

Another Side of Vietnam – Indochina



Looking back when I went into the service, you could put in a thimble as to what I knew about Vietnam. However, over the years, I have studied the country and what the area was all about, the military that attempted to make it a free country.

Frankly, it is not a country or region in the world that many know much about. But then there is that time, frankly really, a long time where it was not called “Vietnam”, but Indochina and before that it was referred to as something else as was called Indo-China with the hyphen in the middle of the word.

And before that it was referred to as three regions known as: TONKIN, ANNAM and COCHINCHINE and before that it was yet something else.

The pages that follow will illustrate what Vietnam was during the last 600 plus years and all that took place with “Rulers”, “Colonizers”, the language, the food, infrastructure, ideology and on and on. This is something every Vietnam Veteran should know. Read carefully, you’ll enjoy it.

As you look at the map above which is about 250 years old, please observe carefully with the “odd names” located on the map which, to me anyway, are unusual. There are names that have not been around for many decades of years, along with the country names being different from their known names of today. And something a little unusual to me is that this is our spelling of “SAIGON”. Today, the Vietnamese spell it “SAI GON” with a space. Instead of Hanoi, they spell it “HA NOI”.

Study the map and pick out the country-name-change, the spelling of cities within Indochina and the regions of various countries within Indochina. You’ll find a great lesson in this to be sure. By the way, show it to your family as they too, may be interested in knowing this.

The History of Vietnam



The history of Vietnam can be traced back to more than 4,000 years ago. Archaeological findings from 1965 showed the remains of two hominins closely related to *Sinanthropus*, dating as far back as the Middle Pleistocene era, several thousand of years ago. Ancient Vietnam was home to some of the world's earliest civilizations and societies—making them one of the world's first people who practiced agriculture. The Red River valley formed a natural geographic and economic unit, bounded to the north and west by mountains and jungles, to the east by the sea and to the south by the Red River Delta.

The need to have a single authority to prevent floods of the Red River, to cooperate in constructing hydraulic systems, trade exchange, and to fight invaders, led to the creation of the first Vietnamese states approximately 2879 BC. Another truly influential part of history in Vietnam occurred during the late Bronze Age, when the Đông Sơn culture dramatically advanced the civilization. Vietnam's peculiar geography made it a difficult country to attack, which is why Vietnam under the Hùng kings was for so long an independent and self-contained state. The Xích Tys and Qins were among the earliest foreign aggressors of Vietnam, but the ancient Vietnamese managed to regain control of the country soon after the invasions.

Once Vietnam did succumb to foreign rule, however, it proved unable to escape from it, and for 1,100 years, Vietnam had been successively governed by a series of Chinese dynasties: the Han, Eastern Wu, Jin, Liu Song, Southern Qi, Liang, Sui, Tang, and Southern Han; leading to the loss of native cultural heritage, language, and much of national identity. At certain periods during these 1,100 years, Vietnam was independently governed under the Triệus, Trưng Sisters, Early Lýs, Khúc and Dương Đình Nghệ—although their triumphs and reigns were temporary.



During the Chinese domination of North Vietnam, several civilizations



flourished in what is today central and south Vietnam, particularly the Funanese and Cham. The founders and rulers of these governments, however, were not native to Vietnam. From the 10th century onwards, the Vietnamese, emerging in their heartland of the Red River Delta, began to conquer these civilizations. Millions upon millions were lost to these lengthy wars over a fifty year period.

When Ngô Quyền (King of Vietnam, (939–944) restored sovereign power in the country, the next millennium was advanced by the accomplishments of successive dynasties: Ngôs, Đinhs, Early Lês, Lýs, Trầns, Hồs, Later Trầns, Later Lês, Mạcs, Trịnhs, Nguyễns, Tây Sóns and again Nguyễns. At various points during the imperial dynasties, Vietnam was ravaged and divided by civil wars and witnessed interventions by the Songs, Mongol Yuans, Chams, Mings, Dutch, Manchus, French, and the Americans. The Ming Empire conquered the Red River valley for a while before native Vietnamese regained control and the French Empire reduced Vietnam to a French dependency for nearly a century, followed by an occupation by the Japanese Empire. Political upheaval and a Communist insurrection put an end to the monarchy after World War II, and the country was proclaimed a republic. It became a fully free country in 1975. Vietnam would become a major player soon.

Kings and Emperors of Vietnam



越南

Viet Nam, *viêt nam*, began as two states, a northern one, **Annam**, Nam Viet, or **Dai Viet**, that was primarily under Chinese influence, and for a long time and was part of China, and a southern one, **Champa**, where there was a strong Indian influence. This can be seen in the names of its kings (e.g. Rudravarman, much like the names of Cambodian kings). Indeed, Champa even spoke a Malayo-Polynesian language, **Cham**, which still survives, in a population mostly Muslim. There are some distant relatives among the "Montagnards," in the mountains, and elsewhere. Having won its freedom from China, the northern kingdom conquered the southern one -- a bit of history that seems to have repeated itself in the 20th century -- and the Chinese cultural influence overwhelmed the Indian. From the small map, it can also be

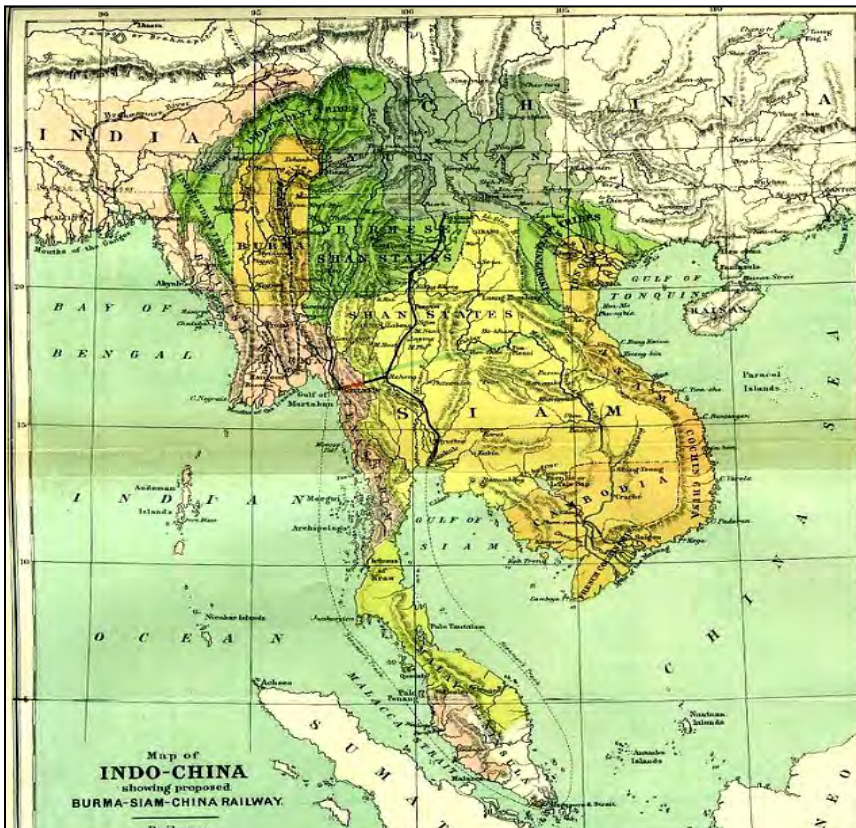


seen that the Mekong Delta region was not originally part of the Vietnamese states. It was Cambodian and was absorbed by Vietnam as Cambodia declined.



Hue became the provincial capital of Vietnam in the 1600's and in some ways still is. It is a beautiful city with a lot of old time "Emperor Glamour" characterized Vietnam back then. Life was obviously a lot different where the "Vietnamese Royalty" spent much of their time alone praying to their gods to help their own ruled people.

Where and What Was “Indochina”?



Indo-China became a colony of France in the late 1840's which allowed France to gain access to the spices and delicious and delicate foods that were only grown in that part of the world. It would become an exotic place to visit by the rich French who wanted “something different” in the way of being waited on, “spoiled”, enjoying the drink, foods and other delicacies of “anything” that France did not have and that by the way, was not much. The people in Europe, the French were (by far) the most spoiled, if I can use that term. And they, like a lot of us wanted more, different experiences, and exotic things and that they got in Vietnam. It was practically half way across the world and about “500 years different” than France or any other European country of that era in time.

Indochina, originally spelled **Indo-China**, is a geographical term originating in the early nineteenth century and referring to the continental portion of the region now known as Southeast Asia. The name refers to the lands historically within the cultural influence of India and China, and physically bound by the Indian Subcontinent to the west and China in the north. It corresponds to the present-day areas of Myanmar, Thailand (Siam), Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and (variably) peninsular Malaysia. The term was later adopted as the name of the colony of French Indochina (today's Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), and the entire area of Indochina is now usually referred to as the Indochinese Peninsula or Mainland Southeast Asia. The origins of the name Indo-China are usually attributed jointly to the Danish-French geographer Conrad Malte-Brun, who referred to the area as *indo-chinois* in 1804, and the Scottish linguist John Leyden, who used the term *Indo-Chinese* to describe the area's inhabitants and their languages in 1808. Scholarly opinions at the time regarding China's and India's historical influence over the area were conflicting, and the term was itself controversial—Malte-Brun himself later argued against its use in a later edition of his *Universal Geography*, reasoning that it over-emphasized Chinese influence, and a possible suggested *Chin-India* instead. However, *Indo-China* had already gained traction and soon supplanted alternative terms such as “*Farther India*” and the *Peninsula beyond the Ganges*. Later, though, as the French established the colony of French Indochina, use of the term became more restricted to the French colony, and today the area is usually referred to as Mainland Southeast Asia.

