getaway hotel located out of the city centre on exotic Thanh Da Island, allowing guests to escape from the chaos of the city life while remaining close to the action. More hotel than apartment complex, The Domaine's private residences are classic and luxurious, making the most of the natural surroundings.
1057 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh
3556 1145
www.saigondomaine.com

Sheraton Saigon Hotel And Towers

Located in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City vibrant business and entertainment district, Sheraton Saigon Hotel & Towers is a 5 star haven of convenience, connecting guests with colleagues and friends.

88 Dong Khoi, D 1
3827 2828
sheratonsaigon@sheraton.com

Sofitel Saigon Plaza Hotel

The Sofitel Saigon Plaza is located in the city center, in the heart of the business district and close to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. 275 elegant rooms and 11 suites, a swimming pool, and a fitness center.
17 Le Duan, D 1
3824 1555
H2077@Sofitel.com
www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-2077-sofitel-saigon-plaza/index.shtml

Windsor Plaza

Located in the heritage area of old Cholon, the Windsor offers authentic Vietnamese and Chinese hospitality with a mix of commercial, cultural, and retail experiences - and they put on a fine buffet.

18 An Duong Vuong, D 5
www.windsorplazahotel.com

CON DAO ISLAND

Six Senses Con Dao

True to the Six Senses philosophy of selecting remote (but accessible) destinations in areas of outstanding natural beauty, Con Dao is an untouched and breathtakingly beautiful area. Con Dao has been built with the very lightest ecological footprint, with villas set up along a mile of sandy beach, sheltered by the green forested hills behind and with stunning vistas of the deep blue sea and the curve of the bay.

Dat Doc Beach, Con Dao, Con Son

DALAT

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat

Ana Mandara Villas Dalat comprises seventeen restored French-style villas from the 1920's and 1930's, preserving the original design, décor and charm, is and set in the cool climate of the rural highlands of Central Vietnam. Striking views of the surrounding town and countryside abound from all areas of the gently sloping hillside property.

Le Lai, Phuong 5, Dalat
www.anamandara-resort.com
(0) 63 3555 888

Blue Moon Hotel & Spa

Located in the heart of breathtaking Dalat, the Blue Moon Resort & Spa is designed to complement the natural beauty of the "City of Eternal Spring." Built opposite the popular and tranquil Xuan Huong Lake, Blue Moon is centrally located and convenient to Dalat's eating, shopping and entertainment spots. Much more than just a comfortable night's sleep, Blue Moon Resort & Spa invites you to experience true hospitality.

4 Phan Boi Chau, Dalat 67, Vietnam
www.bluemoonhotel.com.vn/bluemoon2

Dalat Edensee Lake Resort & Spa

Dalat Edensee Lake Resort & Spa is perched on an idyllic location overlooking Tuyen Lam lake and gently undulating hills. It has four categories of rooms, including VIP villas, all with stunningly furnished rooms, spacious balconies offering sweeping mountain and/or lake view, and subtle finishing touches.

Tuyen Lam Lake, Zone VII.2, Dalat
(063) 383 1515
www.dalatedensee.com

Dalat Green City Hotel 🍷 Oi's Pick

Budget hotel in the center of Dalat. Five minutes from most major attractions in Dalat. Newly refurbished. Beautiful mountain and city views from the rooftop. Features free WiFi, TV, snack bar in all rooms. Coffee shop downstairs. Airport pickup by private car. Motorbike rental. Tour information. Laundry. Computers in lobby for public use.

172 Phan Dinh Phung, Dalat
(063) 3827 999
www.dalatgreencityhotel.com

Dalat Train Villa & Cafe 🍷 Oi's Pick

Located near the Dalat Train Station, the Dalat Train Villa is for short or long staying guests. The villa is a restored 2-story French colonial-era villa. Next to the villa is a French train car, which has been renovated into a bar/cafe/restaurant. Romantic venue. From the lake, take first left after Dalat Train Station.

1 Quang Trung St, Ward 9, Villa #3

Sofitel Dalat Palace

Hotel Sofitel Dalat Palace is one of the most beautiful and amongst the few remaining historical hotels in Southeast Asia. Built in 1922 and meticulously restored in 1995 to its original grandeur, the Sofitel Dalat Palace offers individualized service in the finest

tradition of Vietnamese hospitality.

12 Tran Phu, Dalat
06 3382 5444
info@dalatresorts.com

DANANG

Furama Resort Danang

The Furama Resort enjoys a stunning beachfront location on one of Vietnam's finest beaches, fringed by natural pines and coconut palms. Two four-storey wings overlook the ocean on one side and a freshwater swimming lagoon and manicured tropical gardens on the others.

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

Fusion Maia

It is the first all-pool villa-style resort in the destination and offers 87 pool suites, spa villas, and beach villas each with modern, open-plan living and private courtyard with swimming pool. Customize-your-stay options and breakfast available at multiple locations are a few of the surprising offers in store.

Truong Sa, Ngu Hanh Son, Danang

Pullman Danang Beach Resort

Located on the stunning white sands of Bac My An beach, the friendly and modern Pullman Danang Beach Resort is an oasis of fun. It has 187 guest rooms and cottages and offers warm and genuine Vietnamese service. The resort is perfect for a family holiday or a romantic beach getaway

Vo Nguyen Giap, Khue My, Ngu Hanh Son
(0) 511 395 8888
info@pullman-danang.com

HALONG BAY

Novotel Halong Bay

A glimpse into contemporary Vietnam with echoes of the country's intricate past through its elegant interior décor. Sturdy polished stone, glass and marble stand against the delicate Asian textures of silk, wickerwork and carved wood. With sweeping windows and large mirrors, the hotel captures panoramic views of Halong Bay and its spectacular seascapes at every turn.

Ha Long Road, Bai Chay Ward, Ha Long City
info@novotelhalong.com.vn

TUAN CHAU RESORT

Tuan Chau Resort is constructed in the style of classical French and modern Vietnamese architecture. This is the ideal place to find white sands, blue ocean, and the rejuvenative energy of the Vietnamese tropical sun.

Tuan Chau Island, Ha Long City

HANOI

Hilton Hanoi Opera

This landmark of Hanoi was inspired by the famous Opera House located nearby. A hotel of great beauty and luxury, the Hilton stands in the city's fashionable and elegant French Quarter, and is within close range of the charming Old Quarter and bustling Business District.

1 Le Thanh Tong, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi

Intercontinental Westlake

Superbly situated on the serene waters of Hanoi's West Lake and adjacent to the famous 800-year-old Golden Lotus (Kim Lien) Pagoda. Conveniently located and yet able to offer a retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown Hanoi, the combination of spacious luxurious accommodations, facilities, and attentive Vietnamese hospitality make this the perfect place to stay for both the corporate and leisure traveler.

1a Nghi Tam Tay Ho, Hanoi

Sheraton Hanoi

Perfectly located by the shores of the largest lake in Hanoi and surrounded by a beautifully landscaped garden and courtyard, the hotel provides the perfect balance between tranquillity and convenience.

K5 Nghi Tam, 11 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

The Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

***** 🍷 Oi's Pick

Features include 364 rooms and suites, excellent French cuisine at Le Beaulieu, Vietnamese specialties at Spices Garden, and Angelina - Hanoi's most "avant garde" Italian Restaurant & Lounge. Seven function rooms, a swimming pool, fitness centre and the Le Spa du Metropole are also available in the hotel.

15 Ngo Quyen, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
h1555@sofitel.com

HOI AN

The Nam Hai

A stunning all-villa resort located on the pristine China Beach featuring 60 one-bedroom retreats as well as 40 privately-owned two-to-five bedroom residences each with a private infinity pool.

Hamlet 1 Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban, Quang Nam

Boutique Hoi An Resort 🍷 Oi's Pick

Boutique Hoi An Resort offers 82 rooms and villas, with all rooms facing the sea with private balconies. Other facilities include spa with 3 treatment rooms and 5 massage pavilions, fully-equipped gym, restaurant, lobby lounge and pool bar and conference facilities accommodating 80 guests for dinner functions and 130 guests for cocktail parties.

Group 6, Block Tan Thinh, Ward Cam An, Hoi An City
www.boutiquehoianresort.com

HUE

Ana Mandara Hue

Located a scenic 15km drive from central Hue, this is spacious resort with the largest villas and rooms in the area. The property includes private pool villas, beach villas, duplex and deluxe rooms in a wide range of styles and decor designed with complete and modern facilities.

An Hai Village, Thuan An Town, Hue Phu Vang

La Residence Hotel & Spa

This former French Governor's residence dates to 1930 and is a masterpiece of art deco design. Its incredible location overlooking the Citadel and the Perfume River brings this 122-room hotel a total and serene tranquillity. The hotel features a 40m outdoor salt swimming pool at river height giving the illusion of merging into the Perfume River. Ideal for executive retreats and exotic incentives programmes.

5 Le Loi, Hue

NHA TRANG

Evason Ana Mandara

The exclusive location affords city-centre access to Nha Trang's only beachfront resort. It is surrounded by private tropical gardens, offering simplicity, serenity and refinement together with spectacular views of Nha Trang Bay. Unforgettable incentive experience.

Beachside Tran Phu Boulevard, Nha Trang

Mia Nha Trang

Every one of the 50 rooms has a sea view and each has its own private veranda, which offers the discerning

guest the option of experiencing a beach getaway in ultimate privacy. That has helped Mia Resort Nha Trang to gain numerous accolades including Finalist of Best New Boutique Hotel In The World; Runner up of Best Budget Hotel-The Smith Hotel Awards 2013; and the Certificate of Excellence 2012, 2013 and 2014 from TripAdvisor.

Bai Dong, Cam Hai Dong, Cam Lam
www.mianhatrang.com

Six Senses Ninh Van Bay

The resort is one of Asia's most exclusive and intimate beach escapes, sitting on dramatic Ninh Van Bay, with its impressive rock formations overlooking the South China Sea, white sand beach and towering mountains behind.

Ninh Van, Khanh Hoa

Sheraton Nha Trang

Sheraton Nha Trang Hotel & Spa offers ten categories of accommodation – from spacious, deluxe rooms to 70m2 executive suites and a huge presidential suite. With exemplary conference facilities, this is the number-one MICE resort in the region.

26-28 Tran Phu, Nha Trang
05 8388 0000

PHAN THIET

Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa

The new face of the former l'Anmien, this resort offers an exclusive haven of luxury and relaxation in a spectacular beachfront location right in the heart of Mui Ne. The only property in the Mui Ne district with full conferencing facilities and a range of exclusive villas – and it has an impressive wine cellar.

Mui Ne

Muine Bay Resort

Located in the Mui Ne Bay and overlooking the Hon Lao pristine island of blue sea, Muine Bay Resort includes 103 rooms in 4-stars standard of which 32 bungalows designed and inspired by the Cham Tower.

Khu pho 14, Mui Ne Ward, Phan Thiet
www.muinebayresort.com
0622220222



Novela Muine Resort & Spa

A 150-meter beach resort that offers luxurious accommodations, countless modern facilities and amenities with attentive services. A private and unique space in the heart of resort, Novela restaurant serves a daily breakfast, lunch, dinner and any other banquet with Asian and European cuisine. With two floors, guests can enjoy wine and dining and view the beautiful beach and sand hill.

96A Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ham Tien Mui Ne, Phan Thiet
www.novelaresort.vn
(62) 374 3456

Princess d'Annam

The two Empress Suites are the pinnacle of luxury accommodation in Vietnam – they are mini millionaire's mansions in themselves, fully-equipped, bright and spacious, and possessing of

the same ethereal design quality that pervades this whole resort. Set in the remote Ke Ga Bay, wordlessly beautiful.
Hon Lan, Binh Thuan
06 2368 2222

The Cliff Resort and Residences

Offers 128 rooms equipped with a myriad of amenities such as 3D smart TV, safe and mini bar as well as private bathroom. It boasts an extensive lap pool, a kid's pool and pool bar as well as submerged on deck swimming pool chairs. Its restaurant serves a selection of local seafood specialties and Western cuisine.

Zone 5, Phu Hai Ward, Phan Thiet
www.theciffresort-binhthuan.com

The Sailing Beach Resort

Offers a contemporary setting in sensual tropical harmony that befits its bay host. All 192 rooms, with spacious private balconies affording stunning ocean views, are scattered across tropical vegetation, ponds and rests steps from an endless beach.

