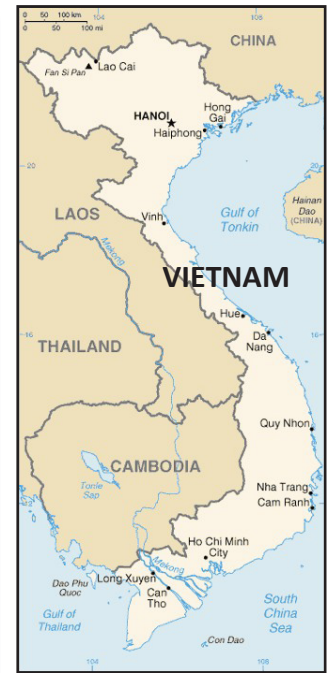




KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid Vietnamese driver's license, passport, visa, vehicle documents and proof of insurance.
- ❑ US driver's licenses and International Driving Permits are not valid. A Vietnamese license must be obtained through the Provincial Public Transportation Service of the Vietnamese Department of Communications and Transport.
- ❑ Drivers without a Vietnamese license who are involved in a traffic crash can be held liable.
- ❑ The US Department of State recommends carrying both a digital and photocopy of your passport at all times, and leaving your original document in a hotel safe or other secure location. Authorities making traffic stops or security checks may detain those unable to produce official identification.
- ❑ Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond planned departure date; proof of visa is necessary to exit the country.
- ❑ Visitors must register their presence with authorities on arrival. Some hotels may provide this service. Do not allow your passport or identification documents to be retained by staff.
- ❑ The Vietnamese Dong (VND) is the legal currency. Use only official, clearly signed money exchange counters. Using other sources is illegal.
- ❑ Women traveling alone and women drivers may be subject to harassment and verbal abuse, and may be targets of sexual violence. Police often disregard male violence against women.
- ❑ Pedestrians are at high risk. Drivers generally ignore those on foot.
- ❑ Pedestrians should be cautious in crowded areas. Thieves on motorbikes and motorcycles frequently target visitors on foot.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is zero for drivers of cars, and below 0.05 g/dl for motorcycle and moped drivers.
- ❑ There are 29.8 road deaths per 100,000 people in Vietnam, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Motorists** are undisciplined and generally ignore all traffic safety rules, including red lights and stop signs.
- **Drivers of small vehicles** are expected to give way to larger vehicles in all traffic situations.
- **Speeding** and disregarding traffic direction, including on one-way streets, is common. Head-on crashes occur regularly, including on main roads and highways.
- **Drivers frequently** operate vehicles in poor condition that lack standard safety features including seat belts, headlights, taillights, turn signals, working brakes and roadworthy tires.
- **Motorcycle** and motorbike drivers regularly ride on sidewalks, against traffic and weave among other vehicles.
- **Bus drivers** often fail to observe traffic rules.
- **Drivers** routinely ignore pedestrian crossings and “walk” lights at intersections.
- **Pedestrian behavior** is unpredictable. Persons on foot may dart suddenly into roadways and ignore traffic rules.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **Of the** 195,468 km (121,458 miles) of roads, 148,338 km (92,172 miles) are paved and 47,130 km (29,285 miles) are unpaved.
- **Surface conditions** vary throughout the country.
- **Main highways** are paved and generally better maintained than other roads.
- **Inter-city** road networks are poorly laid out and chaotic, leading to frequent crashes.
- **Mountain roads** are often difficult to navigate. Roads are narrow, winding, unlit and poorly maintained.
- **Roads become** slippery during and after rain.
- **Potholes** and debris are common on all roads.
- **Construction zones** are often unmarked.
- **Some roads** require tolls. Pay in local cash at toll booths.
- **Protests** occur infrequently. Though most are peaceful, they should be avoided. Large-scale demonstrations have the potential to become confrontational and to disrupt road travel and public transportation; recent protests have included organized attacks on police stations which have resulted in fatalities.
- **There is** a risk of landmines and unexploded ordnance in and near former battlefields. Particularly high risks exist in central Vietnam along the border of Laos near the crossing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. These areas are often unmarked.