French Indo-China From The Start

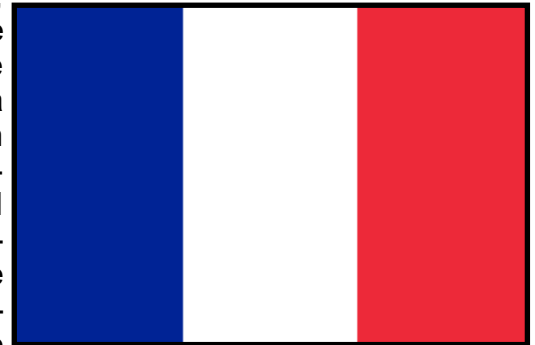
First French Intervention



France–Vietnam relations started in early 17th century with the mission of the Jesuit Missionary Alexandre de Rhodes. At this time, Vietnam was only just beginning to occupy the Mekong Delta, former territory of the “Indianised” kingdom of Champa which they had defeated in 1471. European involvement in Vietnam was confined to trade during the 18th century. In 1787, Pierre Pigneau de Behaine, a French Catholic priest, petitioned the French government and organised French military volunteers to aid Nguyễn Ánh in retaking lands his family lost to the Tây Sơn. Pigneau died in Vietnam but his troops fought until 1802 in French assistance to Nguyễn Ánh.

In the 19th century

France was heavily involved in Vietnam in the 19th century; protecting the work of the Paris Foreign Missions Society in the country was often presented as a justification. For its part, the Nguyen dynasty increasingly saw Catholic missionaries as a political threat; courtesans, for example, an influential faction in the dynastic system, feared for their status in a society influenced by an insistence on monogamy. In 1858, the brief period of unification under the Nguyễn dynasty ended with a successful attack on Da Nang by French Admiral Charles Rigault De Genouilly under the orders of Napoleon III. Due to Diplomat Charles de Montigny's mission having failed, De Genouilly's mission was to stop attempts to expel Catholic missionaries. His orders were to stop the persecution of missionaries and assure the unimpeded propagation of the faith. In September 1858, fourteen French gunships, 3,000 men and 300 Filipino troops provided by the Spanish attacked the port of Tourane (present day Da Nang), causing significant damage and occupying the city. After a few months, Rigault had to leave the city due to supply issues and illnesses. Sailing south, De Genouilly then captured the poorly defended city of Saigon on 18 February 1859. On 13 April 1862, the Vietnamese government was forced to cede the three provinces of Biên Hòa, Gia Định and Định Tường to France. De Genouilly was criticized for his actions and was replaced by Admiral Page in November 1859, with instructions to obtain a treaty protecting the Catholic faith in Vietnam, but refrain from territorial gains.



French policy four years later saw a reversal, with the French continuing to accumulate territory. In 1862, France obtained concessions from Emperor Tự Đức, seceding three treaty ports in Annam and Tonkin, and all of Cochinchine, the latter being formally declared a French territory in 1864. In 1867 the provinces of Châu Đốc, Hà Tiên and Vĩnh Long were added to the French-controlled territory. In 1863, the Cambodian King Norodom had requested the establishment of a French protectorate over his country. In 1867, Siam (modern Thailand) renounced suzerainty over Cambodia and officially recognized the 1863 French protectorate on Cambodia, in exchange for the control of Battambang and Siem Reap provinces which officially became part of Thailand. (These provinces would be ceded back to Cambodia by a border treaty between France and Siam in 1906).

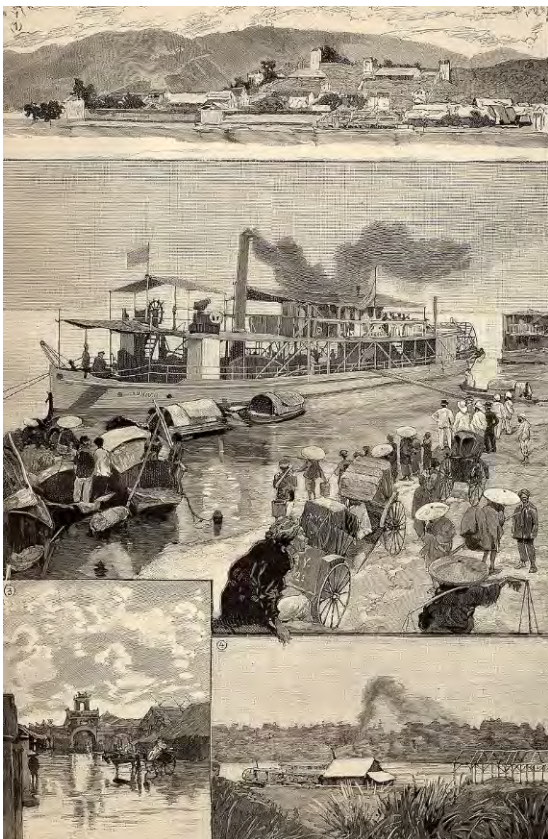
The “When” and the “Where” of the French?



French Indochina (previously spelled as **French Indo-China**) (French: *Indochine française*; Vietnamese: *Đông Dương thuộc Pháp*, IPA: *[d̪əwŋm̩ iəŋ t̪uək fáp]*, frequently abbreviated to *Đông Pháp*, officially known as the **Indochinese Union** (*Union indochinoise*) after 1887 and the **Indochinese Federation** (*Fédération indochinoise*) after 1947, was a grouping of French colonial territories in Southeast Asia.

A grouping of the three Vietnamese regions was by this time formed within the country of Vietnam named **Tonkin** (north), **Annam** (center), and **Cochin china** (south) with Cambodia was formed in 1887. Laos was added in 1893 and the leased Chinese territory of Guangzhouwan in 1898. The capital was moved from Saigon (in Cochin china) to Hanoi (Tonkin) in 1902 and again to Da Lat (Annam) in 1939. In 1945 it was moved back to Hanoi.

After the Fall of France during World War II, the colony was administered by the Vichy government and was under Japanese occupation until March 1945, when the Japanese overthrew the colonial regime. Beginning in May 1941, the Viet Minh, a communist army led by Ho Chi Minh, began a revolt against the Japanese. In August 1945 they declared Vietnamese independence and extended the war, known as the First Indochina War, against France. In Saigon, the anti-Communist State of Vietnam, led by former Emperor Bảo Đại, was granted independence in 1949. On 9 November 1953, the Kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia became independent. Following the Geneva Accord of 1954, the French evacuated Vietnam and French Indochina came to an end.



Saigon **above** in 1875 and Hanoi (**left**) in 1891

In many ways, Indo-China was more or less a “slave labor” living environment for most, if not all of the Southeast Asians in that part of the world. If people (the French and others) needed someone to be there for them and do for them, then it was those native people that attended to their every need. Often times, it took the lives of these people as pride set in to have them do what it took at the risk of their life.

The Settlement of France in Indochina

Its Establishment



France obtained control over northern Vietnam following its victory over China in the Sino-French War (1884–85). French Indochina was formed on 17 October 1887 from “Annam”, “Tonkin” and “Cochinchina” (which together form modern Vietnam) and the Kingdom of Cambodia; Laos was added after the Franco-Siamese War in 1893. The federation lasted until 21 July 1954. In the four protectorates, the French formally left the local rulers in power, who were the Emperors of Vietnam, Kings of Cambodia, and Kings of Luang Prabang, but in fact gathered all powers in their hands, the local rulers acting only as figureheads.

Vietnamese Rebellions

French troops landed in Vietnam in 1858 and by the mid-1880s they had established a firm grip over the northern region. From 1885 to 1895, Phan Đình Phùng led a rebellion against the colonizing power. Nationalist sentiments intensified in Vietnam, especially during and after World War I, but all the uprisings and tentative efforts failed to obtain any concessions from the French overseers .



The First Indochina War



After the World War I, France petitioned for the nullification of the 1938 Franco-Siamese Treaty and attempted to reassert itself in the region, but came into conflict with the Viet Minh, a coalition of Communist and Vietnamese nationalists led by Hồ Chí Minh, founder of the Indochinese Communist Party. During World War II, the United States had supported the Viet Minh in resistance against the Japanese; the group had been in control of the countryside since the French gave way in March 1945. American President Roosevelt and General Stilwell privately made it adamantly clear that the French were not to reacquire French Indochina after the war was over. He told Secretary of State Cordell Hull the Indochinese were worse off under the French rule of nearly 100 years than they were at the beginning. All was over with in 1954.

