
Vietnam Travel Readiness

Passport and Visa Information

US and Canadian citizens planning to travel to Vietnam should ensure that their passport remains valid for at least six months beyond their planned departure date from Vietnam. Additionally, travelers must have at least two blank pages in their passport for visa stamps. A tourist visa is required for entry into Vietnam. Travelers have the option to obtain either a paper visa or an e-visa.

For detailed information on entry requirements for US citizens traveling to Vietnam, please refer to the official [Travel State Government Website for Vietnam](#).

The Vietnamese Immigration Department facilitates the issuance of E-visas to foreigners via an online application system. E-visas are granted with a validity of up to 90 days and offer single-entry access for 25 USD or multiple-entry access for 50 USD. Payments can be made through bank transfer. E-visa holders are permitted to enter and exit Vietnam via 42 specified international border gates, encompassing all international airports.

Comprehensive instructions and the application for Vietnamese E-visas are accessible on the internet and can be located [here](#). For ease of reference, we have detailed the step-by-step process [here](#).

Weather

Vietnam experiences a diverse climate, ranging from hot and humid summers in the north to cold and dry winters in regions like Sapa. Hanoi, the capital city, has a subtropical climate with warm, humid summers (May-September) and cooler, dry winters (December-February). Average temperatures in Hanoi range from 10°C (50°F) in January to 32°C (90°F) in July.

Please note that these are general weather conditions, and temperatures may vary depending on the specific region and time of year. Mountainous areas, such as the northern highlands, can experience significantly cooler temperatures than coastal regions.

Currency Exchange

The official currency of Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). When dealing with prices denoted with the "₫" symbol, it indicates Vietnamese Dong unless specified otherwise. Major hotels, larger shops, and establishments typically accept credit cards, but it's advisable to carry cash for smaller transactions.

Exchange Rate (as of May 2024): 1 USD = 25,275.8 VND

While the official exchange rate is determined by the State Bank of Vietnam, there may be alternative exchange rates available, particularly in tourist areas.

TIP: Avoid exchanging your local currency (USD, EUR, etc.) for Vietnamese Dong before arriving in Vietnam. Instead, exchange your currency locally, preferably seeking competitive rates at authorized currency exchange bureaus or banks. ATMs are also widely available for cash withdrawals upon arrival.

Changing Money

Obtaining Vietnamese Dong in Hanoi is convenient, with currency exchange services available at banks and reputable exchange bureaus. Proper identification may be required for currency transactions.

Some notable currency exchange bureaus in Vietnam include:

1. Vietcombank
 2. Sacombank
 3. Techcombank
 4. ACB Bank
 5. Asia Commercial Bank (ACB)
- ATMs are prevalent in urban areas like Hanoi, operating 24/7 and accepting major international cards.
 - While street money changers may offer their services in tourist areas, it's recommended to exchange currency only at authorized institutions for safety and reliability.

Important: Exchange only what you need at a time and retain your transaction receipts, as they may be required for currency conversion back to your original currency before departure. Please note that there's typically a limit when exchanging leftover Vietnamese Dong at the conclusion of your trip.

Other Recommendations

- **Tax Refunds:** Foreign tourists may be eligible for VAT refunds on purchases exceeding a certain amount. Participating retailers can facilitate this process; ensure you retain receipts and complete necessary forms at customs during departure.
- **Keep Small Change Handy:** In Vietnam, having small denominations of Vietnamese Dong can be beneficial, as shops may experience shortages of change.
- **Utilizing Leftover Vietnamese Dong:** At the end of your trip, if you have excess Vietnamese Dong, you can convert a limited amount back to your original currency at authorized exchange bureaus. Consider spending leftover Dong on souvenirs or local goods.

Vaccinations

While there are no mandatory vaccinations for entry into Vietnam, it's advisable to consult with your healthcare provider to ensure you are up to date on routine vaccinations recommended for travelers to Southeast Asia. This may include vaccinations for hepatitis A, typhoid, and routine immunizations like measles-mumps-rubella (MMR).

Please review the CDC's Vietnam Travel page to see the recommended vaccines for travel to Vietnam [here](#).