Road Conditions, continued

- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is underdeveloped in cities and undeveloped in rural areas.
- **Fatal crashes** between pedestrians and motorbike drivers are common.
- **Use** pedestrian bridges and elevated walkways whenever they are available.
- **Many people** travel by bicycle. Cyclists must share busy roads with motorized traffic.
- **Motorists** generally disregard pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Authorities** may prevent visitors from entering some parts of the country. Areas may be unmarked; there may be no information regarding off-limit locations. Places designated as off-limits may change with little or no warning.
- **The following roads may present particular challenges to motorists:**
 - » **The road leading to Pha Din Pass** is a high mountain pass on the borders of Son La and Lai Chau provinces. The narrow road is flanked on one side by cliffs and on the other by sheer, unprotected drops. The winding, 32-km (19.8-mile) route includes eight sharp hairpin turns that are only wide enough for one vehicle at a time. Lighting and guardrails are lacking. Avoid this road.
 - » **The QL 4C road** from Yen Minh in the Ha Giang province is regarded as challenging. The 213-km (132-mile) route runs along the Dong Van karst plateau Geopark towards Meo Vac, and is popular with visiting drivers. The road's asphalt surface is poorly maintained. There are multiple curving sections and hairpin turns. Dangers increase during and after heavy rain.
 - » **Hanoi Train Street** is a narrow lane with a train track running down the center. It is regarded as one of the country's most dangerous streets. It is a popular tourist attraction with cafes and coffeshops built feet away from the busy track. There are no barriers. Pedestrians often stand on the tracks to take photos of approaching trains; or pull cafe tables and chairs close to the tracks. This street should be avoided.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS










- **Vietnam** is subject to tropical cyclones, monsoons, flooding, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, heat waves and wildfires.
- **Tropical cyclone** season is generally from May/June to November, though storms may occur year-round. Cyclones are often accompanied by strong winds and heavy rainfall.
- **Rainy season** is from June to September in the north and south, and from October to December in central regions.
- **Monsoon** rains may result in flooding, flash floods and landslides.
- **Seasonal flooding** in October and November occurs in central Vietnam. This includes the Mekong River Delta and Hanoi, especially along the Red River. Do not step or drive into floodwaters, which may contain strong currents or obscure deep potholes, debris and other road hazards.
- **There are** frequent regional earthquakes, which may be followed by tsunamis.
- **Heat waves** and humidity, particularly during the rainy season, may result in dehydration and heat stroke.
- **Wildfires** and forest fires may occur throughout the country. Smoke from fires can impair vision.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	60 kph (37 mph)
Rural roads	90 kph (56 mph)
Highways	120 kph (74 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

								
Turning area	Checkpoint	Steep turn: danger of roll-over	No left turn or U-turn	Lanes and speed limits for specific vehicle types	Pedestrian footpath	Dangerous cliffs	Nighttime speed limit	Road junction with priority



TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation options** include cars, taxis, “xe om” (motorcycle/motorbike taxis), “cyclo” taxis (bicycle rickshaws), rideshares, buses, trains, one metro and boats.
- **There are** extensive bus networks in cities. Bus travel is dangerous. Crashes are common.
- **Buses** are generally poorly maintained and overcrowded. Drivers often disregard traffic laws.
- **Bus travel** risks increase at night. Driver fatigue is common, especially on long-distance routes.
- **Bus routes** are limited in rural areas.
- **Licensed**, metered taxis owned by large companies are generally regarded as safe. Book online or through a reputable hotel, and do not hail taxis on the street.
- **Taxi drivers** usually do not speak English. Carry destination written in Vietnamese.
- **Do not** enter a taxi occupied by others, and insist that driver not pick up additional passengers.
- **Avoid xe om** motorcycle/motorbike taxis. Traffic crashes involving motorbikes are the leading cause of severe injury, death and emergency evacuation of visitors to Vietnam.
- **Cyclo bicycle taxis** are available in some urban areas, and are generally regarded as dangerous. Passengers ride in seats positioned in front of driver.
- **Rideshares** are available and are operated by GrabTaxi and other taxi companies. Physical conflicts occur between motorcycle taxi drivers and rideshare drivers.
- **Use only** rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **Trains are** generally regarded as reliable. Routes are limited but include links to main cities.
- **Many trains** are modern and air-conditioned.
- **There is** one metro system, located in Hanoi.