The Economy



French Indochina was designated as a colony of economic exploitation by the French government. Funding came by means of taxes on locals and the French government established a near monopoly on the trade of opium, salt and rice alcohol. The French administration established quotas of consumption for each Vietnamese village, thereby compelling villagers to purchase and consume set amounts of monopolized goods, including alcohol and opium. The trade of those products formed about 44% of the colonial government's budget in 1920 but declined to 20% by 1930. The colony's principal bank was the Banque de l'Indochine, established in 1875 and was responsible for minting the currency, the Indochinese piastre. It was the second most invested-in the colony by 1940 with investments totaling up to 6.7M French Francs. In the 1930s, France began to exploit the region for its natural resources and to economically diversify the colony. Cochinchina, Annam and Tonkin, which encompassed modern-day Vietnam became a source of tea, rice, coffee, pepper, coal, zinc and tin, while Cambodia became a center for rice and pepper crops. Only Laos was seen initially as an economically unviable colony. At the turn of the 20th century, the growing automobile industry in France resulted in the growth of the rubber industry in French Indochina, and plantations were built throughout the colony. France soon became a leading producer of rubber through its Indochina colony and rubber became prized in the industrialized world. The success of rubber plantations in French Indochina resulted in an increase in investment in the colony by various firms

The Indo-Chinese By The Turn of the Century



The Indo-Chinese people were, you might say were “different than the French colonists” that expected a lot from people. Vietnam peasants were a solitary people, didn't do much except worked extremely long days and helped their neighbors out. To put it mildly, they were and still are a very ingenious people who use anything to make anything work. They are thinkers and doers to provide a living for their family.

Education was not important but learning how to perform a myriad of jobs was. They had many ongoing struggles with health and of course when the French came in and they became bonded slaves. Their music, religion, family (of children and parents) and having nothing in their possession was a blessing to them.

All in all, this was a people that was determined to do what they can and live the way they desired and please the Emperors of the day.



Indochina in the Early-to-Mid 1900's

Indochina, including Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia all had their "specific look" as they were by the early 1900's to the middle of the century. The people in the country were hard working, taken advantage of, didn't have much to eat, live with or live in and performed a lot of things that even today we know as "backward". But, they were honest people, very hard working, and knew what to do with "not very much". Having been back to Vietnam as late as 2011, "some of Vietnam" is still in the same way.

Basically, they arise at 4:00 am and they quit work at 10:00 pm and they work, work and work. Inventive? Yes; do without? Yes; live in trivial means? Yes, and the list goes on and on.

Life for the Vietnamese has been a real struggle for a several hundred years and in some cases it is better but for many, it is the same.

Cities like Saigon, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Bay, and some of the Me Kong Delta cites are fairly modern, but you get to the villages and small towns in the Central Highlands around Pleiku, An Khe, Bong Song, and the like, life is a little different and the labor of the Vietnamese is quite different than in the larger cities.

All in all, the Vietnamese are a hard working class of people where having a lot is too much and having little to include, food, clothing and shelter is just enough. They are a very satisfied people.



The French Military



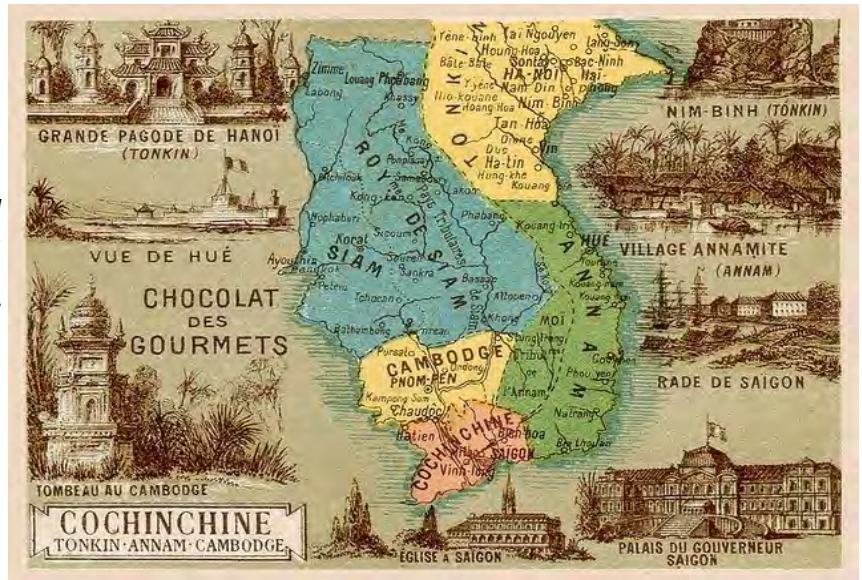
The French military was something to be reckoned with quite some time ago and when they “made their mark”, no body, but nobody messed with them. They were a forceful Army and sometimes maybe a bit too much. During the 1700 and 1800’s; they were a world leader when it came to locating and colonizing land from other continents.



When it came to bravery and honor the French were always on top of that. They dutifully recognized their men and awarded them with the appropriate medals. In many cases the Commander in Chief himself made it a point to make the awards which was Charles de Gaulle, the Commander of all for the forces even through World War II and then he became the Premiere of France for a time. The soldiers in the French military were extremely astute and serious about their work and were well recognized for it.



Needless to say, France had its hands full when it came to defending French Indochina. There was a lot of land to defend and prepare it to be a “French Colony” and France thought it would be easy to convert to be that “*Esteemed Colony across the Pacific*”, but they learned the hard way when their three major colonies in the three regions of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchine, Siam (now Thailand) and Cambodge (now Cambodia), Laos did not exist as yet. It basically took about one hundred years for France to basically lose all of it Eastern Hemisphere territories.



The French military drew conclusions from the government of France thinking all of the Indochina colonies would be France’s forever. Setting up currency, stamps, a flag, the language in which 70% of the Indochinese people spoke made it clear in their minds this would be a get-away for the rich and famous to go to their exile and “live it up”.

Indochina's "International Infrastructure"

International Infrastructure

When French Indochina was viewed as an economically important colony for France, the French government set a goal to improve the transport and communications networks in the colony. Saigon became a principal port in Southeast Asia and rivalled the British port of Singapore as the region's busiest commercial center. By 1937 Saigon was the sixth busiest port in the entire French Empire. In 1936, the Trans-Indochinois railway linking Hanoi and Saigon opened. Further improvements in the colony's transport infrastructures led to easier travel between France and Indochina. By 1939, it took no more than a month by ship to travel from Marseille to Saigon and around five days by aeroplane from Paris to Saigon. Underwater telegraph cables were installed in 1921 and French settlers further added their influence on the colony by constructing buildings in the form of Beaux-Arts and added French-influenced landmarks such as the Hanoi Opera House (modeled on the Palais Garnier), the Hanoi **St. Joseph's Cathedral (resembling the Notre Dame de Paris)** and the **Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica which resembled the Notre Dame Cathédral in Paris, France**. French businessmen also set out to make many of the streets especially those in Hanoi to look like that Paris with the outside tables and bakeries and restaurants which would bring and keep memories of those back home. The French colonists also built a number of cities and towns in Indochina which served various purposes from trading outposts to resort towns. The most notable examples include Đà Lạt in southern Vietnam and Pakse in Laos.



The photo to the left illustrates "Notre Dame" in **Saigon** that look fairly similar in structure.

The photo to the right illustrates "Notre Dame" in **Hanoi** that look fairly similar in structure.

← France made it a point to bring "Paris" to Saigon in a way of many things such as the language, some of the food and some of their very favorite buildings and the ambience of the French Republic to Southeast Asia.

→ France made it a point to bring some of "Paris" to Hanoi, however, the current capital of Vietnam has a very much different "French look" to it than Saigon does in its lights and streets, buildings, etc".



Indochinese Languages

The Language

Although powerfully influenced by Chinese vocabulary, the Vietnamese language is unrelated to Chinese. They both use tones to differentiate syllables is a character that Chinese itself may have picked up from Vietnamese's own Austro-Asiatic language group, or both of them may have gotten it from a neighboring group, the Thai-Lao, where every language is tonal, sometimes with up to 15 tones. It is a little hard to sort this all out in the *Sprachbund* of Southeast Asia, where languages pick up features even from unrelated languages.

Việt Nam
越南
Yūtnăm
Cantonese
Yuènnán
Mandarin

Vietnamese borrowed a great deal of Chinese vocabulary and even analyzed its syllables into "initials" and "finals" like Chinese (as did the, equally unrelated, Korean). The character that wrote "Việt," pronounced *Yuè* in Mandarin and *Yūtn* in Cantonese, still means "to overpass, exceed" in Vietnamese just as in Chinese. It also has a geographical application in the south of China, but probably originally had an ethnological meaning of non-Chinese in both the south of China and Vietnam. "Nam" (as in Cantonese; *nán* in Mandarin) just means "south." After a period of division starting in the 16th century, Viet Nam was reunited by Gia Long, who proclaimed himself Emperor (*Hoàng Đế*, Chinese characters and reading at right) in 1802. This was already with the help of the French, who by the end of the century had reduced Vietnam to a French dependency.