107 Ho Xuan Huong, Phan Thiet

WindFlower Beach Boutique Hotel

Located in the resort capital of Vietnam – Mui Ne Bay, WindFlower Beach Boutique Hotel offers an intimate setting for guests to enjoy a getaway on the beach to its fullest. The hotel is home to 24 cozy deluxe rooms with services and sophistication that are expected from a beach boutique hotel.

76 Huynh Thuc Khang, Mui Ne
(Vietnamese) (06) 2374 3969 / (English) 090 291 3969
www.windflowermuine.com

PHU QUOC ISLAND

Chen Sea Resort & Spa

Located in a quiet bay, this resort allows guests to enjoy the peace and natural beauty of Phu Quoc while also enjoying the exclusive atmosphere that the location suggests and the resort offers.

Bai Xep, Phu Quoc

Saigon Phu Quoc Resort

Located on a hill of coconut palm trees, Saigon Phu Quoc is a beautiful, quiet seaside resort with plenty of sunshine. Just 10 minutes from the airport, the resort is an ideal haven for relaxing, fishing, trekking, snorkeling, and scuba diving.

62 Tran Hung Dao, Phu Quoc
07 7384 6999

La Veranda

The most distinguished of Phu Quoc Island's hotels and guesthouses, La Veranda sports paddle fans, butter-yellow exteriors, whitewashed louvers, and tropical gardens recalling a colonial plantation. Freestanding deluxe villas are notable for their sea-facing porches, spacious bathrooms, and cathedral ceilings.

Tran Hung Dao, Duong Dong Beach

Paris Beach Resort 🍷 Or's Pick

Owned and managed by a friendly and hospitable French-Vietnamese woman and her French husband, the resort is located about a 15-minute taxi ride from the airport. It has an outdoor swimming pool, a private beachfront, recreation room, bicycles and a restaurant serving local and French food. Each room or bungalow has air conditioning, a mini bar, cable TV and free Wi-Fi. They also offer tours around the island.

Cua Lap, Duong To, Phu Quoc

QUY NHON

Life Wellness Resort Quy Nhon

A hide-away style spa and beach destination set in 13.5 hectares of private mountainous land and beach. The tranquillity, splendid views, Cham-inspired architecture and surroundings

are so far unmatched in Vietnam.

Ghenh Rang, Bai Dai Beach, Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh

Bai Tram Resort and Spa

Bai Tram is based on holistic ideals and the search for environmental balance embodying the trend towards seeing ourselves, the natural world, and the man-made environment as one.

Hoa Loi, Xuan Canh, Song Cau, Phu Yen

VUNG TAU

The Grand-Ho Tram Strip

The Grand - Ho Tram Strip is Vietnam's first largest integrated resort and ultimately will include an 1,100-room five-star hotel, a world-class casino, restaurants, high-tech meeting space, an exclusive VIP area, as well as a variety of beach-front recreation activities. The first 541-room tower of this development opened in July 2013 with its casino including 90 live tables and 614 electronic game positions. The second 559-room tower is on track to open in 2015.

Phuoc Thuan Commune, Xuyen Moc District

cinemas & theaters



A O Show

A O Show is a unique blend of bamboo cirque, acrobatic acts, and theatrical visual drama. It depicts the charming beauty of Southern Vietnamese life in villages & cities, where the richness of its culture remains despite inevitable urbanization. Live traditional music which echoes of rural work songs, scenic and lighting design makes the A O Show, which is performed at the 115-year-old historic Saigon Opera House, worth seeing when you visit Ho Chi Minh City.

7 Cong Truong Lam Son, DI
reservation@aoshowsaigon.com
www.aoshowsaigon.com

Ben Thanh Theatre

Once the cultural center of District 1 when it was built in 1995, this is a good air-conditioned theater for Vietnamese shows & cultural activities that can accommodate over 1000 people.

6 Mac Dinh Chi, DI

CT Plaza Megastar

This theater complex offers close proximity to shops for shoppers and many other attractions. Large cinema complex on the 7th floor with 3D theatres and VIP room.

Level 10, 60A Truong Son, Tan Binh

Galaxy

Vietnamese cinema showing international and domestic films.

116 Nguyen Du, DI

Ho Chi Minh Conservatory Of Music

One of three conservatories in Vietnam, offering world class musical education and performances. Concerts at the local Ho Chi Minh City Music School.

112 Nguyen Du, DI

IDECAR Drama Theatre

IDECAR is a theater holding French cultural exchanges as well as offering courses in French.

31 Thai Van Lung, DI

Saigon Opera House

The Municipal Theater is a thriving performance centre with regular musical and cultural shows - predominantly of the classical, high-brow, and top-dollar variety.

7 Lam Son Square, DI

serviced apartments

Diamond Island Luxury Residences

Diamond Island Luxury Residences offers 68 fully-furnished apartments, ranging from two- to four-bedroom units with private balconies providing panoramic views of the stunning surroundings. Each apartment comes with a fully-equipped kitchen, en-suite bathrooms, separate work and living areas. Each lavish space features plush interiors, modern amenities, elegant furnishings and carefully chosen trimmings and fixtures, creating a luxurious harmony of comfort and tranquility that will have you relaxed and recharged, and functioning at peak performance.

No 01 – Street No.104-BTT, Quarter 3, Binh Trung Tay Ward, D2
096 829 3388 / 3742 5678
www.the-ascott.com

InterContinental Asiana Saigon Residences

It's a 31-floor tower with 260 rooms; the Residences offers superb panoramic views of downtown area and is part of the Kumho Asiana Plaza - the city's finest integrated complex featuring commercial, hotel, residential and a diverse choice of dining and dining outlets. They will also benefit from the preferred amenities at the InterContinental Asiana Saigon next door.

Corner of Le Van Huu & Nguyen Du
3520 8888



Jasmine Court

Located on a peaceful and beautiful side street off Nguyen Van Troi Boulevard, only 5 minutes from the Tan Son Nhat International Airport and 15 minutes to the city centre, this boutique property with only 12 apartments is comprised of one and two-bedroom suites of various sizes. All apartments are designed in a fresh contemporary style and finished in a pleasing neutral colour scheme. With personalized service, our warm and attentive staff will make your stay with us a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

307/29 Nguyen Van Troi, Tan Binh
08 3844 6639 - 092 669 9033
www.jasminecourt.com.vn

Norfolk Mansion

A comfortable serviced luxury apartment in the city center, the Norfolk features an outdoor pool, gym & sauna, and high-class Cantonese restaurant.

17-19-21, Ly Tu Trong, DI

Somerset Ho Chi Minh City

Designed with families in mind, it provides relocating executives the space and security to build a warm and comfortable home. Friendly staff are always on hand to help with local knowledge. You can join in a wide range of social, cultural and lifestyle activities, especially designed to help you integrate into the local culture.

8A Nguyen Binh Kiem, DI
3822 8899
www.somerset.com/vietnam

Somerset Chancellor Court

Each of these 172 spacious serviced apartments in District 1 is fully-furnished with an open kitchen concept, contemporary western style décor, and a large balcony.

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, DI
38229197

Somerset Vista Ho Chi Minh City

It has an extensive array of modern facilities and provides convenient access to a hypermarket, international schools, a medical clinic, retail outlets and offices.

628C Hanoi Highway, D2
6255 9900
www.somerset.com/vietnam

The Landmark

The Landmark features serviced apartments, offices, luxury dining, sports clubs, swimming pool at the rooftop of the building with great views of the Saigon River. It offers one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units for rent. Amenities offered include wireless broadband Internet access, 100 percent power backup, room service, maid service and laundry, 24-hour reception and airport shuttle service.

5B Ton Duc Thang, DI
www.thelandmarkvietnam.com

travel agencies

Asiana Travel Mate

Offering tours to magnificent scenic areas in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and India - the firm has strong purchasing power in these regions, allowing it to offer heavily discounted rates.

92-96 Nguyen Hue, DI

BeenInAsia.com

Online travel in Southeast Asia. Offers you selection of best hotels and great tours. Create your own trip or we can tailor make your itinerary.

www.beeninasia.com

Buffalo Tours

A premium travel agency that helps travelers customize their itinerary and destination packages. From corporate to small tour packages available.

81 Mac Thi Bui, DI
www.buffalotours.com.vn

Exotissimo Travel

Exotissimo Travel offers tours to Vietnam, the region and the whole wide world!

Local and regional tours for family and visitors are quick and easy to arrange, from standard to higher-end versions. Less common requests are tailor-built for you by friendly online operators and/or the pleasant District 2 location office.

A District 1 presence will re-open soon.

41 Thao Dien, D2
www.exotissimo.com
anphu@exotissimo.com

Inside Asia Travel

Inside Asia Travel is a boutique luxury travel provider of tailor made travel arrangements for English speaking expats and travelers through Southeast Asia. Guests enjoy highly personalized, bespoke travel arrangements suited to individual tastes and budget.

www.insideasiatravel.com
3844 1005 (Ext: 221)

Saigon River Tour

Established in 1998, Saigon River Tour provides speedboat services and speedboat tours (ecotourism, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta) from Bach Dang Pier.

10b Ton Duc Thang, DI

Living

IMAGE BY MINH TUAN



Romantic Notions

Inspired by the French classical period, Huynh Kim Hien Design House has launched a Royal Collection that harmonizes luxury with romance





Producer: **Nguyen Tra My**
Director: **Hoang Dao**
Photographer: **Minh Tuan**
Model: **Actress Van Thanh**
Makeup: **Duy Lee**
Hair: **Giau Tang**
Assistant: **Vinh Hung**
Costume & Stylist: **Huynh Kim Hien**

Unplanned Parenthood

A day inside an abortion center

TEXT BY ANNIE HOANG IMAGES BY NGOC TRAN



MY MORNING SHIFT at the Reproductive Healthcare (RH) Center had ended. I'd recently been transferred to the pre-abortion counseling room from the youth-only examination room across the hall, and it was time for lunch.

I'd set out for Vietnam from the US under the auspices of a research grant to understand the experiences of young people in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare in Vietnam in its socio-economic, cultural, and legal context. It had made sense to begin my observations in the youth-only examination room in the only RH facility in Saigon catering specifically to women 24 years and under. However, as the weeks passed by, what started out as just a general ethnographic exploration of reproductive health turned into a focused interest in the "abortion epidemic". I didn't fully understand what the big deal was until I noticed that nearly half of my female patients came in for an abortion-related issue and for many, this was not their first time.

To provide some real numbers from my fieldwork so far, the center received 208 and 218 abortion cases respectively in January and February 2014. During those two months, young people aged 24 years and under accounted for one-third of those cases. Aggregating the data from the first six months in 2014, Hung Vuong Hospital had a monthly average of 1,321 medical abortion cases, where surgical abortions consistently accounted for nearly 25 percent of the total number. It has been previously estimated that in Saigon alone an average of 200 abortions take place every day.

After having lunch in the center's cafeteria, I was walking upstairs when I noticed a young woman in tears, sitting alone on those blue waiting chairs outside the pre-abortion counseling room. I sat down next to her and asked her what was wrong. She replied, *"toi dua be trong bung,"* expressing her guilt about the baby inside her. I realized from her statement that she was about to have an abortion that afternoon. To protect her identity, I will refer to her as Lan.

Lan's fetus was 11-weeks-old. Because medical abortions (the abortion pill) are not allowed after eight weeks at the center, she was going to have to be sedated and have a vacuum aspiration procedure. It's exactly what it sounds like – she was going to have a suction machine empty her uterus.

In Vietnam, abortions can be performed legally up to the 22nd week, and only the major Ob-Gyn hospitals such as Hung Vuong Hospital and Tu Du Hospital are authorized to perform abortions in cases over 12 weeks. This center accepts abortions only within the first trimester.

I was surprised enough to find out that Lan was 17-years-old. But what shocked me more was her doctor's decision to allow Lan to have an abortion without her parents' permission. In Vietnam, anyone under 18 must have a parent with them to provide consent. I found out later that, specifically at this center, when the patient is 17 there tends to be a gray zone where the doctor

in question may allow the procedure to take place depending on the patient's circumstances. After learning more about Lan's background, I understood the doctor's decision. She had come all the way from Dong Nai Province alone. She had been living with her sick grandmother while her mother lived with her third husband in Taiwan. The whereabouts of her biological father was unclear, and his side of the family did not acknowledge her. The only person she knew who lived in Saigon was her 19-year-old boyfriend. They had been in a long-distance relationship for nearly six months. Most abortion patients are accompanied by their partners, but Lan's boyfriend couldn't get out of work that day and instead just gave her some money for the procedure.