- **Boats** provide multiple routes, including overnight service on Halong Bay. Vessels are often overcrowded, in poor condition and lack adequate safety equipment.
- **Boat crews** may be untrained. If traveling by boat, use only a reputable company, avoid vessels that appear to be in poor condition, and do not travel during inclement weather. Bring your own life preserver.
- **Piracy occurs** in coastal waters around Vietnam.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age to drive or rent a vehicle. Some rental agencies may have additional restrictions.
- **Seat belt** use is compulsory for driver and passengers.
- **Children** under the age of 13 or 145 cm (57 inches) in height may not ride in front seats.
- **Children younger** than age three must be secured in a child safety seat.
- **Young children** up to the age of 12 months or under 12.7 kilograms (28 pounds) in weight must ride in a rear-facing child safety seat.
- **Helmet use** is compulsory for motorcycle and moped drivers and passengers. Helmets must be fastened, and meet national safety standards. Ventilated helmets for hot weather are available.
- **Child** passengers are allowed on motorcycles.
- **Parking** is prohibited over manholes or sewers, within five meters (16.4 feet) of crossroads, on curves, on pedestrian crossings, or where signs indicate.
- **Drivers must** use horns to alert other motorists prior to overtaking. However, horns are prohibited between 10 pm and 5 am in many urban areas.
- **Pedestrians** have right-of-way at marked crossings, but this rule is often ignored by motorists.
- **Give way** to traffic already present in a roundabout.
- **Police may** carry out random breath tests.

Hanoi (Capital)

- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, “xe om” (motorcycle/motorbike taxis), “cyclo” taxis (bicycle rickshaws), rideshares, buses, trains, a metro system and boats.
- » Driving is not advised. Traffic is unruly and chaotic. Traffic jams are common.
- » There are large numbers of careless and aggressive motorbike drivers.
- » The bus network is extensive. There are more than 60 lines and multiple stations; each station serves routes traveling in a specific direction.
- » Buses are regarded as dangerous. Serious and fatal crashes are common.
- » Buses are generally poorly maintained and overcrowded. Drivers often ignore traffic laws.
- » Bus travel risks increase at night. Drivers are often fatigued.
- » Bus routes are difficult to understand. Drivers generally do not speak English.