Official Languages of Vietnam

Vietnamese is the both the national and official language of Vietnam. The majority of the population of the country speak this language. Vietnamese is an Austroasiatic language that has its origin in northern Vietnam. Originally, Vietnamese was written using a modified set of Chinese characters but later the natives of Vietnam developed their own script which was known as Chữ nôm.

Minority Languages of Vietnam: Tày is Vietnam's major Tai language that is spoken in the northeast of Vietnam near the Vietnam-China border.

Mường: The Mường people of Vietnam speak a group of dialects known as Muong. This language belongs to the family of Austroasiatic languages. Mường is also closely related to the Vietnamese language.

Cham: The Cham people, a minority group in Vietnam, speak the Cham language, a language belonging to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian family. This language was formerly the language of the Kingdom of Champa located in central Vietnam.

Khmer: The Khmer minority of Vietnam speak the Khmer language in Vietnam. The language is the second most popularly spoken Austronesian language after the Vietnamese. The Khmer language is also the earliest written and recorded language of the Mon–Khmer family.

Chinese language is spoken in Vietnam by the Chinese minority group in the country.

Nùng: the Tai–Kadai language of Nùng is spoken in the Lạng Sơn and the Cao Bằng provinces of Vietnam.

H'Mông is a dialect spoken by the Hmong people of Vietnam.

Foreign Languages of Vietnam

French is the most spoken foreign language in Vietnam. A legacy of the colonial rule, French is spoken by a significant section of the Vietnamese as a second language. Russian, Czech, German, and Polish are also spoken by small sections of the Vietnamese population. With greater contacts of the Vietnamese with the Western world, English has also attained popularity in the country.

Flags of Indochina



Annam—1874—1949



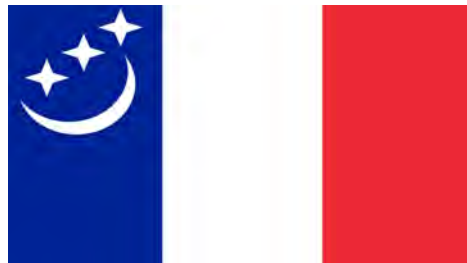
Laos - 1893—1953



Montagnard Confedera-



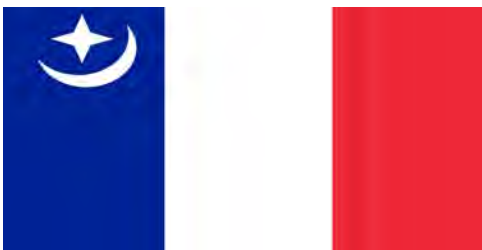
Tay Don People 1944—1953



Montagnard Country 1946—1950



Indochina



Tai Autonomous Territory-1946-1950



Sip Song Chau Tai -- 1950-1955



Cochinchina - 1862-1949



Muong People 1946-1954



Indochinese Democratic Republic



Vietnam del Sur –1945-1948



Alternate Socialist Vietnam



South Vietnam — 1948-1975



Vietnam—1975-2017

Establishment of South Vietnam

World War II — Then “War”



During the era of conquest in East Asia, France focused on the fortune withheld in Indochina. The French had been in the area for centuries, yet policies changed when other Western European nations began to colonize and claim their own pieces of Asia. The French corrupted the Vietnamese sovereignty by colonizing and dividing the nation. It became known as a French “protectorate” from 1883-1939 and remained a colonial empire or “possession” until about 1945. The Vietnamese people strongly resented the tyrannical rule and political and social implementations of the French. Thus, a guerrilla-type revolutionary organization, the Viet Minh, formed to drive out the French. They were led by Ho Chi Minh, the recently elected leader of the Democratic

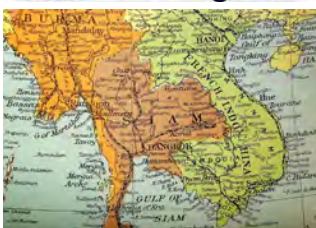
Republic of Vietnam (then known as North Vietnam). The First Indochina War was virtually a stalemate between the French and the Viet Minh from 1946 – 1950; then towards the end in 1954, the Viet Minh gained significant advances in driving out the French.

In 1949, France set up the State of Vietnam (currently known as South Vietnam) as an “associated statehood” under Bao Dai because he had been cooperative with France in the past. But this government clashed with Ho Chi Minh’s Democratic Republic of Vietnam in its political and social ideals as well as his nationalistic goals. The Vietnamese and other nations felt that this attempt was not a significant step towards Vietnamese independence, but rather just a cover up of the fact that Vietnam was to remain a “puppet nation.” The Viet Minh, supporters of communism, also focused heavily on the ideas of nationalism in their fight for freedom from France; this broadened their pool of allies within Vietnam. Although the French had superior weapon technology and financial aid from the United States, they were greatly outnumbered by the Viet Minh in manpower. The French also suffered from unfamiliarity with fighting in a jungle environment against a guerrilla soldier waiting in the tall grass. Enemies were hard to identify, for they looked no different than civilians; in fact, some were, during the day as they wore “Black Pajama’s. The Viet Minh easily recruited local fighters, and because of the Vietnamese hatred of the French occupation, the Viet Minh also benefited from the intelligence information the civilians provided them. When the Chinese Communist Party won control of China in 1949, the advanced weapons gap between the two opposing sides slowly closed because China, along with the Communist Soviet Union, began to supply the Viet Minh with artillery. Yet, the most impressive feat of the Viet Minh guerilla fighters was that they overtook the Red River Delta without any major battle. Their guerrilla tactics and civilian intelligence allowed the Viet Minh to defeat the French.

At the end of 1953, the French settled in Dien Bien Phu, a city in northwestern Vietnam. Hoping to fight the Viet Minh, the French built up their garrison. The attack at Dien Bien Phu began on March 13, 1954, with a strong Viet Minh attack, continued through May. The first French victory of the Battle of Dien Bien Phu was on March 22nd as the tanks were used to attack the Viet Minh. After another French success on March 26th, the Viet Minh, commanded by Giap, started to lose faith in themselves. The tables turned, though, after a Viet Minh assault of the French troops at the end of April, continued until French defeat in early May. After years of fighting this gruesome war, the French surrendered at Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954. The defeat of the French denoted the end of the First Indochina War.



The First Indo-China War (1946-1954)



World War II ended in September 1945 and Vietnam was loaded with troops from France, America and Australia. France, now had the idea of getting back to business with its colony “old Indochina”. However, they were somewhat unaware of Ho Chi Minh and his intentions of his desire and intention to free Vietnam and ultimately Cambodia and Laos as well. In 1941, with the help of Russia and China as well as their own people in the North and the creation of the Viet Minh or a “League for Independence of Vietnam” war was inevitable. By 1950, France had suffered multiple defeats and the USA set up the Military Assistance Advisory Group to aid France. This, allowed France to control all of the cities while the Viet Minh controlled the countryside.

For nine long years and the loss of men, women and children on both sides, it became a reality that France had to give up. This ended in May 1954 at Dinh Bien Phu (in North Vietnam). The First Indo-China War was over.

But, as we all know the end was not over with as yet as Vietnam was divided in half becoming North and South Vietnam. This was the result of a Swiss Government Panel. A South Vietnam official and one from North Vietnam is now formed and both leaders are going to desire to change things. Currently, it was Communism in the North and Capitalism in the South.

For the next 5-6 years, South Vietnam appealed to President’s Eisenhower and Kennedy to “Save South Vietnam” as a result, we all know that from 1960 to 1975, in their eyes, the “Second Indo-China War” was coming for another fifteen years.



“French Indochina News—1954”



After nine long years, France lost their own colony of Vietnam to retreat out of the country. Right after World War II, Ho Chi Minh wanted a free Vietnam and was determined to get it. It became a long hard road as they did not know then what was about to come with the United States over a long fifteen years.

The Cultural Side of French Indochina



Between the currency, coins and stamps, you see that it is informational, colorful and “says something”. These are all items from the early to middle 1900’s that said something about France and its relationship with Indochina. Very different.



The Next 15 Years—1960 to 1975



The Vietnam War was a war that was won politically by having prevented the spread of Communism throughout Southeast Asia. In fact Ho Chi Minh's thinking in 1945 when he was talking to Russia and China was to include all of Oceania, Australia, New Zealand and all of Southeast Asia in the "Communist grab". At the time frame of 1975, it had become America's longest war, however the Global War On Terror (GWOT) has now surpassed that number of years of fighting off the enemy.



It was one of their proud moments when Vietnam kicked France out of the area in 1954 and it was clear in the minds of everyone in the region of Asia that Vietnam was going to muscle everything they could to keep "foreigners" out of their country and in 1975, they did just that. Vietnam, today while Communist in their state it is really operated under a socialist status and their country is truly run under a capitalist operation similar to any western democracy.

