

Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

Travelling to and from Ho Chi Minh City - flights - Buses - Railways or car and driver: Ho Chi Minh City is an important gateway when touring Vietnam and you can get to pretty much anywhere from the City be it into The Mekong Delta or to the beaches and coasts of the South China Sea or of course up into Cambodia, Laos and Thailand etc.

Flying to Saigon / Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh's Tan Son Nhat International Airport is located around 6km north of the City and is easily the largest airport in Vietnam both in capacity and pure area - the airport handles twice as many passengers as does Hanoi for instance. Foreigner tourists can get [Vietnam visa on arrival](#) at the airport easily.

Terminal 1 handles domestic Vietnam flights with the main airline currently being Vietnam Airlines which offers direct flights to Hanoi, Dalat, Can Tho, Hue, Da Nang, Nha Trang and Hai Phong.

Terminal 2 is a very modern building with quite a few international airlines present providing flights to their relevant home countries - these airlines include Air France, Air China, Cathy Pacific, Japan Airlines, Malaysian Airlines, Lufthansa, Qatar Airways, Thai Airways and of course Vietnam Airlines are ever present. There are shuttle buses running out of the airport (near the Domestic Terminal) into the center of Saigon but probably the best way to do this trip is to simply use a metered taxi.

Ho Chi Minh City (formerly called Saigon and these days often quickly referred to as HCMC) is something of a shock to visit if arriving in from much more serene places like Hoi An, Dalat or Chau Doc. There are motorbikes and buses everywhere with associated traffic jams and the traffic movement starts early in the morning and lasts well into the evening. The name Ho Chi Minh City is in relation to the whole area whilst the central and old part of Ho Chi Minh City is still known as Saigon to most people. This Vietnamese city is in complete contrast to Hanoi which has plenty of narrow twisty streets and very old buildings - Saigon seems to be full of often wide congested quite often tatty streets with everyone going somewhere in a hurry and because of the heavy traffic lots of noise and exhaust fumes.

Vietnamese Railways and travelling to/from Saigon.

There are express rail services from Saigon which call at a variety of locations along the Vietnamese coast including Nha Trang, Da Nang, Hue and Hanoi with 5 trains a day leaving from either end of the line. The SE numbered trains are the best to use as they have modern carriages, sleeper cars and air conditioning and the duration of the over 1000-mile journey between Saigon and Hanoi is around 30 hours - so not that "express". Saigon's railway station which is called Gare Saigon, is located at District 3, Ho Chi Minh City.

Saigon Ferries.

The passenger quay at Bach Dang Wharf is in District 1 on the Saigon River and provides hydrofoil links with Vung Tau and its famous beaches and express boat links with Can Tho up in the Mekong Delta.

Saigon Buses.

Open tour buses and buses from Phnom Penh terminate on De Tham (where most of the budget hotels are located). Buses from the north of Vietnam come into Mien

Dong Bus Station which is 5kms northeast of the City at Ox Viet Nghe Tinh. Buses from the southwest i.e. the Mekong Delta come into Mien Tay Bus Station which is 10kms west of the city center at An Lac District. There are shuttle buses operating between Mien Dong and Mien Tay bus stations and also a shuttle bus running between these bus stations and Ben Thanh bus station which is where you will find budget and boutique [hotels in Ho Chi Minh City](#).

Ho Chi Minh City is split into 24 districts with the main ones of interest to tourists being Districts 1, 3 and 5 - the old French Quarter of District 1 is known variously as Saigon, Downtown and Central and contains many hotels and restaurants. Originally just a small fishing village within swampland and known as Prey Nokor, Saigon was inhabited by the Khmer but eventually in the early 1600s Vietnamese settlers moved in from the Mekong Delta and eventually outnumbered the Khmer. The Hue's Nguyen dynasty exerted some control of the city around 1698 and then the French subsequently conquered it in 1859 before they in turn were kicked out by the Vietnamese.

Saigon and Ho Chi Minh Hotels and restaurants.

There are literally thousands of hotels in Ho Chi Minh City from the top name hotels (and top prices to match) through to backpackers' cheap hostels - nearly all of these hotels can be easily found on websites. As far as Saigon restaurants are concerned again there is plenty of choice particularly around Downtown catering for all sorts of food tastes. There are also many bakeries, cafes and supermarkets where you can pick up drinks or food as required. Generally speaking it seems the further south you travel in Vietnam the more expensive both accommodation and restaurants become - although further south still (i.e. of Saigon) into The Mekong Delta things are much cheaper again.