Misconceptions About Contraceptives

Why did Lan wait nearly three months? She explained that her periods were usually irregular, so she didn't think to take a pregnancy test after her first missed period. This is a common response given by many abortion patients. I learned that the couple had never used condoms. When asked why, she said she'd never really brought it up with her boyfriend and neither had he - another common response. Most of my female patients, whether seeking abortions or not, have expressed their hesitancy in negotiating condom use with their partners and many end up shifting that responsibility to the man. This means if their partner does not bring up the topic, the conversation will never happen. And of those who do raise it, their partners sometimes refuse to use them. As a result, many female patients abuse emergency contraception - sometimes at the behest of their partner, and sometimes without their partner's knowledge. Not surprisingly, Lan had used emergency contraception after every time she had sex.

Why didn't Lan use any of the hormonal contraception methods available, such as the IUD, the implant, the shot, or the pill? Like most patients I've encountered, she didn't know what the implant and shot were and thought the IUD was only for married women with kids. She also believed in the widely-held misconception that hormonal contraception leads to sterility. Many of them have heard a combination of horror stories and misinformation - mostly from the internet and older women - and are understandably apprehensive about certain birth control methods.

Moreover, because of this "if it's not natural, it's harmful" belief and general ignorance about birth control, many of my patients experience reproductive coercion or birth control sabotage by their partners - a situation where a man attempts to adversely manipulate a woman's use of birth control, undermining her efforts to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. I had a case where a young patient had to have an abortion because her partner didn't tell her he ejaculated in her. He didn't want her to use emergency contraception for fear that she would be sterile after usage. He also

"I was surprised enough to find out that Lan was 17-years-old. But what shocked me more was her doctor's decision to allow Lan to have an abortion without her parents' permission"



Annie Hoang

refused to use condoms. There was another case where the partner discovered that the condom broke but neglected to tell his girlfriend because he didn't think it was a big deal.

The alarm rang, indicating that my lunch break was over. It was time for Lan to enter the pre-abortion counseling room. When she walked in, I saw the entire room looking at her with judgmental eyes. The midwives were surprised that she had no one at all to accompany her. In fact, they were quite hostile to her, something that I see happen to young female patients every day. They asked, "If something serious happens to you, who will take care of you?" I thought this was an ironic question considering she was at a medical center staffed with doctors and nurses - precisely the people charged to "take care" of someone when something medical goes wrong. The head midwife almost denied her the abortion for this reason until the doctor who was performing it gave the OK. That doctor was also the Director of the Center.

Lan signed the abortion agreement form, received information about the risks and

possible side effects of the procedure and experienced a lackadaisical, 30 second contraceptive counseling session that consisted of the midwife routinely asking her which birth control method she would use after the abortion - instead of properly taking the time to explain her options. Intimidated and uncomfortable, Lan quickly replied she would use condoms, before slipping out of the door and heading towards the changing room.

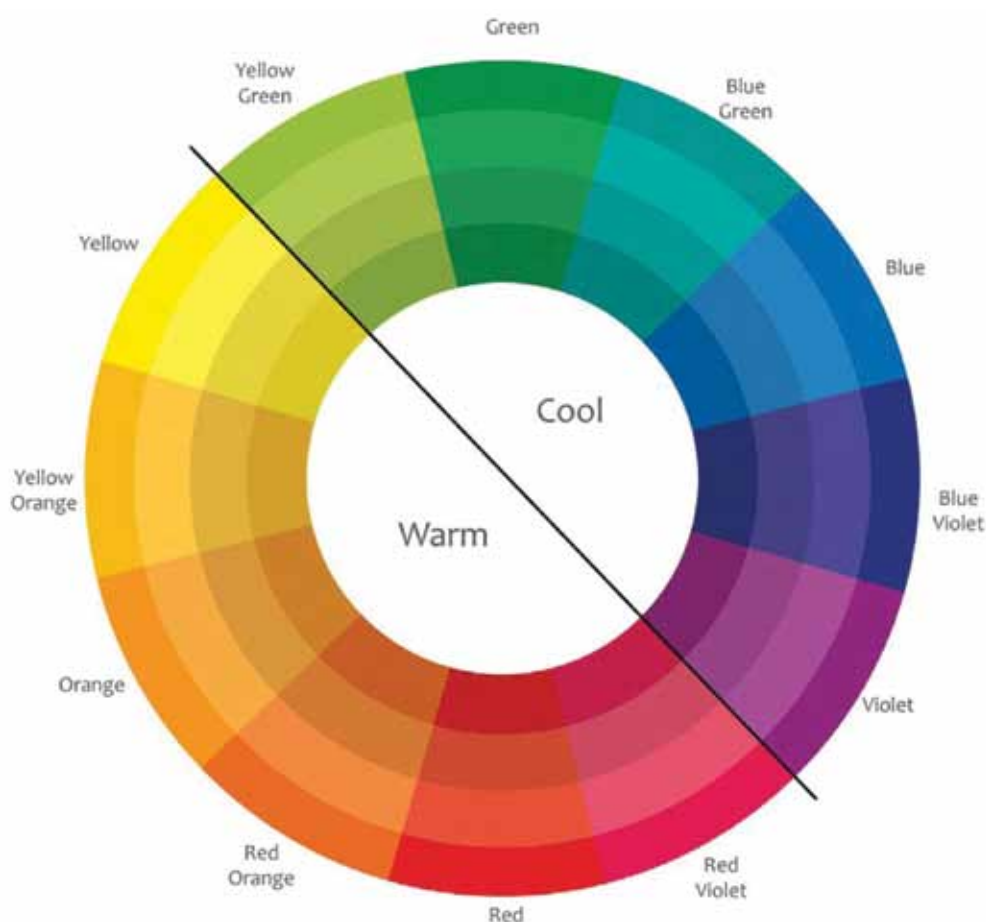
The abortion procedure took less than 15 minutes. I went to visit her afterwards in one of the resting rooms and she seemed clearly tired and weak. I was outside the room when I saw a midwife and the Director standing by her bed. I saw the Director place some money in Lan's hand to help her cover her hotel expenses. They recommended she stay at the center until closing and then walk to the nearest hotel and stay in Saigon overnight instead of taking a three hour ride back to Dong Nai. It was a rare and sincere moment of kindness that contrasted with the sour hospitality provided earlier by the medical staff. And for once, I couldn't help but smile. ■

A Colorful Guy

Why you need to know Roy G. Biv when choosing a color scheme for your home



As an interior and furniture designer for Austin Home Interiors, **McNeill Shiner** is always looking for new ways to mix styles and influences to create spaces that are uplifting, comfortable and very personal.



COLOR IS A GREAT place to start in exploring your personal design tastes, because our reactions to it tend to be instinctual and very personal. Start by letting go of any preconceived ideas about color. Forget what you may have read about what's trendy in fashion or interiors and really pay attention to what you're naturally drawn to. Does that red wall make you feel energized or claustrophobic? When browsing in a clothing boutique, do you gravitate towards saturated, vivid colors or more subtle tones mixed with gray or black?

How about nature: Is it a periwinkle blue sky that makes you feel at ease, the deep tones of greenery, or sunny yellow blossoms on a tree near your home?

Let's say that green evokes a response that you'd like to bring into your home. Now, how to use it? Here's where you need to have some idea of the kind of energy and atmosphere you want to create in your space. Marc Chagall tells us that "all colors are the friends of their neighbors and the lovers of their opposites." Each has their benefit, of course - passion at its best is exciting

and energizing, but messy when it goes wrong. Friendship should be uplifting, comfortable and relaxed.

If it's drama you're after, you'll want to focus on colors that are opposite to one another on the wheel, known as complementary. For green, that's red. Are you thinking Christmas yet? Pure red and green would easily head in that direction, but when we select variations on the hue, the result is more nuanced and sophisticated. In living room #1 (pictured), the color scheme follows from the large abstract hung above the sofa. A vibrant

All colors are the friends of their neighbors and the lovers of their opposites

red was an easy choice with the painting, but can you imagine the room with something else in place of the green? There are warm yellows, bold blues and deep reddish-browns. The light, fresh, spring green chosen by the designer relates to subtle yellow-green tones in the painting, but gives the room a completely different feel. Less obvious usually equates to more interesting.

Toning it Up & Down

Using tones adjacent to one another on the color wheel creates an analogous color palette. It's calming for your eyes, and tends to be easier to get right. Friendship doesn't have to mean boredom, however. The bedroom (pictured) is a great example of this. Warm yellow and beige tones mix with icy greens and touches of turquoise. The color is most vibrant on the drapery, skirted table and trim on pillows, but your eyes don't have to work hard to connect it all. Another part of what works in this example is the way the color varies. For a more interesting palette, you'll need to think beyond the pure colors (called hues) that we learn as children. A hue mixed with white creates a tint, gray for a tone and black for a shade. Imagine a room done completely in pastels. You may love the colors individually, but together they'll look young and overly saccharine. Using all shades can result in a dull space. Together, however, the contrast between them will make both more compelling - lights look lighter and darks look darker. The most interesting and layered spaces will use a mix of hues, tints, tones and shades.

You might think that the easiest color palette to develop in your space would be monochromatic, but that isn't necessarily true. Your color variations need to be chosen carefully in order to get the look you want. Too similar but not identical, and they may clash; too dissimilar, and



Living Room #1



Living Room #2



Bedroom

they won't connect. The phrase "same same, but different" comes to mind here. Monochromatic doesn't have to mean safe or simple either. In living room #2 (pictured), do you notice the way the use of color draws your eyes upwards? Beginning with the black and white floor, you naturally work up from the emerald sofa to the medium-toned screen, the lighter yellow-green on the walls, and finally the white chandelier. There's a lot more happening in this space to make it work, but you can see that color plays a large part. A monochromatic palette actually allowed the designer to be bolder

and more playful in other elements of the space, such as pattern and texture.

With endless variations on Roy G. Biv (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet), this can only be a starting point. But let's review. First, know your own personal and emotional response to color, and find a match for that in the feeling you want to create in your space. Second, generate calm with analogous color, or drama with complementary. Finally, build a more sophisticated palette by layering variations on your initial choices. And with that, you're ready to begin. ■

>>The List Education



Atexpats is Ho Chi Minh City's first truly comprehensive insider's guide for foreign residents

education

SCHOOLS [CHILDREN]



ABC International School (ABCIS)

Inspected and judged an outstanding school by British Government Inspectors (October 2013), the ABCIS is one of the few schools worldwide awarded this Department for Education rating. Progress of students puts the ABCIS among the top 8% of schools in the world. Providing education for 2-18 year olds in a supportive and friendly environment, it delivers a culturally adapted version of the British National Curriculum supported by Cambridge & AQA IGCSE and AS/A levels. Students are prepared for Universities in the UK, USA, Australia, Korea and Canada.

Enquiries and Admissions
Tel: 5431 1833/34/35/36
Email: office@theabcis.com
www.theabcis.com



American International School

Founded in 2006, American International School (AIS) is a private, coeducational, university-preparatory school for students from preschool to grade 12. The language of instruction is English. The school offers standard American curriculum with a complement of performing arts, visual arts, music and sport programs.

Elementary School (102C Nguyen Van Cu, D1)
Middle School (35 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh)
High School (781/C1-C2 Le Hong Phong, D10)

APU International School

Operating since 2004, APU International School is a private coeducational international school enrolling students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Instruction is conducted in English, but there is an English Language Development (ELD) program available to students who require it. It is currently a member of the College Board, and is an official SAT testing site.

Elementary (501 Lac Long Quan, D11)

Middle and High School (286 Lanh Binh Thang, D11)
www.apu.edu.vn

Australian International School (AIS)

The Australian International School is an IB World School with three world class campuses in District 2, HCMC, offering an international education from kindergarten to senior school with the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Cambridge Secondary Programme (including IGCSE) and IB Diploma Programme (DP).

Xi Campus (Kindergarten)
190 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
Thao Dien Campus (Kindergarten & Primary School)
APSC Compound
36 Thao Dien, D2
Thu Thiem Campus (Kindergarten, Primary, Middle & Senior School)
East-West Highway, D2
3742 4040
www.aisvietnam.com



British International School (BIS)

Inspected and approved by the British Government, BIS provides a British style curriculum for an international student body from pre-school to Year 13. The school is staffed by British qualified and trained teachers with recent UK experience. Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and a member of FOBISIA, BIS is the largest international school in Vietnam.