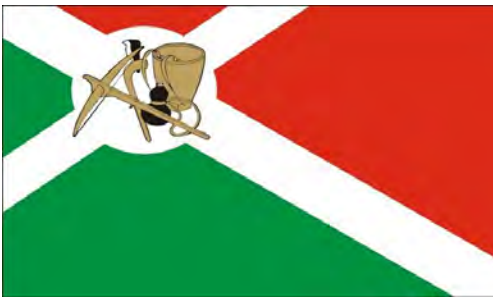
Under President Clinton, we became trading and military partners with Vietnam and have a good relationship with them and they with us. This tells us all that we can get along with former "warring neighbors" even though we may not agree with the ideology of their government.



Vietnam's Indigenous People—The Montagnard's

The Dega, also known as the "**Montagnard**", are the indigenous peoples of the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The term Montagnard means "people of the mountain" in French and is a carryover from the French colonial period in Vietnam. In Vietnamese, they are known by the term người Thượng (Highlanders)—this term now can also be applied to other minority ethnic groups in Vietnam or *Người dân tộc thiểu số* (literally, "minority people"). Earlier they were referred to pejoratively as the Mọi. In 1962, the population of the Montagnard people in the Central Highlands was estimated to number as many as one million. Today, the population is approximately four million, of whom about one million are Degars. The 30 or so Montagnard tribes in the Central Highlands comprise more than six different ethnic groups who speak languages drawn primarily from the Malayo-Polynesian, Tai, and Austroasiatic language families. The main tribes, in order of population, are the Jarai, Rade, Bahnar, Koho, Mhong, and Stieng.

Originally inhabitants of the coastal areas of the region, they were driven to the uninhabited mountainous areas by invading Vietnamese and Cambodians beginning prior to the 9th century. They have a long history of tensions with the Vietnamese majority. While the Vietnamese are themselves heterogeneous, they generally share a common language and culture and have developed and maintained the dominant social institutions of Vietnam. The Montagnard do not share that heritage. There have been conflicts between the two groups over many issues, including land ownership, language and cultural preservation, access to education and resources, and political representation. By the way, the Montagnard tribes were allies to the American forces during the Vietnam War and helped us immensely in locating the enemy.



Montagnard Flag



Montagnard Women



Spiritual Bracelets



A Typical Home



Montagnard Kids



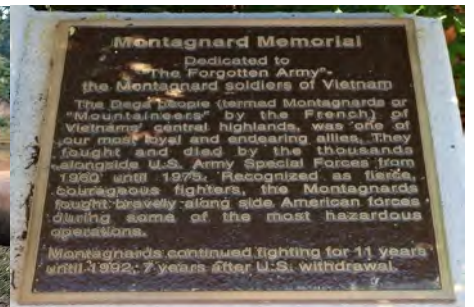
A Typical Montagnard Village



Montagnard People Group



Kids on a Water Buffalo



Montagnard Memorial

The "AZ-LZ"

The Vietnam We Know—Today



The **VIETNAM** we know today is a country anyone would want to visit. From the most modern to the most primitive, this is a nation that since 1975 has advanced from an uncomplicated colony-homeland to a very sophisticated nation-state.

From a non-structure to tremendous infrastructure country and from an unknown “IT world” to a Megatechnology center of Southeast Asia, Vietnam has turned into a monumental assembly of “true possibilities” for their region of the world. The prospect of “getting Vietnam into the world” was a priority for Vietnam for a couple of decades and they have finally succeeded in doing it.

For five or more decades, the Me Kong Delta has fed Southeast Asia all the rice they desire and still doing it. Bordering countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Thailand (former Siam) and Myanmar rely heavily on Vietnam to supply them with an abundance.

On the other hand, the water ways that are attached to the southern portion of Vietnam along with the Me Kong River, the Saigon River and the South China Sea provide the “Ins-and-Outs” of import and export of everything in the region and even on to the Philippine Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and the hundreds of the Oceania Islands.

Vietnam has become sort of a “**Time-Warp**” as you travel the country from South to North. With the multitude of people living in Vietnam, the country has its mass development of expansion and non-growth areas throughout the country. Obviously, the large cities located inland such as Saigon, and those on the water near the South China Sea have materialistically developed over the decades.

To say the least, Vietnam is quickly becoming one of those up-and-coming nations that will make a vast difference in the Eastern world. It is the type of the nation-state that can make an absolute transformation for the peoples of that particular region of the world. The kind of population that Vietnam has, are very strong minded, strong working, extremely mindful of what needs to be done to take care of their elderly. They are a mindful people who desire to do the right thing by whom they deal with.

The “War Remnants Museum”

Vietnam today, has a very young population (median age is 30) where most “*sort of know*” about the Vietnam War (1960-1975) with America. They refer to it as the “American War” and in their minds they won the war against the most powerful nation in the world. The average age today of the Vietnamese is around 30 years old. There are very few (by comparison) older people as we have here in the United States. The Vietnam War is not talked about as that was three to four (3-4) generations earlier and there is only one museum in Saigon that has any representation of what took place. Called “The War Remnants Museum” and it has on its inside the atrocities (if you please) that America and its allies (South Vietnam, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Phillipines and Thailand) did to their country. To say the least, there is too much exaggeration and a different perspective when seen from their point of view.



War Remnants Museum in downtown Saigon



American rebuilt M-60 Tank



A rebuilt Huey UH-1 Helicopter



Pictures of various situations in the Museum

How Did Vietnam Feed Southeast Asia?



Vietnam's government is banking on agricultural reforms in its main rice producing region to meet the challenges posed by climate change and disrupted water flow on the Mekong River. The reforms aim to produce higher quality climate-adapted rice, and boost alternative crops to ensure sustainability in the Mekong Delta, home to 18 million of Vietnam's 95 million people.

The region, which produces more than half of Vietnam's rice and feeds over 145 million people in Southeast Asia, covering thirteen provinces in Vietnam's south where the river flows into the South China Sea. The Mekong, with its source in the Tibetan plateau, runs 4,300 kilometers through six countries from China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia before reaching Vietnam.

Climate Change



Heightened concerns over the Delta's future followed an extreme drought this year that resulted in sharply higher salinity levels intruding into the delta. Rice production fell 1.1 million tons according to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization. Between climate change, sea level rise

in particular, but also increasing frequency of storms has implications for the Delta. One of the big concerns is the amount of salt water and the distance the salt water moves up various Mekong tributaries into the delta, which again threatens the viability of rice farming," said Hirsch, of the university's school of geo-sciences.

Feeding the "New Indochina"

With the Saigon and Me Kong Delta Rivers close at hand, the entire lower part of Vietnam is the "breadbasket" that fed and still feeds much of Southeast Asia, which long ago, was referred to as "Indochina".

Vietnam's dedication to the region of Asia has proven that they (Vietnam) will always be there for those surrounding countries in providing rice and other goods that are grown in their country. Not to mention the raw materials such as sand being shipped all over the area for eventual concrete and cement jobs for building. They have manufactured many different items which are fairly unique to Vietnam.



What Vietnam Offers The World

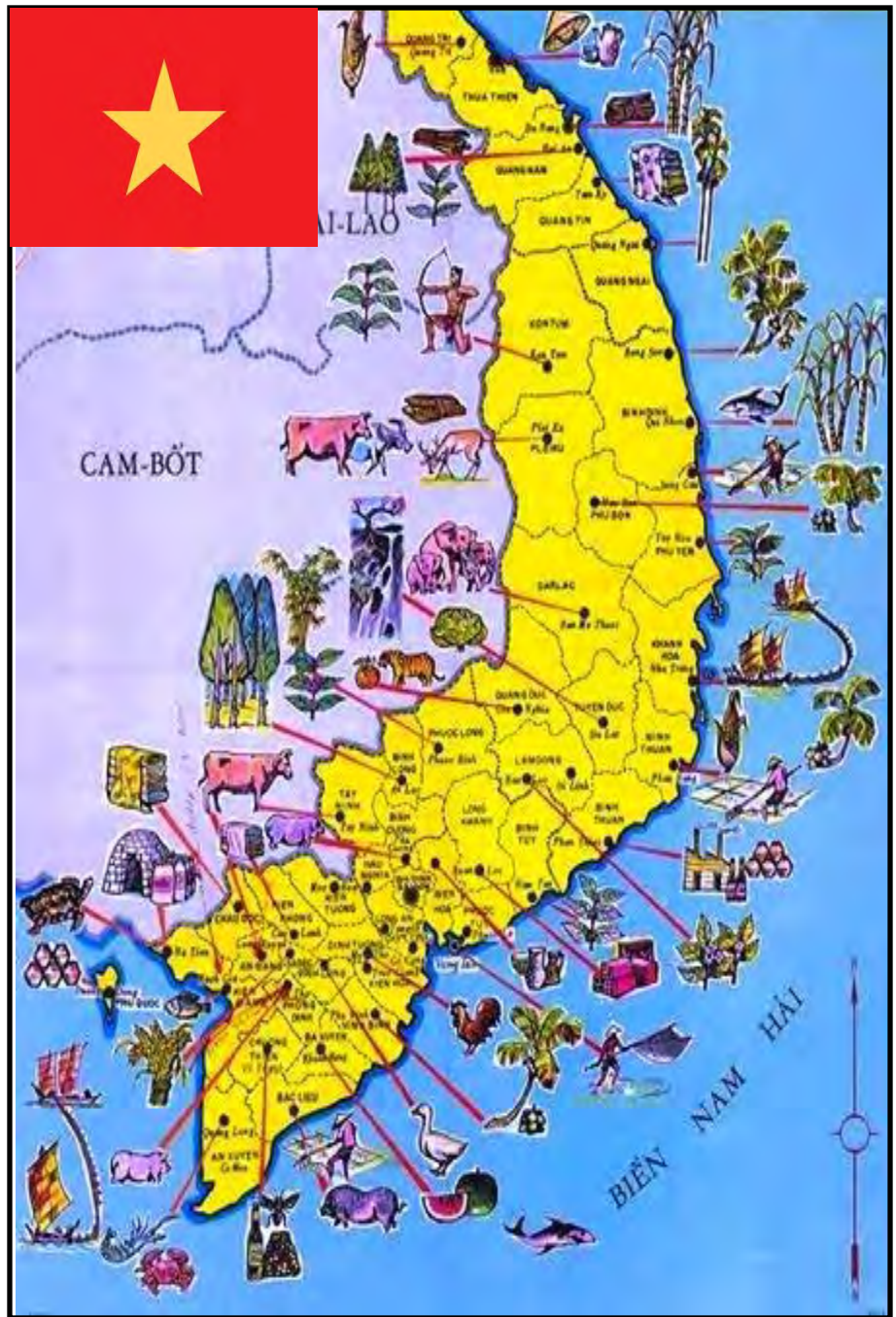
Looking at the map of Vietnam provides numberless amounts of products some of which are only grown and found in Vietnam