Electricity

Vietnam operates on a standard voltage of 220 V with a frequency of 50 Hz. Travelers from regions with different voltages will require a voltage converter. The plug types commonly used in Vietnam are types A, C, and F.

Telecommunications

Major telecommunications services in Vietnam are provided by companies such as Viettel and Mobifone. Public phones and phone centers are available in urban areas for local and international calls.

Calling Cards: Prepaid calling cards can be purchased for international calls from kiosks and supermarkets.

Cell Phones: Visitors can use their cell phones in Vietnam, with 4G coverage available in major cities. Ensure to check roaming charges with your provider.

Internet: WiFi is widely available in hotels and public spaces across Vietnam.

Name Badges

Your name badges will be distributed at the first meeting of the delegation by your Delegation Leader or Delegation Manager. Please wear your name badge throughout the program, so you are easily identified as a member of the delegation.

Rooming List

The Rooming list will be posted on the website at approximately 30 days prior to your delegation convene date. Take a few moments to make sure you are assigned as per your request. Please advise me immediately of necessary changes.

Gratuities

Most of the tips associated with this program for bus drivers, porters, restaurant staff and hotel

luggage service has been included in your program cost. Their tips will be paid from the program office.

Tips for your Delegation Manager HAVE NOT been included, as the Delegation Manager is critical to the success of the program and will be the individual with whom you interact the most. Your Delegation leader will coordinate the tip for the national guide, collecting from each of you to make up this gratuity. We suggest \$8-12 dollars a day, per person.

If any of the others, including bus drivers and hotel staff have impressed you, providing additional gratuities to specific individuals whom you would like to recognize their excellent service additional gratuity is always appreciated.

Health and Safety

- **Water and Food Safety:** Water in Vietnam is not potable. Bottled water is available everywhere. The usual soft drinks are also available. Fresh fruit juices are a great alternative.
- **Sun Safety:** Use sunscreen and wear hats and sunglasses to protect against the sun's intensity.
- **Insect Protection:** Use insect repellent to guard against mosquito-borne illnesses.
- **General health tips:** Ensure you get adequate rest before departure and carry necessary medications. Pack remedies for common ailments like colds, motion sickness, and digestive issues. Consider bringing broad-spectrum antibiotics and extra eyewear. Maintain hydration and be cautious with spicy foods and areas prone to insects.

General Health Tips

- Get plenty of rest before departure.
- To avoid delays at customs, always use the original containers for over the counter and prescription drugs.
- Common travelers' ills can be treated with antacids, aspirin, and preparations such as Imodium or Pepto Bismol or Imodium. If you suffer from motion sickness, take along a preventive remedy.
- Ask your doctor for a broad-spectrum antibiotic that you can take with you, just in case.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Watch out for spicy dishes, especially at the outset of your program. Avoid eating food from roadside stalls as well as unpeeled fruits and fresh salads in small hotels. If you absolutely must eat food at a doubtful location, make sure it is served hot.
- Always use an insect repellent if you find yourself in a mosquito-prone area.
- If traveling in scorching heat, remember to drink enough water and to use hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Avoid venturing out in the midday sun.

It is recommended that all passengers traveling have personal insurance to assist with any medical and other costs. Please do not forget to take a copy of your insurance policy with you.

Personal Safety

Exercise common sense precautions to safeguard personal belongings, avoid accepting gifts from strangers, and use hotel safes for valuables. Carry passports and valuables securely and avoid isolated areas at night.

Prescriptions

Please take the following precautions to avoid complications while traveling:

- Leave all medication in its original packaging with all prescription details.
- The prescription must be in your name.
- Bring extra medication in case of loss or damage.
- Discuss the issue of time zone changes with your physician to ensure that you are receiving the proper dosage at the proper time of day. You should also discuss alternatives for medications that require refrigeration, as this is not possible while traveling.
- You will need an original, signed letter from your doctor to bring certain medical devices such as syringes, pumps, or EpiPens® on the airplane.

Medical Services

Travelers with specific medical needs should carry ample supplies of medications and understand that local guides and staff may not possess medical training. Personal travel insurance is recommended for medical coverage during your trip.