An Phu Primary Campus
225 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2
3744 4551
apprimary@bisvietnam.com
An Phu Secondary Campus
246 Nguyen Van Huong Street, D2
3744 2335
apsecondary@bisvietnam.com
Tu Xuong Primary Campus
43-45 Tu Xuong Street, D3
3932 0210
txprimary@bisvietnam.com
www.bisvietnam.com



Canadian International School

Now in its fifth year of operation with a student population of 700 students in grades K-12, CIS- VN has received approval from the Ministry

of Education and Training in Vietnam and the Department of Education and Training in Ho Chi Minh City to accept both Vietnamese nationals and expat nationals. The school's language of instruction is English.

No 86, Road 23, D7
www.cis.edu.vn

Canada Vietnam Kindergarten

According to the average age of each class as well as the physiology and psychology of each age, CVK has deployed a curriculum that ensures the balance between study and playtime, Vietnamese and English learning.

Street 23, Tan Phu, D7
5412 3028
www.cvk.edu.vn

CreativeKids

CreativeKids preschool program is tailored based on Singapore and New Zealand preschool program. Offers special curriculum including after school English and Mandarin class, for kids whose English is their second language, and parent's English conversation course, for adults who need to converse in English in daily situations.

No 216, Lo H7, My Hung, Phu My Hung New City Center, D7
5412 1306
www.creativekids.edu.my



Deutsche Schule Ho Chi Minh City International German School

Deutsche Schule (IGS) offers a German curriculum from Early Years to Grade 12 which is approved and supported by the German government. IGS is staffed by native German, Vietnamese and English speakers who have many years of teaching experience. We offer a link between Vietnamese and German culture, an international program with German standards and the immersion of German culture into everyday life.

12, Vo Trung Toan, An Phu
08 37 44 63 44
info@igs-hcmc.de
www.igs-hcmc.de



French Ministry of Education.
234 Nguyen Van Huong, D2
3519 1521

www.creche-ecole-francaises-internationales-hochiminh.com



European International School HCMC



The European International School Ho Chi Minh City (EIS) offers a supportive and challenging academic education from Early Years to Grade 12 (K-12) an. EIS promotes inter-cultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century. Its motto is "Educating Global Citizens".

Thao Dien Campus
730 F-G-K Le Van Mien Street
Thao Dien, D2
www.eishcmc.com



Fosco International School

Caters to pre-school children from 18 months to 4 years and elementary students from 5 to 12 years. It offers enrolment opportunities to both local and expat children providing childcare services, comprehensive pre-school and kindergarten programs and an internationally aligned elementary school curriculum.

40 Ba Huyen Than Quan, D3
3930 5930
www.fis.edu.vn

Global Indian International School

Offers Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and the Global Montessori Plus Program. The school's Nine Gems model is a proprietary tool to achieve a balance between academics and experience, mental and physical development, fine arts and performing arts, language skills and creativity, personality development, ethics and entrepreneurship.

172 Nguyen Van Thu, D1
www.globalindianschool.org

Horizon International Bilingual School

Offers curriculum for kindergarten, primary, secondary and high school. Classes are taught in English and Vietnamese. Offers scholarships for children who achieve excellence in school.

6 - 6A - 8, Street 44, D2
5402 2482
www.hibs.vn

Ecole Antonia

A kindergarten and primary school with pre-school classes designed in accordance with the guidelines of the French government and primary classes taught following the French model based on the official guidelines of the



The International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC)

The most established school in Ho Chi Minh City is celebrating 20 years of success in 2013. ISHCMC is the only school in HCMC with full accreditation to teach all three IB programs to students from 2 to 18. ISHCMC is fully accredited by both the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC), two of the most prestigious international accreditation organisations. ISHCMC has 975 students from over 50 different nationalities enjoying recently upgraded facilities.

28 Vo Truong Toan, D2
www.ishcmc.com



International School Saigon Pearl

ISSP is an elementary school for children 2 to 11 years of age. Offers an academically rigorous American curriculum. The school has several smartboards, projectors and an independent IT suite that allows students the opportunity to interact with technology to enhance learning.

92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
082227788
www.issp.edu.vn

Kids Club Saigon

Early childhood centers in Phu My Hung offering creative play-based programs for children ages 2 to 5. Known for unique facilities, experienced staff, high-quality learning resources, and small class sizes

79/7 Pham Thai Buong, D7
27/3 Ha Huy Tap, D7
5412 5944
www.kidsclubsaiгон.com

Kinderworld International Kindergarten

KinderWorld International Kindergarten has been in operation since November 2006 and offers both international and local kindergarten services for children aged 1.5 to 5.5 years old.

The Manor Building, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 3036
enquiry@manorhcmc.kinderworld.edu.vn

L'atelier

Classes include spelling and grammar tuition after school, monitoring for the French education program, preparing for official tests (DEFL, DAFL, TFL, IB), and Vietnamese lessons, including extra-curricular activities during the holidays.

33/19 Quoc Huong, D2
3744 6844
www.latelier-anphu.com

Little Angels International Preschool

Offers nursery and kindergarten classes and provides full-time or part-time childcare and kindergarten services for children 4 months through 5 years.

159/12 Hoang Van Thu, Phu Nhuan
3844 3719
www.little-angels.edu.vn

Montessori International School of Vietnam

The school seeks to enable all its pupils to achieve their fullest potential by providing them with a nurturing and stimulating environment, and by being sensitive and responsive to their individual needs. Their curriculum is designed based on Montessori methodology and practice, and is enhanced with a variety of programs.

42/1 Ngo Quang Huy, D2
3744 2639
www.montessori.edu.vn

Noah's Club

Providing high quality care & education for kids aged 1-6 in District 2. Various creative & fun programs, beautiful outdoor space with a warm family feeling and more.

No3, Duong so 4, Nguyen U Di, D2
3744 4709
noahandmum@yahoo.com.vn



Renaissance International School Saigon



Renaissance is an International British school providing an inclusive curriculum based upon the British curriculum complemented by the International Primary Curriculum and International Baccalaureate. The school has made a conscious decision to limit numbers and keep class sizes small to ensure each student is offered an education tailored to meet his or her individual learning needs. It is a family school providing a stimulating and secure learning environment with first-class facilities including a 350-seat theatre, swimming pool, mini-pool, play-areas, gymnasium, IT labs, music and drama rooms, science labs and an all-weather pitch.

74 Nguyen Thi Thap, D7
3773 3171 ext 120/121/122
www.renaissance.edu.vn



Saigon Mandarin English Kindergarten

For children aged 5 months to 6 years old. The learning environment is highly interactive and play-based, where every child is encouraged to reach out and relate to people around him or her, going through learning stages: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

133 Nguyen Trai, D5
38 38 11 23
www.smehr.edu.vn

Schools of North America

Offers a dual curriculum - instructing students in a Vietnamese program directed by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in tandem with an American program aligned with the State of California. Students graduate after accumulating 248 credits which is equivalent to high school graduates in the US.

Street 5A, Trung Son Residential Quarter, Binh Chanh
402 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
www.sna.edu.vn

Saigon South International School

Founded in 1997, Saigon South International School seeks to accommodate an increasing need for American education for both local residents and expatriate families. SSIS enrolls over 850 students in Early Childhood - Grade 12 from over thirty-three countries in a spacious six-hectare, well-equipped campus.

78 Nguyen Duc Canh, D7
www.ssis.edu.vn



Saigon Star International School

Saigon Star is a student focused international primary school offering high quality first class provision. Specializing in the British National Curriculum, all of the class teachers hold international teaching qualification. In the early years program, a Montessori specialist works closely with the main class teachers to ensure a high rate of progress. The school also provides specialists for children requiring extra support with ESL.

Residential Area No.5, Thanh My Loi Ward, D2
3742 STAR / 3742 7827
www.saiгонstarschool.edu.vn



Singapore International School at Saigon South

Commenced operations in August 2008, The Singapore International School at Saigon South (SIS @ SS) is a purpose-built international school campus that has a capacity of 625 students. It operates classes from kindergarten to senior high school.

No 29, Road 3, Trung Son Residential Area, Binh Chanh
www.saiгонsouth.sis.edu.vn

Smartkids

Focuses on the holistic development of the child and combines Montessori, Steiner and Reggio Emilia philosophies into its program. Also offers childcare for young children until 6 years old.

1172 Thao Dien Compound, D2
3744 6076
www.smartkidsinfo.com

Stamford Grammar - SLC Kindergarten

Provides comprehensive and holistic education for infants from 4 months to kindergarten students of 6 years old. Each class is conducted by one qualified native English teacher and two qualified local teachers.

4bis Phung Khac Khoan, D1

214 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
www.stamfordgrammar.com

Vietnam Australia International School (VAS)

Established in 2004 and licensed by the Vietnamese government, VAS is offering educational services to some 4,500 students from K through 12 at 6 campuses in Ho Chi Minh City.

www.vas.edu.vn

Vstar School

Vstar School provides education from Grades 1-12 in a spacious 30,000m2 environment including a sports field and swimming pool.

Him Lam Residential Complex, Nguyen Huu Tho, D7



The American School of Vietnam



The American School of Vietnam (TAS) is a young school that has been granted candidacy by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), representing 20 nationalities. TAS provides an American-based curriculum with rigorous performance standards and a variety of academic offerings including Advanced Placement courses, university credit courses through our partnership with Missouri State University, and an Intensive ESL Program for English Language Learners.

177A, 172-180 Nguyen Van Huong st., Thao Dien ward, D2, HCMC
www.theamericanschool.edu.vn
08 3519 2223, 08 3519 2224
info@tasvietnam.edu.vn

SCHOOLS [ADULT]

Kent International College

The first Australian vocational college in Vietnam to receive approval from the Ministry of Education and Training to teach Australian Advanced Diplomas in business, marketing and information technology in Vietnam.

148-150 Nguyen Dinh Chinh, Phu Nhuan
219 - 221 Xo Viet Nghe Tinh, Binh Thanh
www.kent.edu.vn

PSB International College

PSB College is an Internationally-Recognized Singaporean Institution specializing in business programs ranging from Business Administration & Marketing, Accounting & Finance, to Hospitality & Tourism Management.

144-146-148 Le Lai, D1
www.psbcollege.edu.vn

RMIT

RMIT University Vietnam is an Asian campus of Melbourne-based University RMIT, Australia's biggest tertiary education. Offers programs from business and management to design and micro engineering, and boasts a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

702 Nguyen Van Linh, D7
21 Pham Ngoc Thach, D3
www.rmit.edu.vn

ladieswear

Anupa Eco Boutique **Ol's Pick**

The boutique has been converted into an eco-boutique which houses the complete Anupa leather collections and semi precious jewelry as well as up-and-coming eco designers both locally and internationally such as ready to wear mens linen shirts, ladies cotton dresses, chicken leg watch straps, bamboo glasses and scarves with pendants.

9 Dong Du, D1

www.anupa.net / [facebook: anupaluxury](https://www.facebook.com/anupaluxury)

Gaya

A high-end shop that sells cocktail and party dresses by French-Cambodian designer Romyda Keth. Gaya has specializes in home interior products.

1 Nguyen Van Trang, D1

Kelly Bui

Launched in April 2010, the shop sells the most recent collections by the brand. The collections shown on the website are the same as those in-store.

BI-24, Vincom Center, 70-72 Le Thanh Ton, D1

Valenciani **Ol's Pick**

Highly respected Vietnamese designer whose collections are featured in ELLE Vietnam and Vogue Vietnam.

23 Ly Tu Trung, D1
3821 2788

090 785 5788

menswear

Anna Vo Fashion Boutique

A popular designer currently in Saigon, Anna Vo produces seasonal collections inspired by her time in Europe and Vietnam as well as aiming to be both beautiful and functional. The boutique also carries pieces from her mother Thuy Nga's collections as well as high quality imported accessories. Each collection includes both menswear and womenswear.

23 Dong Khoi, D1

Bonjour

A fashion boutique at the Vo Van Tan/ Cao Thang T-intersection providing an exhaustive range of one-off fashion pieces and accessories with both a modern and vintage feel. Prices are affordable for both men and women and come in a range of sizes to suit most customers.