Hanoi, continued

- » Bus stations include Gia Lâm, Luong Yen, Kim Ma, My Dinh, and Phia Nam/Southern Station.
- » Bus drivers often begin to pull away from stops before passengers have fully disembarked.
- » There is a metro rapid transit system with one line operated by Hanoi Metro Company (HMC). Expansion is currently underway on additional lines.
- » The 2A/Cat Linh Line connects the neighborhood of Cat Linh to Yen Nghia bus station in Ha Dong. There are 12 stations along this route.
- » Metro trains run from 5:30 am to 10 pm daily.
- » Paper metro tickets are sold at station ticket counters. Ticket stubs are necessary to exit stations.
- » Rechargeable smartcard metro tickets can be purchased at vending machines located at stations.
- » Metro cars are crowded during twice-daily commuter rush hours.
- » Pedestrians are at great risk. Sidewalks have been taken over by street vendors and motorbike riders, who use them as parking lots. Pedestrians are forced to walk in busy roads.
- » There are two bridges crossing the Red River. Chuong Duong bridge has no sidewalk. Long Bien bridge is shared by pedestrians, bicycles, trains and motorbikes.
- » Many people travel by bicycle. Infrastructure is underdeveloped.
- » Bicycle travel is dangerous. Drivers regularly ignore the safety of cyclists.
- » Licensed, metered taxis from large companies are generally regarded as safe and reliable.
- » Taxi colors vary by company. Drivers generally do not speak English; carry destination written in Vietnamese.
- » Taxi meters are rarely used and may be inaccurate; agree on fare with driver prior to travel. Carry small bills, as drivers rarely give change.
- » Book taxis online or through a reputable hotel, and do not hail vehicles on the street.
- » Avoid taxis occupied by others, and insist that driver not pick up additional passengers.
- » Xe om motorbike taxis are generally found on street corners. Drivers wear green helmets.
- » Motorbike taxis should be avoided. These vehicles are frequently involved in serious and fatal crashes.
- » Cyclo bicycle taxis are generally regarded as dangerous. Passenger seats are positioned in front of driver.
- » Rideshares are operated by GrabTaxi and other taxi companies. Physical conflicts often occur between drivers of motorcycle taxis and rideshares.
- » Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Trains are operated by the Vietnamese Railway Company, and are generally regarded as reliable. Many trains are modern and air-conditioned.
- » Hanoi Train Station is the main station for national travel. Daily routes are available to southern cities including Hue and Nha Trang; and to Lao Cahi in the northwest.
- » "Reunification Express" trains connect to Ho Chi Minh City, but do not actually provide express service. The route takes from 31 to 38 hours.
- » Train tickets may be purchased at the station or online. Ticket scams are common: Avoid friendly English-speaking ticket sellers in the main area of the station and purchase tickets at windows or online.
- » Long-distance trains to China arrive and depart from Gia Lâm Station. Overnight service is offered several times a week.
- » Pedestrians are at high risk. Drivers generally ignore those on foot, even at marked crossings.
- » Many people travel by bicycle. Cyclists must share busy roads with motorized traffic.
- » Motorbike drivers often drive on sidewalks, and generally disregard pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- » Boats provide multiple routes. Vessels are often overcrowded, in poor condition and lack safety equipment.
- » Boat crews may be untrained. If traveling by boat, use only a reputable company, avoid vessels that appear to be in poor condition and do not travel during inclement weather. Bring your own life preserver.
- » Piracy occurs in coastal waters around Vietnam.



Hanoi, continued

- » Noi Bai International Airport is approximately 35 km (21.7 miles) north of the city.
- » Buses, taxis and rideshares provide transport between the airport and city.
- » Public buses depart from the arrivals level of the international terminal.
- » Express buses connect to Long Bien bus station near the Old Quarter.
- » Shuttle bus service operates hourly between the airport and Vietnam Airlines Downtown Office.
- » Some hotels may provide private shuttle transfers. Reserve seat prior to travel.
- » Rideshares are available to and from the airport.
- » Taxis queues are located outside of the arrivals terminal. Use only official, metered taxis located at the queue, and avoid drivers soliciting for fares in the arrivals area. Carry your destination address written in Vietnamese.
- » Airport taxi scams are common These include robbery, and delivering passengers to the wrong address and charging high fees to travel to the requested destination.
- » Airline travel manifests are not secure. Passengers may be met at the airport by drivers who are carrying placards showing their name. Passengers who expect to be met at the airport should request driver's name, phone number and license plate number and verify all information before entering vehicle.

Ho Chi Minh City

- » Largest city. Commonly referred to as Saigon.
- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, "xe om" (motorcycle/motorbike taxis), "cyclo" taxis (bicycle rickshaws), rideshares, buses, trains and boats.
- » Driving is not advised. Traffic is undisciplined and dangerous.
- » There is an extensive bus network with more than 150 routes.
- » Main stations include Mien Dong Coach Station, Mien Tay Bus Station, Cholon Bus Station, "Local Bus Terminal" and Cho Ben Thanh Bus Station.
- » Public buses are bright green. Most have a driver and onboard conductor who can help passengers determine the correct stop for their destination.
- » Buses usually do not come to a complete stop when passengers are disembarking.
- » Private coach companies operate bus service to destinations including Cambodia.
- » Bus travel is dangerous. Buses are generally overcrowded and in poor condition; drivers may disregard traffic laws. Dangers, including driver fatigue, increase at night.
- » In general, metered taxis from large companies are considered safe and reliable. Book taxi online or through a reputable hotel, and do not hail vehicles on the street.
- » Few taxi drivers speak English. Carry destination written in Vietnamese.
- » Never enter a taxi occupied by others, and insist that driver not pick up additional passengers.
- » Xe om motorcycle/motorbike taxis are dangerous. Avoid this form of transportation.
- » Cyclo bicycle taxis are available in some downtown areas. These vehicles are generally regarded as dangerous. Passengers ride in seats positioned in front driver. Helmets are not provided.
- » Rideshares are available. Services are operated by GrabTaxi and other taxi companies. Physical conflicts often occur between motorcycle taxi drivers and rideshare drivers.
- » Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Walking is dangerous. Drivers generally ignore pedestrians, even at marked crossings.
- » Despite city laws, sidewalks in large parts of the city have been taken over by street vendors and motorbike drivers, who have turned them into informal parking lots.
- » Bicycle travel is common. Infrastructure is lacking. Cyclists must share busy roads with motorized traffic.
- » Motorists often disregard the safety of bicyclists.