For example, 90+% of the world's cinnamon is grown in the south-east Asian country. They produce about 70% of the under clothing, we all wear, not to mention the varying production of the following:

- 1.) Oil and Gas production
- 2.) Consumer goods
- 3.) Telecommunications
- 4.) Financials
- 5.) Basic Materials
- 6.) Personal Products
- 7.) Utilities
- 8.) Technology
- 9.) Industrials
- 10) Consumer Services

For instance, consumer services might include: Automobiles themselves, automotive parts, tires, farming and fishing products, durable household products, non-durable household products, furnishings, home construction, consumer electronics, toys, clothing accessories, footwear and personal products.

This is just a start of what Vietnam has to offer the world in the way of any kind of production. The two words they rely on to describe their people and population that produces so much for the rest of the world is one that all nations should utilize and that is having their workers and their work be "RELIABLE", and "HONEST". And it seems to have worked for Vietnam.



Looking at the map above illustrates visually, a lot of the products that it manufactures or fabricates. For a population of 95,000,000 people with a median age of 30 years old, they should have a long way ahead of them to generate quite an abundance of goods and income for many years to come. They also capitalize on vacationing in Vietnam and to say the least it is and can be the "cats-meow" of a place to go and spend a couple of weeks. It is a fascinating place to visit.

The Vietnam Industries of Tomorrow

The International Companies that have invested in Vietnam have made quite a difference in South-east Asia and particularly that of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and the surrounding island nation's of Oceania. Look below to glean those types of industries and organizations that have invested themselves in Vietnam.



**IN FOREIGN
TRANSIT
VIETNAM**



**TEACH FOR
VIETNAM**
Giảng dạy vì Việt Nam




Vietnam
A Different Orient




Vietnam Airlines



**VIETNAM TECH
CONFERENCE 2016**




Vietnam net

The Vietnamese Age—Population Structure

As of 2017, Vietnam has an age structure of quite unlike any other country. 25% are under 15 years old, while 69% are between 15-64 years of age and 5% are over 65+ years old. Males and females are split about 50-50 when it comes the numbers of each,

- There are about 95,587,116 people today
- 47.2 million males and 48.3 million females
- Over 2 million births per year
- About 500,000 deaths per year
- About 2,000 deaths per day
- About 700,000 population per year
- About -35,000 net migration in a year
- About 2,268+ population growth in a day

For one country after multiple decades of war, Vietnam has struck back to become one of the most impressive countries anywhere in the world. The dedication of the people, this young generation that the country before it was and the “brain-power” has become extraordinary.

- The Vietnam population is 1.27% of the world population.
- It ranks 14th in the countries of dependencies
- Population density is 800 people square mile.
- Total land area is 119,715 square miles or the length of California and half of Oregon
- 34.7% live in urban areas or 33,121,357 Vietnamese people.
- Internet users' total are 51 million
- Social media users are 46 million
- Mobile connects' are 125 million
- Mobile social users are 41 million

Living in Vietnam

Vietnam is quickly becoming the most popular destination in Southeast Asia for digital nomads and expats. The low cost of living plays a major factor, and the deliciously cheap street food helps as well. Most digital nomads and entrepreneurs prefer to establish a base in Saigon, while retirees prefer locations like Hanoi and Hoi An. You will, however, find digital nomads and entrepreneurs on both those locations, but the communities are smaller.

Another reason Southeast Asia is a hotbed for the life of being an “expat”, is that short and long-term rentals are generally easy to find. This proves true across the region, from Thailand to Vietnam. When looking for a place to live, it’s a painless process. While Craigslist can be helpful, it is not necessary. Simply choose a neighborhood/district and walk around. You will find plenty of buildings renting rooms or apartments. There are also modern, Westernized condominiums in the larger cities. Similar to other Asian cultures, Vietnam culture is very family/community based. Some expats also use the affordable real estate agencies. Unlike in the West, these real estate companies also negotiate rentals and the fee is often minimal, with their fee coming out of the renter’s side of the price. In addition to the ease of simply getting set up over there, the food and culture is a huge draw. Street food is a fact of life in Southeast Asia, and on a Western budget it’s very affordable. Note that the local wages are very low — \$148 in some cases — and as such, prices are pegged accordingly. One of the drawbacks for older retirees is the lack of medical infrastructure. Though Saigon has quality hospitals, they are still behind nearby Thailand’s strong medical tourism industry, which guarantees high quality medical facilities. For retirees with health concerns, this fact is a determining factor for choosing Thailand over Vietnam.

Enjoying The Cuisine in Vietnam

Vietnamese cuisine encompasses the foods and beverages of Vietnam, and features a combination of five fundamental tastes (Vietnamese: *ngũ vị*) in the overall meal. Each Vietnamese dish has a distinctive flavor which reflects one or more of these elements. Common ingredients include fish sauce, shrimp paste, soy sauce, rice, fresh herbs, fruit and vegetables. Vietnamese recipes use lemongrass, ginger, mint, Vietnamese mint, long coriander, Saigon cinnamon, bird's eye chili, lime, and Thai basil leaves. Traditional Vietnamese cooking is greatly admired for its fresh ingredients, minimal use of dairy and oil, complementary textures, and reliance on herbs and vegetables. With the balance between fresh herbs and meats and a selective use of spices to reach a fine taste, Vietnamese food is considered one of the healthiest cuisines worldwide.



The food and drink shown above is one of the very best in or out of Vietnam. America has taken on “[The Love of Southeast Asian](#)” food and enjoying it quite often. Then, with the influx of Vietnamese coming to America, it certainly adds to the restaurants and Vietnamese foods inside stores.

The “AZ-LZ”

Vietnam—The Vacation Hotspot

Vietnam is quickly becoming the most popular destination in Southeast Asia for digital nomads, Americans and those living in Europe. The low cost of living plays a major factor, and the deliciously inexpensive food helps. Most prefer to establish a base in Saigon, while expats, retirees and those “new to Vietnam” prefer locations like Hanoi and Hoi An.

Short and long-term rentals are generally easy to find. When looking for a place to live, it’s a painless process. Simply choose a neighborhood and walk around to locate what you want or need. You will find plenty of buildings renting rooms or apartments. There are also modern condominiums in the larger cities. Vietnam culture is very family based. In addition to the ease of simply getting set up over there, the food and culture is a huge draw. Street food is a fact of life in Southeast Asia, and on a Western budget it’s very affordable. Note that the local wages are very low — \$148 in some cases — and as such, “prices are pegged” accordingly. One of the drawbacks for older retirees is the lack of medical infrastructure. Though Saigon has quality hospitals, they are still behind Thailand’s strong medical industry, which guarantees high quality medical facilities. Possibly the most popular destination among most is Hanoi is home to a large community, many of whom are teachers. There are influences in Hanoi, making it easy to find international foods, as well as English-friendly businesses and health services. Hanoi still maintains a “French look and feel” about it. Weather in winter, however, is dreary and temperature are a cold, damp, 50°F.

One of Vietnam’s largest cities, Saigon, is a “go-to destination” for the young travel bloggers, to see the world and budget travelers. Hoi An is a great town that is both less chaotic but still a very popular tourist destination. For that reason, you’ll find all the needed amenities such as Wi-Fi, foods, and also a community of digital nomads. As this small coastal town grows, the retiree community is also growing. Though it’s popular with tourists, it’s small enough that living outside of the city center is still a short, convenient drive or walk into town. The nearby beach also gets a big thumbs up for the quality of life. As a town, you have the quaint, pretty architecture, but still access to a beach and delicious foods. It’s an excellent small-town option if the two big cities don’t quite sound appealing.