446 Vo Van Tan, D3

gyms

Ais Sports Complex

Open to the public, the center has a 25m swimming pool, basketball court and an astroturf play area. Inquire about special packages.

APSC Compound, 36 Thao Dien, D2
www.aissportscentre.com

Amaryska Kamionko

Private fitness trainer, assisting in full body workouts, toning & strength training for females. Sessions often at clients' homes or at their designated gyms.

personalfitnessathome.blogspot.com

Body By Jovie

Body By Jovie is a boutique personal training center and yoga studio, catering to individuals demanding diversity, challenge and results. It specializes in one on one session and also offer a full range of classes such as yoga, TRX suspension class, belly dancing, Zumba and outdoor boot camp.

Riverside Residence, Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

info@bodybyjovie.com

7am - 9pm (Weekdays) and
7:30am - 7pm (Saturdays)

California WOW

The first and largest international fitness company to open in Vietnam. Provides world class fitness services and products in a state-of-the-art 5-star fitness and entertainment facility.

126 Hong Bang, D5

28-30-32 Le Lai, D1

5 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4

Christina Eberlin Yoga Teacher

Christina graduated from Virajati 300hr yoga teacher training in Thailand. She is offering private yoga classes and group classes. For more information you can reach her at

Christinaeberlin@gmail.com
or 093 849 2461

Cyril And You

French physical instructor Cyril specializes in sports conditioning, resistance training and senior training along with designing a personal fitness program to fit your needs.

Thao Dien, D2; 094 777 1326

www.cyril-and-you.com

Get Fit Gym

Located on the 3rd floor in the H3 Building, this international-standard, gym offers a steam bath and sauna, yoga, kickboxing, rumba, salsa, merengue, cumbia and reggaeton classes.

384 Hoang Dieu, D4

K1 Fitness & Fight Factory

A well-known brand name founded by a group of professional kickboxers and now present in France and Southeast Asia, including Montpellier and Phnom Penh as well as here in Saigon.

14 Duong 38, Nguyen Thi Thap, D7

Nicky's Zumba® Fitness Studio

They offer Zumba® Fitness, Yoga, Cross Fit, Pilates Personal Fitness, Nutrition Advice and Hip hop kids, Aerobic kids, ZumbAtomic®.

Available at: Panorama-Fitness (206 Tran Van Tra, D7), Fit & Fun Club (Sky Garden 2, D7), Cyril&you (49a Xa Lo Ha Noi, D2), and Sommerset (8 Nguyen Binh Khiem, D1).

093 406 0735 or 6680 7226

zumba.nutrition@gmail.com

www.zumba-saigon.com

Nutrifort Fitness

Aiming to be the voice of health and fitness in Vietnam, Nutrifort provides clientele with proper tools and teaching methods to keep the mind and body fit and healthy. Clients also learn about nutrition to nourish and maintain their health.

2B1 Chu Manh Trinh, D1

Saigon River Club

Located in Ruby Tower at the Saigon Pearl, Saigon River Club is equipped

with the very latest in fitness technology. It has a fully-equipped sauna and steam room and a large outdoor pool with jacuzzi.

Ruby Tower, 92 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

Star Fitness Bitexco

Located in The Manor Tower, this gym is not only a fitness center it includes other specialized classes such as yoga, belly dancing, kick boxing, zumba, body toning, and so on.

Level 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
3514 0255

Spa InterContinental & Healthclub

Guests will have access to a 20-meter outdoor lap pool complete with a sundeck, a 160-square meter spacious fitness centre with the latest generation cardio and resistance equipment, plus a personal program of fitness classes.

3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon
Corner of Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1
spa@icasianasaiagon.com

8am - 9:30pm

The Health Club

The Landmark Health Club is located on the 15th and 16th floors of The Landmark serviced apartments, and offers a fully equipped gym, rooftop swimming pool, and a squash court. It also features male and female changing facilities and saunas.

5B Ton Duc Thang, D1
hc@thelandmarkvietnam.com

The Crescent Wellness Club

Overlooking The Crescent complex's lagoon, this multi-purpose and organically designed fitness and wellness centre offers an array of modern facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, group fitness classes, yoga sessions, a squash court, swimming pool, steam bath and nutrition bar.

3rd Floor, Crescent Plaza,
105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

X-Rock Climbing

With two locations in the city, this wall in An Phu stands at 26 meters. The center offers nine levels from beginners to hardcore.

503A Nguyen Duy Trinh, D2
www.xrockclimbing.com

Yoga Club

Yogo fitness center for both men and women

18 Street Number 2, D2

clinics

American Chiropractic Clinic

American Chiropractic Clinic is a chiropractic, physiotherapy, and foot care clinic in the Heart of Saigon. We are staffed by American and French-trained Chiropractic Physicians and Vietnamese Physical Therapists.

161-161A Hai Ba Trung, D3
www.acc.vn

American Eye Center

Provides eye care services to adults and children by an American Board certified ophthalmologist with 17 years of experience. The American standard facility is equipped with state of the art equipments for the early detection and treatment of important eye conditions such as Lasik, Cataract surgeries to Presbyopia, Glaucoma and Diabetic eye

disease. Cosmetic procedures such as eyelid surgery and Botox injections are also available.

5th floor Crescent Plaza, 105 Ton Dat Tien, D7

08 5413 6758

www.americaneyecentervn.com

Animal Rescue & Care

Abandoned and wild cats and dogs can be adopted or fostered from their online database. ARC also organizes several animal welfare education and low-cost spaying campaigns.

31-44 Thao Dien, D2
www.arcpets.com

An Phu International Clinic

An international standard clinic with a full range of specialist and modern medical equipment with a dedicated team of professors, doctors, experienced nurses.

251A Luong Dinh Cua, D2
6660 6602

www.dakhhoanphu.com

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2
3744 2000

www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics

The Australian Clinic, Pathology & Diagnostics (ACPD) is comprised of a medical outpatient clinic and associated pathology laboratory. The clinic hosts highly trained and experienced medical specialists.

273 - 275 Ly Thai To, D10

Columbia Asia Saigon Clinic

Beautiful international clinic a short distance from the cathedral, with exemplary standards of healthcare for walk-in patients.

8 Alexandre De Rhodes, D1

Centre Medical International

Centre Medical International was created in 1992 by Pr Alain Carpentier and Dr Duong Quang Trung, director of the health service of HCMC. In the heart of the city, just near the Notre-Dame Cathedral, French and Vietnamese doctors provide high quality medical service in 12 specialties: General and tropical medicine, Cardiology, Gynecology, Traditional oriental medicine, Ophthalmology, Speech and language therapy, Osteopathic, medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychomotor Therapy, and Dietetics. All our profits are dedicated to the Heart Institute which helps deprived Vietnamese children to pay their cardiac surgery.

1 Han Thuyen, D1
3827 2366

www.cmi-vietnam.com

David Shepherd Chiropractic Clinic

DSCC provides Chiropractic care for patients using state of the art physiotherapy equipment imported from USA. DSCC is managed and operated by American doctors who use modern and advanced technologies techniques to ensure safe, gentle, and effective treatment.

41 Noi Khu, Hung Gia 3, D7
www.saiгонchiropractic.com

Diag Center International

Situated in Ho Chi Minh City, Diag Center International is a diagnostic testing center, which consists of a team of thirty Vietnamese staff, and operates under French medical biologists and assisted by a group of Vietnamese medical technicians trained in France.
146 An Binh, D5

Family Medical Practice

With a nationwide operational advantage, they provide international standard medical services in a safe, professional and welcoming environment.

95 Thao Dien, D2
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com
hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com
8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-2pm Saturday

Hanh Phuc International Women & Children's Hospital

Hanh Phuc International Hospital aims to be the leading private healthcare provider for women and children in Vietnam. Designed and managed up to Singaporean standards, the 260-bed Hanh Phuc Hospital aims to provide a comprehensive range of quality healthcare services to women and children with a personalized touch and in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

2nd floor Saigon Trade Centre,
37 Ton Duc Thang, D1

Institute of Traditional Medicine

Established in 1975, the Institute of Traditional Medicine is a holistic research and teaching hospital. Patients are treated using traditional medicines, some of which are produced by the institute itself. Some doctors speak English and/or French, and acupuncture lessons are on offer.

273-275 Nguyen Van Troi, Phu Nhuan

International SOS Medical Care

Located in the city center, the clinic is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing routine and emergency healthcare services as well as on-site laboratory and radiology services. Languages spoken include Japanese, Korean and French, among others.

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3
3829 8551

Saigon Acupuncture

Practitioner Christopher Booth, M.S., L.Ac., is now accepting new patients. Chris treats the following conditions with acupuncture: Chronic and Acute Pain, Neurological Disorders, Gynecological Disorders, Emotional & Psychological Disorders, among others.

161 Hai Ba Trung, D3
saigonacu@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/saigonacupuncture

Stamford Skin Centre

The Stamford Skin Centre has grown to include qualified specialists who treat general diseases of the skin such as acne, eczema and other forms of dermatitis, rosacea, psoriasis, and skin cancers.

99 Suong Nguyet Anh, D1
08 3925 1990 or 0908 453 338
www.stamfordskin.com

Victoria Health Care International Clinic

Victoria Healthcare offers the highest standard of healthcare, based on American and European practices, and offering compassionate and efficient service with the greatest respect for the patient.

79 Dien Bien Phu, D1

Vietnam Family Medical Practice

International clinic located in the Manor complex, within easy reach of high-rollers living around the Saigon Pearl area. The sister clinic is located beneath Diamond Plaza.

Ground Floor, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh

dental



Dr. Hung & Associates Dental Center

A centrally located dental center that uses the latest modern equipment with a team of skilled specialists. Services include cosmetic, implant, braces, prosthodontics, pedodontics and more. Expect high quality service at a reasonable price.
Building 244A Cong Quynh, D1
08 3925 7526
08 3925 7527
nhakhoadrhung@gmail.com
www.drhung01.com



2000 Dental Clinic Trung Tam Implant

Established in 1999, 2000 Dental Clinic now has 65 dentists serving 3 locations offering the full range of dental care, including surgery, implants and extractions.

125 Le Thi Rieng, D1

Dang Luu Dental Centre

Dang Luu Dental Centre offers the full range of dental services, including implants, crown and bridges and teeth whitening. Orthodontic services are also provided. Some of the dentists have been foreign-trained.

34 Phan Dang Luu, Binh Thanh

Digital Dental Clinic

Digital Dental Care draws on well-known Korean consistency in service standards and precision equipment to offer a truly world-class service in the Phu My Hung area.

R4-35 Ton Dat Tien, D7

Elite Dental Group

Elite Dental is an international and well-equipped clinic that provides a wide range of dental services including general dentistry, cosmetic dentistry, implant, pediatric dentistry and orthodontics. Luxury design and their dental experts will bring you an extremely comfortable experience.

57A Tran Quoc Thao, D3

European Dental Clinic

Offering state of the art technology, competitive pricing, and supreme quality, this dentistry is truly dedicated to their patients.

17-17A Le Van Mien, D2
www.europeandentalclinic-asia.com

German International Dentistry

German International Dentistry offers excellent consultation services from experienced, international dentists so that you can make informed decisions about your dental care.

1489 Nguyen Van Linh, D7

Grand Dentistry

Grand Dentistry is an upscale dental office located in the ground floor of Sunwah tower on Nguyen Hue street. It is noted for being very tourist/expat friendly. This dentistry features English speaking staff and expatriate dentists.

Ground Floor Sun Wah Tower,
115 Nguyen Hue, D1

Minh Khai Dental Clinic

French/American/Swiss managed clinic with well-maintained international-standard equipment.

199 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Nguyen Cu Trinh, D1

Naomi Dental Clinic

A full service dental clinic under the direction of Japanese dentist Dr. Nakashima Mikio.

R4-45 Hung Phuoc 4, D7
5410 3937

Saigon Smile

With a group of experienced doctors and professional staff trained to do teeth cleaning, dental work and other teeth enhancing procedures.

96 Tran Nao, D2
6674 4255
8am to 8pm

Saint Paul

Saint Paul has facilities all over Ho Chi Minh City, and with the slogan "slight, exact, and painless," the doctors at Saint Paul aim to please even the most fastidious patients.

50 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3835 6159

Smile Dental Center

Quality dental care with whitening, cleaning, and orthodontic services. Japanese equipment and techniques.

