

**Guide to
visiting the
Socialist Republic
of
Vietnam**

Foreword

The Singapore Embassy in Hanoi and Singapore Consulate-General in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) are responsible for the provision of consular services to Singaporeans in Vietnam.

Many of the travellers' problems could have been avoided with proper planning and by exercising due caution and care. This booklet aims to help you prepare for your trip and stay in Vietnam and to assist you in dealing with any difficulties which may arise during your stay.

Note: The information contained in this booklet was correct at the time of printing. Please refer to the Singapore Embassy in Hanoi's webpage at <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/overseasmission/hanoi.html>, the Singapore Consulate-General in HCMC's webpage at https://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/overseasmission/ho_chi_minh_city.html or the official webpages of the relevant government departments and agencies for any updates. This publication was adapted from "Have a Good trip" by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore.

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BEFORE YOU GO ...

Introduction

The preparations you need to make before your trip to Vietnam will depend on the destination, length and purpose of your stay. Whether you are travelling for business, work, leisure or study, a good knowledge of travel requirements such as travel documents, visas, customs, currency regulations, immunisation and tickets will better prepare you and help to avoid unnecessary difficulties.

Travel insurance

Medical services overseas can be very expensive and payment in advance is sometimes required. Therefore, obtaining comprehensive travel insurance prior to your trip to Vietnam is highly encouraged.

CPF Medisave does not provide for payment of medical services outside Singapore.

Many insurance companies offer insurance for unforeseen circumstances such as flight delays, trip cancellation, lost or damaged baggage, accidents hospitalisation, medical evacuation and repatriation.

Ensure that the insurance policies you sign up for satisfy your requirements.

Travel Documents

Passports

Ensure you have a valid passport throughout your stay in Vietnam. Babies are also required to have valid travel documents.

Passports have to be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry into Vietnam. Ensure that the validity of your passport covers until your return date to Singapore.

Ensure that your passport is in good condition (e.g. lamination is intact, pages are not torn or missing). A passport which appears to have been tampered with may cause suspicion when entering Vietnam, and result in a great deal of

inconvenience. In the worst-case scenario, you may be denied entry into the country and asked to return to Singapore immediately.

Try not to keep your passport and identity card (IC) in the same place when you travel. This minimises the risk of losing all your documents of identification which may delay the verification of your identity in the event that you lose either of these documents.

Keep a photocopy of both your passport's personal particulars page and your IC with you all the time as proof of your citizenship in the event that your actual documents are lost, stolen or misplaced. It is advisable to keep the photocopies separate from your actual documents.

Loss of Passport

If your Singapore passport is lost or stolen when you are in Vietnam, make a police report immediately at the nearest local police station.

Bring the police report, a passport-sized photograph and documentary proof of your citizenship (e.g copy of your NRIC, driving license, etc.) to the Singapore Embassy in Hanoi or Consulate-General in HCMC to obtain a Document of Identity (DOI). A fee will be imposed for the issuance of the DOI.

If you are unable to obtain a local police report, you will be required to execute a Statutory Declaration at the Embassy or Consulate-General to explain the loss.

The DOI can only be used to facilitate your return to Singapore either directly or through transiting in another country. It cannot be used for onward travel to a third country. Apart from the DOI, you will also need to apply for an exit visa at the Vietnam Immigration Department (add: No 44-46 Tran Phu, Ba Dinh, Hanoi or 254 Nguyen Trai, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City) . Normally this process will take 3-5 working days. Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 0800-1600.

When you return to Singapore, You will be required to surrender the DOI to the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and apply for a new passport.

Visas

As of January 2017, most Singaporean visitors to Vietnam are not required to apply for a visa, unless they are staying for more than 30 days. However, onward travel from Vietnam to a different country may require travellers to hold a valid visa. It is advisable to obtain a visa for onward travel, if needed, before the start of your journey, rather than apply for it en-route to your destination. Visas can be difficult to obtain at the border of the countries you intend to visit. Remember to apply for your visa early as visa processing may take long time.

Permission to enter at the point of entry is the sole prerogative of the host country. Regardless of whether you need a visa and even if you had been issued one, you must be prepared to prove, upon your arrival at the destination, that you:

- Have sufficient funds to support yourself during your intended stay;
- Have the necessary travel documents (e.g. passport and valid visa) for admission to the next country in your itinerary; and
- Have onward/return transportation tickets.