If you have a “beach city” in mind, some top spots for you might be in Nha Trang. This has a long stretch of gorgeous beaches. It’s in southern Vietnam, so the weather is warm year-round but the coastal position makes it cooler than the city. And even more, it has a laid-back vibe that locals and expats love. Although there are some touristy spots, it is far less congested than Hanoi or Saigon, and the tourist-factor ensures that you’ll find any amenity that is desired or needed. The number one thing about “driving” and “walking in Vietnam”, there is a great deal of safety.



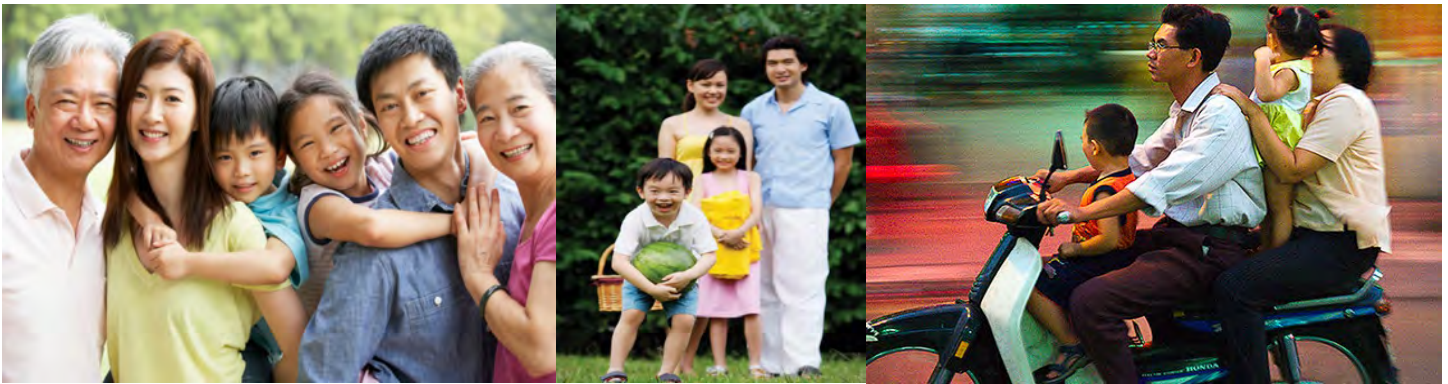
The Vietnamese Family

The Vietnamese language is very much “tonal”, and so are Vietnamese names. Names with the same spelling, but with different tones are different names, which can confuse non-Vietnamese people when the diacritics are dropped, in usage outside Vietnam. Anyone applying for Vietnamese nationality must adopt a “New Vietnamese Name”:

The family name, positioned first, is passed on by the father to his children. It is estimated that there are around one hundred family names in common use, although some are far more common than others. The name Nguyễn is estimated to be used by almost 40% of the Vietnamese population. The top three names are so popular because people tended to take the family name of emperors, to show their loyalty. Over many generations, the family names became permanent.

The most common family names among the Vietnamese are the following (the Chinese characters following each name are Hán tự). Added together these 10 names account for 90% of the people.

Nguyễn (39%)	Phan (4.5%)
Trần (11%)	Vũ/Võ (3.9%)
Lê (9.5%)	Đặng (2.1%)
Phạm (7.1%)	Bùi (2%)
Huỳnh/Hoàng (5.1%)	Đỗ (1.4%)



The Family

The family unit is very important in Vietnamese culture. This emphasis on collectivity includes an obligation to provide for the welfare of family members. Family members are expected to work and behave for the good of the group. Families may publicly denounce a member who is ill behaved; they may also pronounce family achievements. Each member has a kinship term, and these are used when addressing one another. Even though the family is viewed as a unit, the father or an older male has the ultimate responsibility and acts as an authority leader while delegating tasks and involving others in the decision making. From a very young age the father and other family members educate the children on “filial piety,” a key part of Vietnamese culture which requires that children give parents and elders respect, love, and care.

In Vietnam, the family is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal, often with two to four generations under one roof. There is the immediate family and the extended family. In Vietnam, the immediate family is the nuclear family plus the husband's parents and the grown sons' spouses and children. The extended family is the immediate family plus family members of the same name and relatives residing in close proximity. Grandparents help with child care and children help with chores. Younger siblings are to respect and obey older siblings, and aunts and uncles are treated as parents.

Vietnam's #1 Industry

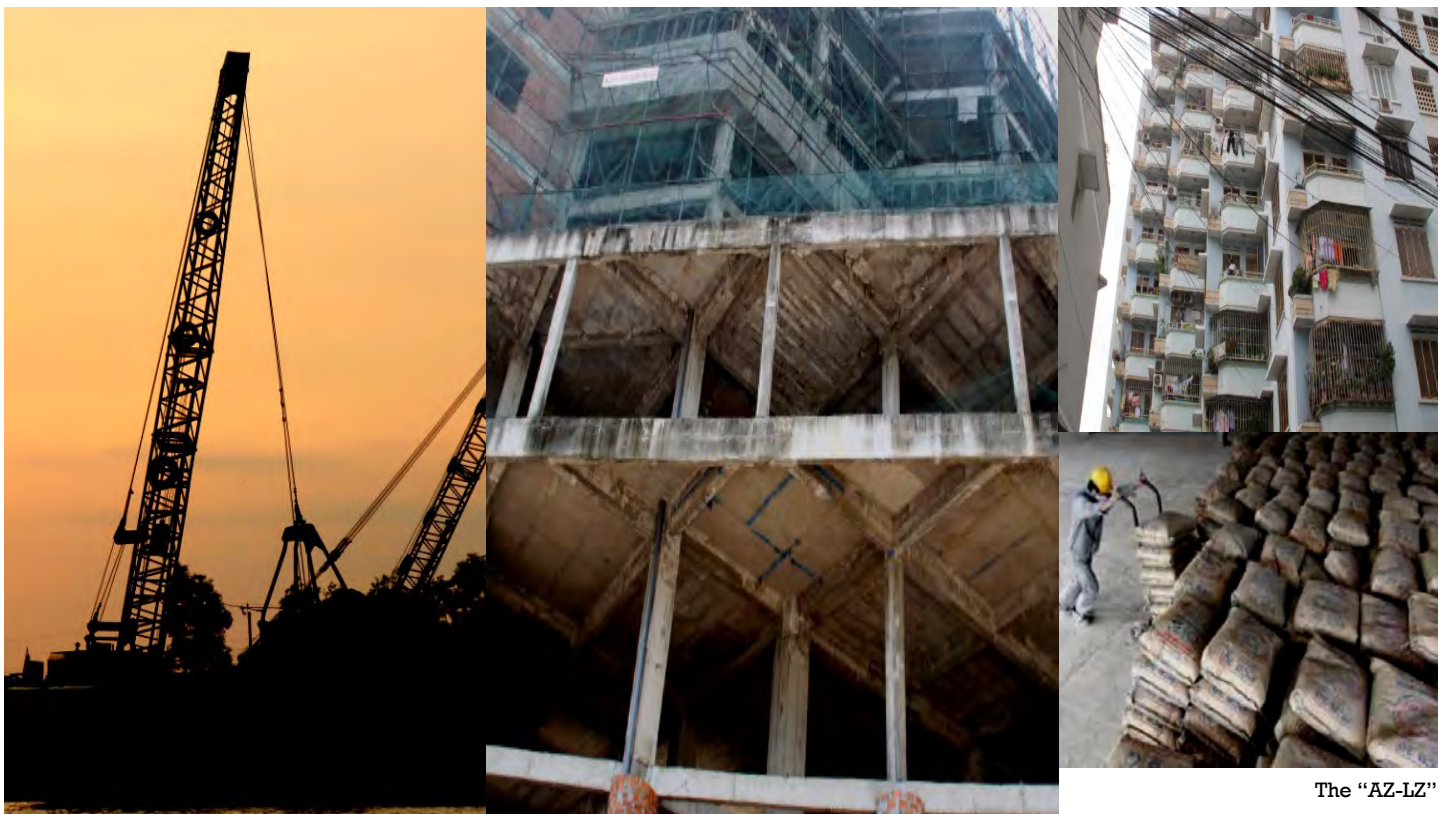
Concrete

Vietnam has a huge outlook in the manufacturing of construction and infrastructure sector and it remains positive for the next ten to twelve years. It is supported by strong economic growth, regulatory changes, large inflows and strong project pipeline. Vietnam's construction industry patterns remain extremely positive and is forecasted real growth of 5% to 6% in 2017 and 2018. Vietnam has a myriad of raw materials which assist them greatly in ensuring that the construction of anything using concrete appears to be its number one material.

In first half of this year, the enterprises throughout the Southeastern Asia region booked revenues at about VNĐ 76.1 trillion or US\$3.45 billion while the rate of urban and rural construction hit 100 percent, and urbanization nearly 35.7 percent of their respective targets for the period.