173 Ton Dat Tien, D7
5413 6635

Starlight Dental Clinic

Award-winning quality care and personal service in clean premises, offering general dentistry, whitening and cosmetic surgery, implants, orthodontics, pediatric, and preventive dentistry.

2 Bis Cong Truong Quoc Te, D3
3822 6222

Westcoast International Dental Clinic

Large, international team of dentists and support staff from Canada, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Thailand, and Vietnam. The clinic regularly hosts visiting dentists from many other countries.

27 Nguyen Trung Truc, D1
3825 7485

hospitals

Cao Thang Eye Hospital

The CT International Eye Hospital is one of the few dedicated, comprehensive eye institutes in the country. Internationally recognized staff diagnose and treat the entire spectrum of conditions of the eye, including complex problems such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and cataracts.

135B Tran Binh Trong, D5

Cho Ray Hospital

Cho Ray Hospital is the largest healthcare service in Vietnam, providing full priority service for expatriates, with a staff including 696 doctors and 1350 nurses.

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh, D5

Columbia Asia International Hospital - Gia Dinh

Skilled and experienced doctors offer exceptional medical care at affordable prices with the latest in medical technology. Patients benefit from advanced medical diagnostics, treatment and personal care.

1 No Trang Long, Binh Thanh

DialAsia International Hospital

A specialist centre in kidney treatment for the expat community, DialAsia is a fairly well-reputed international hospital of nephrology & dialysis, offering medical consultancy in renal diseases, haemodialysis, and paraclinical examinations.

253 Dien Bien Phu, D3

FV Hospital

FV Hospital is a Vietnam's only internationally accredited healthcare facility. A wholly foreign-owned general

hospital offering a wide range of medical and surgical services under one roof, equipped to care for patients from consultation and diagnosis through to the completion of treatment.

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, D7

Saigon International Maternity Hospital J.S.C.

A private-owned hospital specialising in maternity, this was the first hospital to meet the Hotel-Hospital international standard in HCMC since the year 2000.

63 Bui Thi Xuan, D1

Traditional Medicine Hospital

This hospital is a major medical centre practising the essence of that millennia-old exploration into the rhythms of the human body and its connection to the natural world which firmly belongs to this region.

179 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, D3

Tu Du Hospital

Tu Du is a large state hospital specializing in maternity, women, and children's diseases, family planning, and many other areas. Highly experienced doctors and staff provide affordable care.

284 Cong Quynh, D1

Vu Anh International Hospital - Obstetrics

Luxurious hospital facility offering modern care in a comfortable setting. The hotel also provides 12 VIP rooms for patients seeking 5 star medical services featuring garden access and designer furniture.

15-16 Phan Van Tri, Go Vap

nails

Classic Nails

Located near Ben Thanh Market, Classic Nails is a professional salon with staff who are trained and experienced in designing complicated pattern. The salon only uses materials from reputable companies and always update with the latest colors. They also have sofas with a massage function and adjustable posture for the customer's comfortable and relaxation.

4 Phan Boi Chau, D1
3825 7047
9am - 8pm

Fame Nails

A place for your nail care near Ben Thanh Market. Besides classic manicure and pedicure, it also offers deluxe spa manicure and pedicure, nail art and enhancement, and services including waxing, facial, eyebrow shaping and eye lashes extension.

18 Pham Hong Thai, D1
www.famenails.com

Kelly Pang

Nail salon established in 2004 as a small nail salon in Phu Nhuan, Kelly Pang has gradually become known as a training center and professional nail care facility throughout Vietnam.

214C Nguyen Trai, D1

OPI Nail Spa Nguyen Hue

Providing a full range of official products and services of the OPI brand.

103 Nguyen Hue, D1

spas

An Nam Spa

Housed in a beautiful nine-story building with different areas for men and women, guests can enjoy a panoramic view of Saigon while calming their senses in a relaxing sanctuary.

26-28 Dong Du, D1

Dermal Essentials

Dermologica, a Los Angeles-based company, is a revolutionary skin

treatment system. Call Dermalogica's therapists for a complimentary Face Mapping consultation.

108 Pasteur, D1

Eden Spa

Extremely central, Eden is located in a quiet niche off Nguyen Hue in the commercial center. Owing to its expertise in skincare and first-class relaxing atmosphere, Eden has the gumption to claim a number-one spot in the discerning Japanese market.

19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 3815

097 810 6868

Flamingo Spa

Flamingo Spa is an authentic Thai spa where all ingredients used are imported from Thailand. Guests arrive in a clean and friendly atmosphere for an optimal relaxing experience. Men, women and couples are welcome, and they offer a wide range of massages along with a sauna, jacuzzi facilities & VIP rooms.

13B Le Thanh Ton, D1

3822 1074

091 243 9601

FlamingoSpa.vn@gmail.com

Open 10:30 am to close 11:30pm

Glow

A boutique day spa located in the heart of the city. In this relaxing, peaceful atmosphere, guests can enjoy a full range of massage/treatment options.

Kim Do Hotel, 129A Nguyen Hue, D1

Huong Sen Spa

Located in a charming old French villa, Huong Sen Spa is a natural green oasis with skin, face, and body treatment services.

215 Nguyen Van Troi, Ward 12, Phu Nhuan

Golden Lotus Foot Massage Club Sauna

Fully equipped massage establishment with pool, steam room, and hydraulic massage located in trendy Thai Van Lung street. Various salt scrubs, and high end beauty products imported direct from Korea are available.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1

3822 1515

Indochine Spa

Nestled in the heart of Saigon, Indochine spa will bring you back to an ancient time with peaceful melodies and aromatic scents. With our skillful therapists, Natural products with French formulation and high class cleanliness environment, Indochine spa provides your senses with natural energy. Indulge yourself for a unique and amazing experience.

69 Thu Khoa Huan st., D. I, HCM

3827 7188

indochinespa@gmail.com

www.indochine-spa.com.vn

Open: 10:00-22:00

Jasmine Spa

Experienced staff utilize exotic skincare products to comfort guests in this cozy urban sanctuary, which has has a large, loyal following that swears by its friendly and professional service.

45 Ton That Thiep, D1



Kyoto Spa & Hair Salon

Body massage
Foot massage

Hair cut women and men

32 Dong Du, Ben Nghe Ward, D1
(Spa & Hair Salon)

8A/4D1 Thai Van Lung,

Ben Nghe Ward, D1 (Spa)

0902 983 089

loan_royal@gmail.com

www.spakytotohcmc.com.vn



Korean Style Sauna

Sauna and massage that serves mostly Japanese and Korean men - some of the more discerning expat clients. For a delicate touch.

15 Thai Van Lung, D1

L'Apothiquaire - Saigon South

This Japanese/French style spa is an exclusive distributor of organic French skin care products, and other exclusive products from around the world.

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7
5413 6638

La Cochinchine Spa



Located in the Rex Hotel, this luxury spa and fitness centre combined with a swimming pool and bar has a particular style that is a combination of Vietnamese, French, Cham, Hindu, and Asian cultures. Luxury spa and gym located at the Rex hotel.

6F, Rex Hotel, 141 Nguyen Hue, D1
3825 1812

La Maison de L'Apothiquaire

This unique spa is situated in an artfully-designed villa and offers guests many therapeutic body and skin treatments. The luxurious villa also provides a yoga studio, enclosed garden, and many exclusive skin care products.

64A Truong Dinh, D3

100 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

1st floor, 103 Ton Dat Tien, Tan Phu, D7



Maison Mikio Boutique Salon

District 7's Premium Boutique Salon. Two floors providing full beauty services nestled in a quiet residential area in Phu My Hung's Garden Plaza 2 Complex. Equipped with a café, nail bar, 2 VIP rooms, and a spacious massage room - this boutique salon is like no other in Ho Chi Minh City.

Garden Plaza 2 Complex
8 Tôn Dật Tiên, Quận 7
5412 4773

MiMi Clinic & Spa

Prestige Spa for celebrities holding frequent beauty events - and therefore one of the best-known local brands in medical aesthetics for over 10 years in HCMC.

32 Dong Khoi, D1
090 387 6666

Miu Miu

Spa with an elegant and charming décor, offering facials, body massages, and manicures. Pervaded by exotic oils and aromas, the staff provide counsel on unique skin-care products from Thailand and around the world in English, Vietnamese, and Japanese.

4 Chu Manh Trinh, D1
6659 3609

Moc Huong Spa

Moc Huong Spa is supported by top-ranking professional physiotherapists who combine Eastern with Western techniques resulting a full body wellness. Reasonably priced with a wide range of services that include manicure, pedicure, facial, both body and for your complete well being.

9C Ton Duc Thang, D1
3911 7118



Oasis Salon & Spa

The original Oasis spa & beauty salon, this venue offers a full range of services at competitive prices. Full hair care, facial, massage, nail spa, beauty care & waxing services.

1st & 2nd Floor, 45 Nguyen Hue, D1

Saigon Spa

Recommended inexpensive spa treatments with a full spa menu.

1st Floor, 47 Dong Khoi, D1

Sense Spa

Sense Spa is a massage, skin, and body care haven with a plethora of high-end imported creams, lotions, and serums.

54 Dong Du, D1

Spa InterContinental

Spa InterContinental is a contemporary spa that has two double and five single treatment rooms, each with a private bathroom, a foot reflexology area, and luxurious changing and shower rooms. Combining the fresh, local traditional herbs and plants, an ambient lighting, soft scents and soothing sounds with the best of international brands, Spa InterContinental offers guests the professional spa expertise and a truly sensory experience.

3rd Floor, InterContinental Asiana Saigon

Cornet Hai Ba Trung & Le Duan, D1

3520 9999

spa@icasianasaiagon.com

8am - 9:30pm

The Body Shop

A global manufacturer and retailer of naturally-inspired, ethically-produced beauty and cosmetics products. The Body Shop offers many kinds of skincare products, makeup accessories, hair & body care products, perfume, and bath milk.

87 Mac Thi Buoi, D1

The Prime - Spa For Men

American skin treatments for men from top brands such as Dermalogica and Lab Series. Equipped with two imported machines from Europe. The spa has five therapy services, including basic skin care, professional skin care, intensive therapy, eye therapy, body therapy - and a Prime special service package.

192 Le Lai, D1

Tri Siam

Well-respected salon on the edge of town, offering manicures & styling.

76C Hai Ba Trung, D1

Xuan Spa

One of the most luxurious spas in Ho Chi Minh City, Xuan is located inside the five-star Park Hyatt hotel. Services include packages such as Urban Retreat Package, Apricot blossom - Mai, Bamboo, and more.

2 Lam Son Square, D1

Yuri

A full-range Korean beauty salon in the Lotte complex, with a chief focus on beautiful hair styling.

3rd floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu Tho, D7

3775 2990; 093 481 8085

Yves Rocher Botanical Beauty Spa

A famous international botanical cosmetic brand with a full range of products, The Botanical Beauty Spa Center combines the expertise of its beauticians with the efficacy of Yves Rocher treatments.

16-18 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Zest Massage

Famous for its fish pedicures, Zest, located in the outer western region of District One, serves up some fairly dynamic Thai massage.

60 Bui Thi Xuan, D1

home & furnishings

AA Deco Company

AA Interiors provides high-quality fabrication and fit-out services for hotels, residences, spas, and so on throughout the city. Also sells many well-known furniture brands.

219 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

AkzoNobel Decorative Center

Dulux Paints specialist with attractive central-city showroom/store.

91-93 Nguyen Hue, D1

3915 3491

Authentique

An interior decorating shop featuring Vietnamese traditional styles with a small showroom in the busiest area of the city.

71/1 Mac Thi Buoi, D1
3823 8811

Canada Home Deco Company

Established by an expat Canadian couple in 2003, Canada Home Deco specializes in distributing high-quality blankets, pillows, bedspreads, and cushions.

158 Hai Ba Trung, D1

Catherine Denoual

Supplies blankets, pillows, mattresses, tablecloths, cushions, and other luxury linens to reputable hotels, spas, resorts, and individual consumers.

15C Thi Sach, D1

Gomo

Typical of the large furniture warehouses in North America and Europe, Gomo sells contemporary items for your home and office.

77/30B, Road 13, Binh Hoa

Thuan An Town, Binh Duong

(0650) 376 5115

www.gomo.com.vn

Lam Bui Natural Home Goods

Founded in 2004 by a team of intrepid entrepreneurs, Lam Bui Natural Home Goods is a large, well-stocked home goods store with specialty old-style furnishings and decor items.