Vietnam has special requirements for persons who intend to reside for extended periods, or who plan to work, study, or engage in non-tourist activities.

To avoid possible inconvenience or even deportation at the point of entry, consult the Vietnamese Embassy in Singapore about immigration regulations before your departure if necessary. They could advise you about visa, entry and exit regulations, health certification and other requirements.

Exit Permits

Exit permit requirements

With effect from August 2006, NS liable persons aged 13 years and above and all Full-time National Servicemen (NSFs) and Regulars are required to apply for an exit permit to travel and remain overseas for 3 months or longer. The exception is the Operationally Ready National Servicemen (NSmen) who will require an exit permit if they are travelling overseas for a period of 6 months or more in a single trip.

Application for Exit Permit

Applications for exit permits can be forwarded to:

Central Manpower Base

Tel: 1800-3676767 or
+65 6567 6767 (from overseas)

Fax: 6853 7894

Email: contact@ns.sg

Via NS Portal at www.ns.sg

Police National Service Department

Tel: 6478 3357

Fax: 6478 3259

Email: SPF_Exit_Permit@spf.gov.sg

Via NS Portal at www.ns.sg

HQ SCDF

Fax: 6283 3486

Email: scdf_epo@scdf.gov.sg

Via NS Portal at www.ns.sg

Notification of Overseas Trips by NSmen

NSmen who wish to travel out of Singapore for more than 24 hour but less than 6 months do not need an exit permit. However, they are required to notify MINDEF of their overseas trips. Failure to notify is an offence.

NSmen can notify MINDEF/MHA via the following:

Tel: 1800-3676767 or
+65 6567 6767 (from overseas)

Via SMS:36767

Fax: 6853 7894

Email: contact@ns.sg

Via NS Portal at www.ns.sg

When notifying MINDEF, please provide the following information:

- NRIC number
- Country of destination(s)
- Departure and return dates

- Local and overseas contact numbers

For more information and/or updates, please contact NS Customer Services Centre at 1800-3676767 or email contact@ns.sg

Money & Currencies

Personal Funds

Ensure that you have enough funds to last you for the duration of your stay. You may be required to show evidence of financial sufficiency before you are allowed entry into the country.

Do not carry too much cash. According to the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV), foreigners are allowed to bring into/out of Vietnam of up to USD 5000 or equivalent. Specific paperwork and approval is required before you are allowed to bring in currency beyond this amount into the country. You are advised to check with SBV (<http://www.sbv.gov.vn>) for the updated requirements.

If your money and valuables are stolen or lost, make a police report at the nearest police station.

In an emergency, you can arrange for funds to be remitted to you by your family or friends through a bank. Emergency funds can also be remitted to you via the Singapore Embassy in Hanoi or Consulate-General in HCMC if your family or friends deposit funds with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular Directorate.

Credit Cards and Travellers' Cheques

Check that your type of credit card /charge card is widely accepted. In major cities in , Vietnam, Visa and MasterCard are popularly accepted at major establishments.

Keep a separate record of your travellers' cheques and credit cards.

Do not countersign unused travellers' cheques so that you can promptly cancel and replace them in the event of loss or theft.

Keep some travellers' cheques in small denominations for easy conversion.

Money Exchange

Avoid changing money with illegal moneychangers who tempt tourists with attractive exchange rates. You may be short-changed or given counterfeit currency. Engaging in illegal transactions also increases the risk of prosecution.

Non-compliance with local regulations or discrepancies between what is declared and what is found with you could result in detention, confiscation of your funds and imposition of fines.

Health

Health and medical considerations in Vietnam may differ from those in Singapore.

Check on any outstanding health concerns reported in the places you are visiting and take necessary precautions such as obtaining vaccinations or carrying appropriate medication to protect yourself and your family.

Remember to bring along any prescription medication that you may require during your trip to Vietnam.

Certain medicines may be considered controlled drugs in Vietnam. It is illegal to bring such substances without prior permission and you may be detained at customs for doing so. Check if the regulations governing imports of controlled drugs apply to you. If need be, you should obtain prior approval and carry a copy of your doctor's prescription with you.

Registration

You are strongly encouraged to register online with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs via the e-Register system at <https://eregister.mfa.gov.sg>.