Vietnam has the largest cement industry rating number eight in the world after China, India, Russia, the US, Japan and South Korea. In 2012, the US Geological Survey reported that Vietnam had a clinker capacity of closer to 55 metric tons per year in both 2010 and 2011. Moreover, cement production in Viet Nam was in the region of 50 metric tons per year placing it in the company of countries such as Indonesia, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. There is a capacity utilization rate of approximately 85%, assuming clinker to cement ratio of 0.95. However, the cement industry of Vietnam actually is still in the process of adjusting from a centrally-planned, state-run enterprise into a market economy.

The sand in Vietnam is of quite a delicate ratio needed for the concrete and consequently in Vietnam's Me Kong Delta region is enough sand for concrete mix equal to that of New York City. Between the Saigon and Me Kong Delta Rivers and the connection with the South China Sea, they are raising and forging sand from the bottom to cover their supplies and have much more than needed.



The "AZ-LZ"

What You Didn't Know About Vietnam

Cost of Living Range: \$700 to \$1,400 per month

Currency: Vietnamese Dong; pegged roughly 1:22,400 with the US dollar

Expatriate Scene: Vietnam is a popular destination with budget backpackers, travel bloggers, digital nomads, and young entrepreneurs. While there are some older expats and families, the majority of expats in Vietnam are in the 18-35 age group.

Average Local Salary: The average monthly salary of a worker in Vietnam is about \$148 per month; those in high paying jobs bring home around \$500 per month.

Visas: The most common visa for Vietnam is a single-entry three-month visa. However, six month and twelve month visas are also available, both single entry and multi-entry. Depending on your plans, it may be worth to get a twelve month multi-entry visa. Always ask for the visa to be attached to your passport as there have been instances where travelers with valid visas have been denied entry to Vietnam. Visit the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam website for more information. If you're visiting on a shorter visa, it can be easier to use an online visa agent.

Internet: High speed internet is very common in large cities like Saigon, especially in cafes. It is faster and more reliable than high speed internet in Thailand. Smaller towns also have internet access, but it can vary a bit more than in the larger cities.

Safety: Relatively safe. Petty theft is common, as well as scams involving taxi cabs, charities, and visas. Traffic is intense in big cities and motorcycle accidents are also common; it's advisable to carry an insurance policy that covers such accidents.

Possible Issues: Regional flooding can occur during the rainy season. Foreigners cannot own land in Vietnam; for expats hoping to buy and build a legacy, this is nigh impossible. While you can purchase a dwelling house, you must lease the land from the government.

Water: Tap water is not drinkable. When you live there, you will buy reusable 19-litre jugs for about 10,000 VND.

Some Average Prices: A typical cup of coffee is about 50¢, but extremely strong. Breakfast is about \$1.50, a small room in a nice hotel is about \$10.00. Taxi rides are about \$2.00. And the train from Saigon to Nha Trang is approximately \$20.00 and to Hanoi from Hue is roughly \$45.00.



Vietnam Coffee



Vietnamese Food



Vietnam's "AMTRAK"



Helping American's get around

The NEW and the OLD of Vietnam—Part 1



Vietnam has come a long way since the days of the First Indochina War and the Vietnam War. The year 1975, gave them their break to be “part of the world” in their own way. The gifts and talents of the Vietnamese are really pretty rich in their own way and they utilize them in a way that you see in the picture to the left. These ladies are wearing a cloth material made from silk worms and hand woven in a special way to form a superb silk fabric to create what you see in the photo of different colors of the **Ao Dai dress** that is “spreading all across southeast Asia”.



The **manufacturing** is tremendous in Vietnam. All the way from micro chips to everything else including electronic. They are nearly the number one choice in the world for determining the best methods and performing it over many other countries in their region. For that part of the world and the size of that country, it is remarkable choice to build and manufacture anything from clothes, chips, fruit, liquids, spices and the list goes on. Vietnam produces most of the world’s cinnamon



The **beaches** of Vietnam are simply superb. The sand is warm, not hot and the water is just right. Nha Trang is one of the very best beaches to visit. We discovered the beaches to be safe, entertaining by folks trying “goofy things”. The hotels ran about \$10-12.00 per night with a nice breakfast and very strong coffee, and we had an enjoyable time . Swimming out to islands, enjoying exotic foods made those days great.



The **night highlights** of Vietnam is simply out of this world. A typical Vietnam veteran might never think Vietnam could pull itself together and see a sight like this practically all over the country. Cities such as Saigon pretty much has it all. Hanoi on the other hand has that “somewhat French look” to it with a lot of “On-the-sidewalk-manufacturing” that it does all day and somewhat into the night time hours. This 24 hour per day metropolis was certainly superb to see.



The days of old under the **Emperors** from several hundred years ago still exist. This quickly brings back the past of Vietnam of which people today living there would have no idea what it could have been like. Many still follow the old-time religions that have been around for a few thousand years and others have changed to more modern ones. The buildings by-and-large are still in very nice shape and interesting to see.



Ha Long Bay is a sight out of a “**different world**”. It appears you’re in the middle of nowhere and in the middle of somewhere. Traveling on the boats is a trip one would do every few months. Between the food and the local tours you receive from this two or three excursions is something you’ll never forget. The peace, quiet and tranquil beauty, this could be the number one spot you’d visit often and enjoy it.

The NEW and the OLD of Vietnam—Part 2

Vietnam's outback is one to wonder in awe about as you glance at the mountains that form the levels for the plants grown in the northern region of Vietnam. The beautiful part of Vietnam seems to provide a lot of natural beauty for the residents and tourists to have a grandeur look at. This area is simply beautiful in its geographical state. The effortless abilities of the Vietnamese that live in this region provide a lot of insight for growing anything and everything they need to.

In the middle portion of the country is what is considered the "poorer Vietnamese" who live off of the river, their rice paddies, growing whatever they can and living in whatever they can. They are very dedicated and satisfied in making what they have for their living for themselves and their families about them and are graciously happy to do and glad to have what they have.

In the larger city placements are what we would label "Interstate highways". Throughout the Saigon, Me Kong Delta vicinity, the high paced roads are very professionally done to create the ability to get from one large city to another. It will take several years to equal any other country, but they are making great headway with it. With the inexpensive automobiles available from anywhere in Asia, this young population will be driving soon.

The rural Vietnamese that live in the smaller towns and villages do a truly wonderful job in supplying vegetables and fruits to the local people and even those in the bigger cities. It is simply amazing what they are able to grow at any given time of year. With the abundance of magnificent soils and plenty of some of the best water in the area, their output and quantities are amazing. They're able to feed their family and six to eight other families in their area for a few months over time.

Vietnamese housing has been a questionable item depending on where you live. Saigon has metal shacks to wooden houseboats to small huts. On the other hand, very modern buildings in the way of apartments and individual dwellings are shooting up everywhere, especially in the larger cities of Saigon, Nha Trang, Hoi An, Da Nang, Hue and Hanoi. This was basically unheard of a decades ago. During the 1960's, people lived in palm leaf built homes with dirt floors and sleeping on them.



The "AZ-LZ"

The NEW and the OLD of Vietnam—Part 3



Vietnam in 2017 has become a **country of stark changes** and is one of the fastest changing ones on the Asian continent so close after having endured decades of war a short time ago. Their aptitude and “Can-Do Attitude” of making Vietnam into one of the most vibrant and objective nations to deal with has proven to be on a very positive note. Their ability to construct anything with their own materials and develop pretty much anything they choose has proven on a positive note based on the culture and eagerness of their population and talents within the people. Everything for their low cost of living can be found right here with an abundance at a good price.



Tourism has crept up quickly within Vietnam as they provide good prices to get there, good prices to stay there, good food, tourist places with guides, safety is immanent for them. The ruggedness of getting around Vietnam (at times) is quite unique compared with that of the United States. The one thing the Vietnamese do is provide the tourist with a trip “You’ll Never Forget”. The photos in Hoi An, a tourist town provides something from the “1940’s to the 21st Century” and everything that goes with it. This location is a trip you’ll not forget.



Living in the **Central Highlands** of Vietnam is like “another world”. Simple, but nice, a little complicated, but easy (once you figure it out). They’re located about in the middle of South Vietnam and there are abundance of small villages in which live very simple and everything in there is somewhat “*in manual mode*”. They make the most of everything, live well and “out of the IT world” of phones, computers and the like. Their kids are brought up in appropriate way and they live day by day. School is up to possibly the 8th grade and the rest is learned by teaching and doing. Not bad way to function.

This is your **grocery store on water**. These ladies and the occasional man are on the water everyday selling their great vegetables, fruit and wonderful and distinct souvenirs of their country to anyone desiring that wonderful “**Stop-Light-Bananas**” which are in color, red, yellow and green. Not to mention fruits and the vegi’s that you’ve never seen before. If you’re hungry for lunch? Well, a container of Pho is right up their alley and it tastes as good as if you are sitting down in a restaurant for 50% of the price. They know what they’re doing.

The “AZ-LZ”