Unit 16-17, 2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65

Le Loi, D1

3914 3553

Mosaïque Decoration

Mosaïque Decoration takes all the unique beauty and craftsmanship of Vietnam and adapts it to contemporary home décor. Mosaïque offers unique lighting design, decorative embroidery, silk quilts, and other home accessories.

Ground Floor, Saigon Centre,

65 Le Loi, D1

Premium Housewares

Providing high quality kitchenware and accessories, Premium Housewares presents its products in more than 70 countries worldwide.

77 Pasteur, D1

Red Door Décor

A well-known furniture store in Ho Chi Minh City offering products such as interior/exterior decorations, artwork, handicrafts, glass ceramics, garments, and textile materials.

31A Le Thanh Ton, D1

Vscential

Vscential sells aromatic French lavender bouquets, fresh flowers, silk flowers, and handmade flowers. With 45 different types of essential oils available, there's a scent for everyone.

Vscential

238B Pasteur, D3

www.vscential.com

Business & Tech

IMAGE BY JIMMY DAU





WeSave founders Lance and Petr

Let's Make a Deal

A new bilingual discount website is reinventing the Groupon business model

TEXT BY **NPD KHANH** IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

IN VIETNAM'S THRIVING e-commerce market, it seems unfair for the expat community, which stands at more than 700,000 in Saigon, to have to sit on the sidelines and watch without participating.

In August that will change as a new player **WeSave** (www.wesave.vn), a bilingual Vietnamese-English daily deal site, enters the field.

In its 2013 annual statement, the Vietnam E-Commerce and Information Technology Agency reported 38 daily deal websites operating in Vietnam, a total of 6.3 million voucher transactions worth VND774 billion in revenue, and yearly double digit growth. Without a doubt, Vietnamese-language daily deal sites are going strong in Vietnam.

Despite the size of the industry, WeSave

has identified a business model which sets it apart - and, being run by expats - is committed to enabling foreigners to enjoy the benefits along with locals.

"There is never a perfect time to enter an industry," shares Lance F. Huff, co-founder of WeSave. "To be competitive in any business field you have to offer something different and better to the market and let the customers decide which they prefer."

WeSave boasts a new and different model from existing Vietnamese daily deal sites and aims to set itself apart by offering bilingual options, easier methods of payment, digital delivery voucher codes, and an overall better consumer experience.

"We are very clear on the fact that we do not sell services or products. What

we sell are exclusive promotions and our model reflects this," explains Petr Jumar, WeSave's co-founder. "The voucher code is not exchangeable for products or services. It is pure promotion. The buyer then pays the money directly to the service provider when he or she uses the services."

Vouchers on their website are sold for VND10,000 to VND60,000 depending on the value of the deal being offered. The deal code is delivered instantaneously via SMS and entitles its owner to an exclusive promotion at the service supplier.

According to Petr, this model has two game-changing benefits. First, it eliminates the time, labor and logistical difficulty in delivering physical vouchers. "It doesn't make economical sense to me. It is a costly

and inconvenient way that doesn't belong in this industry. We are not selling tangible products, we are selling promotions." On Vietnamese sites, it takes anywhere from three to five days and numerous phone calls to deliver a single voucher to the customer. Sometimes it is difficult for the Vietnamese delivery man to communicate with non-Vietnamese customers to rendezvous a delivery time. WeSave's digital delivery option means that they can easily bypass this hurdle.

Second, since the customers pay the supplier directly, this eliminates the money transferring process between the deal website and the suppliers. "Other sites hold the money for up to three months," says Petr. "It is terrible for business cash flow. And on top of that, they charge a heavy commission. There are also cases where the suppliers don't get their money back from the daily deal sites."

Merchant Feedback

To date, WeSave has amassed more than 60 merchants for their launch and they all look forward to a long and fruitful partnership.

"I am most concerned about branding," says Valencia Tran, the woman behind Vincom Clair Center, a high-tech beauty clinic, and one of WeSave's merchants. "What we do here all hinges on top quality, top services, top safety. Our branding must reflect who we are. Vietnamese deal sites, because they must target the largest and least demanding market, do not have much in terms of branding or merchant quality control. I have high hopes to establish the Clair brand as a reputable, prestigious name alongside other similar merchants under WeSave."

Like Valencia, James Heng, owner of JJ's Brazilian Restaurant and Bar on Pham Ngu Lao in District 1, is a businessman with less than perfect past experiences with Vietnamese deal websites. "It is always so difficult to get the money from them. I run a food business. Cost is incurred on the day, but I had to wait for at least a month, sometimes more for the money I made to get to the bank." James has cycled through various Vietnamese deal sites before. "Hotdeal, Nhommua, Cungmua, I've tried them all."

On his partnership with WeSave, a new brand in a notoriously ruthlessly competitive market, James is not at all concerned. "I run no risk," he says simply. "The customers come to me and pay me. I get the money the moment I incur cost. They make money from selling our promotions. It's win-win-win, for us, for WeSave, and for the buyers."

"In Europe, the economy is down, so the national trend is for everyone to save as much as possible. Of course in this environment, the Groupon industry and services thrive," adds Giacomo Erre, the managing director of Villa Aesthetica Cosmedi Spa who has also partnered with WeSave. "I have seen their model. It's good. So I have high hopes for them." ■

"The customers come to me and pay me. I get the money the moment I incur cost. They make money from selling our promotions. It's win-win-win, for us, for WeSave, and for the buyers."



Valencia Tran, Vincom Clair Center



James Heng, owner of JJ's Brazilian Restaurant and Bar



Giacomo Erre, the managing director of Villa Aesthetica Cosmedi Spa

Dear Hadrien,

In January, I agreed with my landlord to sign a one-month lease agreement (uncertain of my plans at that time) and that I could leave at any time if I gave him a week's notice. Now that I actually want to move out of the apartment, the landlord is starting to cause trouble for me. He doesn't want to return my deposit unless I give him a month's notice, and is also asking me to pay taxes for one year of rent! Since January, I have not signed any other lease agreement with him, but he seems to base his claims on some papers that he helped me fill out for my temporary residence registration. Can he just do that and what are my legal rights?



A member of the Paris Bar, **Hadrien Wolff** has been practicing law in Vietnam for more than seven years, currently as a partner of Audier & Partners based at its HCMC office. Having gained extensive legal experience in the Netherlands and Cambodia, **Marijn Sprokhereef** is an associate at the Hanoi office of the same firm. **Audier & Partners** is an international law firm with presence in Vietnam, Myanmar and Mongolia, providing advice to foreign investors on a broad range of legal issues.

THE KEY TO understanding and hopefully resolving your current situation has to do with your relationship with your landlord, as a result of the joint interpretation of the contractual provisions under the initial one-month lease agreement that you signed in January, the oral agreement on the extension of the term, and the legal provisions of Vietnamese law governing the extension of lease agreements in respect of residential houses and apartments.

Before entering into the details of the matter, I would like to warn you and our dear readers that as in many legal systems around the world, civil parties in Vietnam enjoy a great amount of freedom in determining the conditions of their relationship as provided under the contract that will bind them.

Consequently, one should always be prudent when becoming a party to a contract, even if that contract seems to be as trivial as a short-term lease agreement. This seems obvious but it is worth reiterating.

Without being able to actually review the contract that you signed, I unfortunately cannot provide any definitive advice on your specific legal position, but I can share some thoughts with you in more general terms.

Based on the description of the facts that you gave in your question, I understand that you have signed a lease agreement for a period of one month without agreeing in writing on any automatic extension of the term. On

the basis of that written agreement, at the end of the term of the contract (i.e. after a month as from the moment the lease agreement became effective, which should be the date when you moved in) your contractual relationship with the landlord for the lease of your apartment should have terminated automatically and, as a consequence, you should have moved out of the apartment and your landlord should have reimbursed you the deposit that you paid. However, I understand that there was an oral understanding with your landlord that you would stay longer than a month, without any written amendment to the lease agreement to reflect this.

The Vietnamese Civil Code states that any agreement for the lease of residential houses and apartments must be made in writing. Failure to do so makes such an agreement void and invalid. One consequence of such principle is that the term of a lease agreement may only be automatically extended if there is a provision to that effect in the written lease agreement.

Therefore, your landlord may not validly claim that you are bound by a verbal agreement on the conditions of the extension of the term of the contract and he likewise cannot argue that your initial agreement has been automatically extended for one year or longer or that the papers that you filled out for your temporary residence would serve as a new lease agreement.

The same applies to his claim that you

would be liable to pay any taxes for a period of one year. Paying income tax as a lessor of a residential apartment is your landlord's own responsibility and without being able to provide evidence of your written agreement to the contrary, his claim is groundless.

Being aware of your rights to use them as leverage in your negotiations is surely one helpful thing, efficiently enforcing those rights before a civil court is unfortunately something very different. Starting court proceedings in Vietnam for a case like yours is probably not worth your time and money.

I would suggest you discuss the situation tactfully with your landlord once more on the basis of the clarifications of your legal position as set out above, and trying to find a mutually acceptable solution. Making some concessions, for example, by agreeing to apply a one month notice before moving out of your apartment in order for the landlord to have sufficient time to find a new lessee, could help you reach a compromise. If you do come to an agreement with your landlord, make sure to execute a new detailed contract that reflects the full extent of the agreed terms and conditions of the lease.

And in the future, remember to always avoid half written, half verbal agreements. Everything should be inked!

Every month, **Hadrien and Marijn** answer legal questions from Oi readers. If you have any legal questions you want answered, send them to legal@oivietnam.com. ■

Dear Dr Lam Tran,

My mom is now 60-years-old. She lost all her teeth and this has limited her diet. Eating food like fruits and certain vegetables are now difficult and painful for her. She is wearing dentures but they aren't helping as much as we would like. She had her dentures made in the US and now we're moving to Vietnam. Is there a way to replace her dentures to help improve her chewing, and can it be done in Vietnam?



Tran Hung Lam, Ph.D. graduated from the Ho Chi Minh City Medicine and Pharmacy University. After getting his PhD from the University of the Mediterranean (Marseille, France) in 2007, he has been working as Head of the Prosthodontics Department at Elite Dental Group (www.elitedental.com.vn). Dr. Lam successfully presented clinical cases of implants at ICOI conference (Hamburg, Germany). He holds a Diplomate of the ICOI - the highest rank of ICOI member.



TOOTH LOSS, DENTAL disease and gum disease are common issues as people get older. About 20 percent of adults in the US aged 65 and older have lost all of their natural teeth because of tooth decay or gum disease. The reasons behind this problem can stem from poor oral hygiene and habits, poor nutrition, trauma or injury, the degeneration process due to age, hormonal changes, and medication. Missing teeth affects the pattern and function of the teeth, reducing quality of life, self-esteem and confidence, and can cause serious social, psychological and emotional consequences.

It used to be that dentures were the only solution. However, patients often complained of slurred speech, food stuck under the dentures and pain. And dentures recovered only 50-60 percent of chewing ability, reducing the enjoyment of savoring your food.

Fortunately, there is a new technique that is ideal for your mom called All-on-4 dental implants developed by Nobel

Biocare company - a world leading implant manufacturer in Sweden. All-on-4 means placing four implants into the jawbone at an angle, minimizing bone grafting or sinus augmentation. Later, multi-unit abutments will be placed as a bridge, which supports the prosthetic teeth, including 12 to 14 teeth of each jaw immediately on the day of surgery.

The procedure can be completed in two months in Vietnam and comes with clear benefits such as utilizing four implants per jaw, no bone grafting, restoring facial muscle tone, creating a natural look, saving time and money while lowering discomfort. It will usually take six visits from start to finish:

1) Consultation including clinical and radiographic records. The dentist creates a treatment and financial plan tailored to meet your needs.

2) The day of surgery where the dental implant is placed. The procedure lasts about

2.5 hours. A temporary bridge will be restored (teeth in a day).

3) The implants will be left undisturbed for several weeks allowing them to be 'osseointegrated'. Checkup and follow-up after 10 days.

4) The dentist will take an impression to make the replacement bridge. The bridge is fabricated for a perfect fit in the arch area to create a natural look.

5) Test the new bridge for a proper fit.

6) Cementation of the new bridge to the abutment.

Dental implants can be applied on almost any edentulous patient. However, for those 50 and older, in your mom's case, it is important for the doctor to know her medical background before suggesting this as a possible solution. Patients with high blood pressure, coagulation disorders or diabetes, for example, should seek advice from their medical doctor first. Dental surgery done under general anesthesia is also possible.