Registering online will ensure the Singapore Embassy in Hanoi and Singapore Consulate-General in HCMC can contact you to provide consular assistance in emergency situations, such as natural disasters or civil unrest in the

country.

Remember to inform us of any subsequent change of address/contact number / departure and/or return dates by re-registering the updated information with us in the e-Register system.

Consular Travel Advice from Vietnam

Find out about your destination from experienced travellers, travel agents, tourist information offices and airline on matters such as local customs, hotel accommodation, access to medical services, international communications and transportation network in Vietnam.

Prepare a proper itinerary. Plan your trip/route well in advance.

Leave your itinerary (including names, addresses and contact numbers of persons, hotels and places to be visited) with your family or friends in Singapore so that you can be reached in an emergency.

Monitor daily news media for reports of unrest or bad weather.

Make a photocopy of your passport personal (particular page), IC, credit cards, travellers' cheque numbers and keep them separate from your passport and credit cards as you may need to refer to them in the event the originals are lost or stolen. It is advisable to leave photocopies of such documents with family members or friends back home as a contingency.

Call home regularly and inform your family of any changes in your itinerary and the length of stay in the country.

Checklist

- Purchase comprehensive travel and medical insurance to cover overseas hospitalisation and medical evacuation costs
- Ensure passport have at least 6 months' validity
- Have confirmed onward/return ticket
- Check visa requirements for entry and obtain visa, if needed
- Check on health and vaccination requirements. if your personal medication is a controlled drug, carry a copy of your doctor's prescription
- Bring sufficient funds
- Obtain vital information pertaining to the country and places you may visit in the country
- Make photocopies of passport (identification page), Identity Card (IC), credit cards and travellers' cheque number (if any)
- Obtain address and contact numbers of Singapore Embassy in Hanoi and Consulate-General in HCMC
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with your family/friends and inform them of where you are going and how to contact you
- e-Register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

WHEN YOU ARE HERE ...

Consular Assistance

In an emergency, you can contact the Singapore Embassy in Hanoi at duty handphone number +84-904696589 or Consulate-General in HCMC at duty handphone number +84-903113500.

The Singapore Embassy in Hanoi and Consulate-General in HCMC serve to protect the interests of Singapore citizens abroad. However, there are limitations to the services and assistance we can provide.

What our Embassy/Consulate-General can do ...

We can issue you with an emergency travel document if you have lost your Singapore passport overseas. However, you must first report the loss to the local police and provide our Mission a copy of the police report.

We can contact your next-of-kin in the event of accidents, injury, arrests or death.

We can contact your relatives or friends and request them to send you funds for any necessary emergency expenses.

We can help you during emergencies in Vietnam, such as natural disasters or civil unrest.

What our Embassy/Consulate-General cannot do ...

We cannot pay your medical, hospital, legal, accommodation and other bills/expense, provide loans or cash your cheques.

We cannot assist you to find a job, obtain work permit or residential permit in Vietnam.

We cannot act as your guarantor or sponsor for any purpose (e.g to apply for a visa).

We cannot intervene or act as intermediary in civil disputes.

We cannot provide translation, mail forwarding, telephone, fax/telex or other

personal services.

Arrest and Detention

Singaporeans travelling overseas should remember that they are subject to the laws of the countries they visit. While we can assist Singaporeans who have been arrested or detained in Vietnam, we cannot intervene in the local judicial process. Long delays in Vietnam's judicial process are not uncommon.

If arrested or charged with an offence when you are in Vietnam, remain calm and cooperative. Request the authorities to inform Singapore Embassy/Consulate-General or ask your relatives or friends to contact the Embassy/Consulate-General.

Consular assistance to a Singaporean under detention or imprisonment aims to ensure that the Singaporean is:

- Accorded fair and humane treatment in accordance with local laws.
- Given access to a Singapore Consular Officer, his lawyers and those who have a legitimate right to have access to him.
- Offered legal assistance which is in accordance with local laws.
- Not penalised, discriminated against or denied justice because of his nationality and not remanded pending trial for a protracted period.

What our Singapore Embassy/Consulate-General can do ...

Notify the family of the detention or arrest and provide details made available by the local authorities.

Obtain information about the status of the case.

Assist in obtaining information on the local judicial and prison systems.

Provide a list of local lawyers, if needed.

Assist in arranging prison visit for the family.