Ho Chi Minh City, continued

- » There is a citywide bike rental program available through the TN-Go app.
- » Saigon Railway Station is the main station. Tickets may be purchased from the Vietnamese Railways website. A ticket office located at the station generally provides an agent with some English language skills.
- » Trains are generally regarded as reliable. Routes include regular service to Hanoi.
- » Many trains are modern and air-conditioned.
- » Boats including Saigon Waterbus provide multiple routes on the Saigon River. Vessels are often overcrowded, in poor condition and lack adequate safety equipment.
- » Boat crews may be untrained. Use only a reputable company, avoid vessels that appear to be in poor condition and do not travel during inclement weather. Bring your own life preserver.
- » Tan Son Nhat International Airport is located about 8 km (4.9 miles) from city center.
- » Rideshares are available to and from the airport.
- » Official taxis are located outside of the arrivals terminal. Use only taxis parked in the queue. Avoid drivers soliciting for fares in the arrivals area. Carry your destination address written in Vietnamese.
- » Airport taxi scams, including robbery or delivering passengers to the wrong address and charging high fees to go to the requested address, are common.
- » Airline travel manifests are not secure. Passengers may be met at airports by persons impersonating taxi drivers who are carrying placards showing their name. Passengers who expect to be met at the airport should request driver's name, phone number and license plate number and verify all information before entering vehicle.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Most** public places and public transportation are not accessible to persons with mobility, sensory or other challenges.
- **Sidewalks**, curb ramps and road crossings are lacking in most of the country, including in tourist areas.
- **Some new** buildings and facilities in large cities are fitted with ramps and accessible entrances.
- **Metro travel** in Hanoi is free for those with mobility and sensory challenges. Stations have elevators. Trains are fitted with spaces for wheelchairs and dedicated seating; stops are announced over loudspeakers.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
- **Responders** to emergency numbers, doctors and medical staffs at public health care facilities rarely speak English.
 - » Police: 113
 - » Ambulance: 115
 - » Fire: 114
- **Responses** to emergency situations may be slow, particularly outside of large urban centers. First responders are usually unable to access remote areas beyond large cities. Traffic congestion may delay response time.
- **In an emergency**, visitors may wish to take a taxi or private vehicle to the nearest reliable medical center.
- **Emergency care** and medical facilities are generally below western standards. Medicines and supplies are lacking.
- **Reliable medical care** is generally available only in or near major cities. Minor illnesses and injuries may be treated at international health clinics in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Serious injuries or conditions may require evacuation to another country.
- **Private clinics** and hospitals are generally better equipped than public facilities. Some have English- or French-speaking staff.
- **Immediate** cash payment is necessary for medical treatment.
- **Some medications** prescribed in other countries may be illegal in Vietnam. Law requires all medicines to be carried in their original packaging, accompanied by a written doctor's prescription that includes patient's name, age, medicine name, volume, dosage, doctor's signature and address. Prescription medications must be carried in hand luggage.



Emergency Information, continued

- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police and contact car rental agency.
 - » Administer aid to injured persons as required by law, and remain at scene until authorities indicate you may leave.
 - » Do not sign any documents that have not been accurately translated into English.
 - » Take photos of scene and collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses, if possible.
 - » Visiting drivers involved in a crash may be prevented from leaving the country until police have completed their investigations. Delays may be long.

**ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)**

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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