The first several weeks after surgery are crucial for the healing process. This stage will show how the implants integrate with the surrounding bone. Follow all advice given by the dentist – take prescribed medicine, keep your mouth clean by brushing, flossing and rinsing with special antiseptic mouthwash daily, and refrain from drinking beer.

There is a 90 percent success rate but with any minor surgical procedures there is always the chance of common problems or complications. Do not hesitate to ask the dentist about anything in particular that worries you. ■

banks

Asia Commercial Bank

442 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
39290999

Bank of China

19th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9949

Citibank

15/F Sun Wah Tower, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3824 2267
094 801 6318

Commonwealth Bank

65 Nguyen Du, D1
3824 1525
012 1861 8695

HSBC

Metropolitan Building, 235 Dong Khoi, D1
3724 7247

Mizuho Corporate Bank

18th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3827 8260

Standard Chartered Bank

Saigon Trade Center 1st Floor, 37 Ton Duc
Thang, D1
3911 0000

Shinhan Vietnam

100 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3
3829 1581

Vietcombank

2bis-4-6 Le Thanh Ton, D1
3824 4797
www.vietcombank.com.vn

concierge

Giup.me (help.me)

A local concierge service fluent in English, Vietnamese and Mandarin to assist in all your personal needs from finding an apartment, domestic help and schools, to setting up a local company, renewing visas, car services and arranging medical/legal services. They charge a flat rate VND175,000 per hour.

7300 4487 (7300 GIUP)
service@giup.me
www.giup.me

consulates

Australian Consulate-General

47 Ly Tu Trong, D1
3521 8100
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12pm; 1pm - 5pm

Belgium Consulate

105 Duong Van An, D2
6281 8001
9am - 11.30am on Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri

Cambodia Consulate

41 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 2751
Mon-Fri: 7.30am - 11.30am; 2pm - 5pm

Consulate General of Canada

10th floor, The Metropolitan, 235 Dong
Khoi, D1
3827 9899
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Chile Consulate

79/1/1 Phan Ke Binh, D1
3910 2903

China Consulate

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3829 5009
www.vn.china-embassy.org/eng/
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 11am

China Consulate - Commercial Office

39 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3823 1142
ptmchn@hcm.vnn.vn
www.hochiminh.mofcom.gov.cn

Cuba Consulate

45 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 7350
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Denmark Consulate

115 Nguyen Hue, D1
3821 9373
Mon-Thu: 8.30am - 4.30pm; Fri: 8.30am - 3pm

Finland Consulate

Room 501, 5/F Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1
3827 2029

France Consulate

27 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3520 6819
www.consulfrance-hcm.org

Germany Consulate

126 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3829 2455
www.ho-chi-minh-stadt.diplo.de
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Hungary Consulate

22 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3829 0130

Iceland Consulate

80 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D1
Mon-Fri: 9am - 5pm

Consulate General of India

55 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, D3
3823 7050
www.india-consulate.org.vn
Mon-Fri: 8.30am - 12.30pm, 1pm - 5pm

Indonesia Consulate

18 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3825 1888
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm

Italy Consulate

81 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh
08 6258 6473
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1pm - 4pm

Japanese Consulate

261 Dien Bien Phu, D3
08 3933 3520
8.30am - 11.30am; 1.15pm - 4.45pm

Kuwait Consulate

24 Phung Khac Khoan, D1
3827 0555
kuwaitconsulate@gmail.com
Mon-Fri: 9am - 4pm

Laos Consulate

93 Pasteur, D1
3829 7667
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am; 1pm - 4.30pm

Malaysia Consulate

2 Ngo Duc Ke, D1
3829 9023
malhcmnh@tln.gov.my
Mon-Fri: 8am - 11.30am

Mexico Consulate

215 A-B Hoang Van Thu, Phu Nhuan
3844 5520
Mon-Fri: 8am - 3pm

Myanmar Consulate

50 Sam Son, Tan Binh
5449 2425
www.gmas.com.vn
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 2pm - 5pm; Sat: 9am - 12pm

New Zealand Consulate

235 Dong Khoi, D1
3822 6907
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 11.30am; 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Nordcham

12A Floor, Bitexco Building, 19-25 Nguyen
Hue, D1
3821 5423
www.nordcham.com

Norway Consulate

21-23 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1
3822 1696
norcons@hcm.fpt.vn
Mon - Fri: 08.30am - 11.30am; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Panama Consulate

7A Le Thanh Ton, D1
3825 0334
consulgeneral@hcm.fpt.vn

Hon. Consulate of Portugal

66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach
3820 0623

Russia Consulate

40 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, D3

Consulate-General of The Republic of Singapore

8th floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1
3822 5174
www.mfa.gov.sg

Slovakia Consulate

64-68 Hai Ba Trung, D1

South Korea Consulate

107 Nguyen Du, D1
3822 5757
Mon-Fri: 9am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 5pm

Sweden Consulate

8A/11 Thai Van Lung, D1
3823 6800
Mon-Fri: 8am - 12pm; 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Switzerland Consulate

42 Giang Van Minh, D2
3744 6996

Thailand Consulate

77 Tran Quoc Thao, D3

The Czech Republic Consulate

28 Mac Dinh Chi, D1

The UK Consulate

25 Le Duan, D1
3829 8433

U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

34 Le Duan, D1
3520 4610

Ukraine Consulate

22-24 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

insurance

ACE Life Insurance

One of the world's largest multiline property and casualty insurers, insurance products include universal life insurance, term life, whole life, riders,

and global personal accident.

21st Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1

AIG Vietnam

AIG's presence in Vietnam dates back to the 1920s, although modern operations began back in 2005. They offer a wide range of personal and commercial insurance products.

9th Floor, Saigon Center, 65 Le Loi, D1

BaoViet Insurance Corporation

BaoViet is now the leading financial insurance group in Vietnam with more than 145 branches across 63 provinces.

23-25 Thai Van Lung, D1

BHNT Great Eastern

Life assurance & financial plans for customers of various age groups. The company's focus is on promoting health and longevity - they have the perfect incentive to do so, really.

Level 8, 25 Bis Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

Blue Cross

Blue Cross Vietnam is a Medical Insurance Administrator specializing in Health and Travel insurance in Asia. Our competitive advantage is in our design and administration of modern travel and medical insurance plans; plans built for people living and working in Vietnam.

Level 8, River View Tower, 7A Thai Van Lung, D1. 3821 9908

IGlobal Assist

Offers insurance programs offered by ACE, Liberty, Seven Corners and other global insurers. Free consultation and custom quotes for most lines of insurance including health, travel, home, auto, motorbike, property, liability, and personal accident.

www.iglobalassist.com

IF Consulting

IF Consulting has for 20 years provided advice to individuals and businesses in assessing health/accident risk and finding the best suitable solution. The company is independent and Vietnam-based.

IBC Building, 3rd Floor, 1A Me Linh Square, D1

www.insuranceinvietnam.com

Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual is a 100% US-owned general insurer licensed to provide insurance services directly to Vietnamese individuals and state-owned enterprises as well as motor insurance.

15th Floor, Kumho Asiana Plaza, 39 Le Duan, D1. 3812 5125

LIG Insurance

The company provides property and casualty insurance, along with customer relations management and automobile claims support services and long-term insurance to individuals and corporations.

Unit 809, 8th Floor, 115 Nguyen Hue, D1 3821 9968

McLarens Young International

McLarens Young International is a global claims service provider that helps our clients achieve timely and equitable claims resolution.

9th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3821 3316

Prudential Vietnam

Prudential Vietnam is one of the leading life insurers nationwide, also

providing a variety of financial solutions, with over 200 customer service centers, branch offices and general agency and business partner offices.
Unit 25F, Saigon Trade Centre, 37 Ton Duc Thang, D1

information technology

Asia Pacific Solutions

A software development and IT support service company, services include developing all kinds of engineering systems and implementing software solutions.

Suite 1201, 12th Floor, 111A Pasteur, D1

NTT Communications Vietnam

NTT Com Vietnam delivers high-quality ICT services to customers in Vietnam, providing voice and data communication infrastructure, and supporting SME

11th Floor, Sailing Tower, 111A Pasteur, D1 3827 3646

Prism Smart IT

Prism is a foreign-owned Information and Communications Technology company that offers IT Managed Services and Total Business Solutions to companies throughout Vietnam.

4th Floor, Yoco Building, 41 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1

finances

Total Wealth Management

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66/11 Pham Ngoc Thach 3820 0623 t-wm@t-wm.com

law firms

Apex Law

The Apex management system

represents a creative edge in meeting the evolving legal landscape in this country.

Unit 4A2, 4F Nam Han Office Building, 65 Nguyen Du, D1. 3822 2942

JP Law Firm

J&P Law is a full-service law firm providing the highest quality legal services to both international and domestic clients, and its widely-recognized practice areas include Corporate, M&A and Finance.

Level 7 - Room 702, 81-85 Ham Nghi, D1

Logos Law Firm

Logos HCMC Office offers comprehensive legal services in a wide range of subject areas for foreign investors in Vietnam through highly qualified lawyers licensed in Korea, Vietnam, and the United States.

Unit 2002B, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3 3822 7161

Phuoc & Partners Company

Phuoc & Partners is an independent law and consulting firm with integrated legal and tax practices. The firm enables clients to reduce their administrative overhead and focus on core business.

Room 1602, Level 16, Centec Tower, 72-74 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D3

real estate agencies

Colliers International Vietnam

Globally, Colliers International is a leading commercial real estate services company offering comprehensive expertise to investors, owners and tenants around the world.

Bitexco Office Building, 7th Floor, 19-25 Nguyen Hue, D1. 3823 3529

Cushman & Wakefield Vietnam

Their primary focus is on consultancy, brokerage, and investment across the retail, office, and hospitality sectors.

Level 2, Pathfinder Building, 52 Dong Du, D1. 6291 4707

House Link

House Link offers a wide array of apartments and houses for lease all over Ho Chi Minh City.

23 Phung Khac Khoan, D1 3824 5271

Realty World

Focuses on real estate business, consulting, managing, and marketing. Currently they specialize in apartments, office buildings, and villas.

111 Nguyen Huu Canh, Ward 22, Binh Thanh. 3899 4979

Savills

Savills PLC is a global real estate services provider listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Avalon building, 53 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, D1. 3825 8598

The Nest

The Nest is a customer-dedicated property company focusing on leasing luxurious properties in Saigon. French-Vietnamese managed with over four years of property experience.

369/6 Do Xuan Hop, Phuoc Long B, D9

relocation

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5th Floor, Lafayette De Saigon, 8A Phung Khac Khoan, D1 35210071

ags-vietnam@agsfourwinds.com www.agsfourwinds.com

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District 1. 0122 5141 848

Asian Tigers

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9th Floor, Unit 9.3, 9 Doan Van Bo, D4. 3826 7799

Crown Line

Crown Line is a well-known Japanese moving firm now operating out of Ho Chi Minh City.

60 Nguyen Van Thu, D1

JVK International Movers

Focused primarily on the international and local movement of household goods since 1979, JVK has established itself as a leader in this unique transportation field.

1st Floor, Saigon Port Building, 3 Nguyen Tat Thanh, D4. 3826 7655

Logical Moves

They offer your belongings the best protection available with the latest technology, experienced staff and equipment. With door to door services, Logical Moves is all about quality service, best prices and well-arranged time. They have moved offices and household goods for many well-known international companies in Vietnam.

3941 5322 www.logicalmoves.net

Santa Fe Relocation Service

Door to door relocation service which promises to take the stress out of moving personal possessions from one city - or country - to another. Also offers pet relocations, records management, home search and immigration help.

www.santaferelo.com info@santaferelo.com.vn

EDITORIAL

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Faces & Places



Game of Precision

The Saigon International Darts League (SIDL) held a party at Lion Restaurant to hand out awards and to celebrate the mid-year season.

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN**

Food Heaven

The Windsor hotel brought over celebrity chef Martin Yan to promote their USDA premium choice beef and mooncake specialties for July and August.

IMAGES BY **NGOC TRAN AND JAMES PHAM**

Adorned

SONG held an exclusive cocktail party to view a new limited edition jewelry collection by PHU HIEP x SONG.

IMAGES BY **ADAM ROBERT YOUNG**



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