Facilitate the transfer of funds to the detainee if other means are unavailable (only if such remittance is permitted by prison authorities).

Ensure that medical problems, if any, are brought to the attention of the prison authorities.

Take up any justified complain about ill-treatment or alleged discrimination with the prison authorities.

Make arrangements for repatriation or deportation, after release.

What our Singapore Embassy/Consulate-General cannot do...

Seek preferential treatment for a Singaporean prisoner over that is provided for locals or other nationals.

Initiate court proceedings or represent Singapore citizens at trials.

Give legal advice or interpret local laws.

Pay legal expenses, fines or bail out a Singaporean.

Investigate a possible crime.

Recommend or select a specific lawyer.

Circumvent prison rules regarding what can or cannot be brought into or to be taken out of the prison.

Death of Singaporean

If your relative or friend passes away in Vietnam and you are with them, please contact the Singapore Embassy or Consulate-General for assistance. Make sure you have the following information of the deceased with you:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Passport number
- Contact details of the next-of-kin of the deceased (if you are not the closest relative)

All deaths must be registered in the country where the death occur. Documents pertaining to the death of the deceased must be translated into English if they are in another language.

Our Consular Officers will keep in touch with the deceased's family and until the burial/cremation overseas or repatriation to Singapore of the deceased has been completed.

It is important to note that it may not always be possible to carry out the wishes of the next-of-kin, such as a request for cremation as such facilities may not be available in some places.

What our Singapore Embassy/Consulate-General can do...

Notify the next-of-kin of the incident.

Provide a list of local undertakers.

Advice on the cost of local burial/cremation and transportation of remains and personal property of the deceased to Singapore.

What our Singapore Embassy/Consulate-General cannot do...

Investigate the cause of death.

Make an insurance claim on behalf of the family of the deceased.

Pay for burial or cremation expenses.

Pay for the return of the deceased's remains to Singapore or any bills or debts that may be outstanding. In the absence of suitable medical / travel insurance, the next-of-kin or friends of the deceased are expected to cover these expenses.

Driving in Vietnam

Singaporeans in Vietnam who hold a long-term visa for employment or a resident can apply for conversion from Singapore driving license to Vietnam driving license if they want to drive in Vietnam. The applicants can contact the Directorate for Roads of Vietnam (in Hanoi) or the College of Transport

(in HCMC) at the following addresses to obtain full information on the driving license conversion procedures.

Directorate for Roads of Vietnam

Add: D20, Ton That Thuyet Road, Cau Giay District, Hanoi, Vietnam

Website: <http://drvn.gov.vn/>

Tel: 84 4 38571 444

Ho Chi Minh City College of Transport

Add: 252 Ly Chinh Thang, Ward 9, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City

Website: www.hcmct.edu.vn

[Tel: 84 08 39350551](tel:840839350551).

Please ensure that you have purchased adequate insurance coverage for yourself, your passengers and the vehicle. Remember to read the small print on the car hire agreement before you sign it.

Drive carefully and defensively, as driving conditions and habits may be different from those in Singapore. Roads may not be familiar to you and conditions deceptive, especially during cold weather. Long-distance driving can lead to the hazard of driver fatigue. Do have adequate rest breaks and plan to have a co-driver if you are travelling with family/friends.

Other General Tips

Personal safety and Security

- Avoid isolated, unfamiliar places or places with high incidence of crime;
- Do not carry too much cash or other valuables, especially expensive jewellery;
- In case of civil disturbances or unrest, exercise caution and prudence at all times and avoid large gatherings and demonstrations;
- Monitor media reports closely or check with the Embassy/Consulate-General on the situation. If situation is deteriorating, you are advised to leave the destination as soon as possible;

- Take all necessary precautions to safeguard your passport, IC, other identification documents, travel tickets, money, travellers' cheques, credit cards and insurance documents. Try not to carry these items together. There is the risk of being left entirely without identification and funds in case of theft or loss.

Immigration

When you enter or depart the country, always check before leaving the Immigration Checkpoint to ensure that your passport is stamped. This ensures you are not breaching the host country's immigration laws.

Do not pass immigration booths that are unattended.

Customs regulations

Be familiar with the local customs regulations. There are stringent requirements on the entry of food and agricultural products. Travellers are required to declare items which come under the agricultural quarantine restrictions as stated on the customs forms at the point of entry. Failure to do so could result in the imposition of severe fines.

Illegal drugs and narcotics

Most countries impose severe penalties for possession or trafficking of even small amounts of illegal drugs. As in the case of Singapore, some countries also impose the death penalty for convicted drug traffickers.

Do not convey or transport any parcel, especially across a border, when asked by a stranger. Should such parcels contain illegal drugs, you risk being found guilty of possession, smuggling or trafficking in drugs. You should also never leave your belongings unattended or under the "care" of any stranger.

Sanitary and Health Conditions

- Take special precautions for your personal hygiene and well-being;
- Be careful with what you eat and drink;
- Consult a local doctor if you fall ill overseas and refrain from travelling until you are certified fit by the doctor;

- Avoid crowded areas and maintain good ventilation;
- If possible, avoid contact with birds and animals while overseas;
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water.

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Singapore Embassy in Hanoi

Add: No.41-43 Tran Phu, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi

Tel: +84-4-38489168

Fax: +84-4-38489178

Email: singemb_han@mfa.sg

Website: www.mfa.gov.sg/hanoi

Duty Officer

Tel: +84 904 696 589

Hanoi Family Medical Practice

Add: 298I Kim Ma, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi

Tel: +84-4-38430748

+84 90 340 1919 (for emergency)

International SOS Clinic

Add: 51 Xuan Dieu, Quang An, Tay Ho District, Hanoi

Tel: 04-934 0666

Hanoi French Hospital

Add: 1 Phuong Mai, Hanoi

Tel: +84-4-35771100 or 11

Vietnam Immigration Department

Add: 44-46 Tran Phu, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi

Tel: +84-4-38264026

Website: www.vnimm.gov.vn

Email: vnimm@hn.vnn.vn

Noi Bai Airport Immigration Office

Tel: +84-4-3886 5231 or 5232

Singapore Airlines

Reservations & Ticketing:

Tel: +84-4-3826 8888 or +84-4-3886 5545

Airport: +65 6223 8888

24-hour Hotline: +65 6580 7005

Consulate General of the Republic of Singapore in HCM City

Sai Gon Centre, 8th Floor

65 Le Loi Boulevard, District 1, HCMC

Tel: +84-8-38225174

Fax: +84-8-39142938

Email: singcg_hcm@mfa.sg

Website: www.mfa.gov.sg/hochiminhcity

Duty Officer Consular

Tel: +84-903 113 500

Raffles Medical Clinic/ International SOS*

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia Street, District 3

Hotline: +84 8 3824 0777

FV Medical Centre

Level 3, Bitexco Financial Tower, 2 Hai Trieu Street, District 1, HCMC

Tel: +84 8 62 90 61 67

Hotline/ Emergency: +84 8 62 90 67 67

Email: saigonclinic@fvhospital.com

FV Hospital

6 Nguyen Luong Bang Street, Phu My Hung, District 7, HCMC

Tel: +84 8 54 11 33 33

Emergency: +84 8 54 11 35 00

Email: information@fvhospital.com

Family Medical Practice (FMP) in HCMC*

Diamond Plaza Ground Floor, 34 Le Duan Street, District 1, HCMC

Hotline: +84 8 3822 7848 (24/7 hour clinic)

Email: hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com

Tam Duc Cardiology Hospital

4 Nguyen Luong Bang Street, Phu My Hung, Tan Phu ward, District 7, HCMC

Tel: +848 54110025/ 54110026/ 54110027/ 54110031/ 54110036

Emergency line (24/24): +84 8 5411 5411

Hotline: +84 8 903 052432

Email: hospital@tamduchearthospital.com

Cho Ray Hospital*

201B Nguyen Chi Thanh Street, Ward 12, District 5, HCMC

Tel : +84 8 3855 4137 - 38554138 - 38563534

Email : bvchoray@hcm.vnn.vn

**Clinics/ Hospitals which can arrange for medical evacuation to Singapore.*

Singapore Airlines

Reservations & Ticketing:

Tel: +84-08-3823 1588 (Mon-Fri 0800h – 1730h)

Airport: +65 6223 8888

24-hour Hotline: +65 6580 7005

Email: sia_sgn@singaporeair.com.sg

Websites for Reference:

Singapore Business Association Vietnam

(Hanoi Chapter): <http://www.sbav-hanoi.org>

Singapore Business Group (Ho Chi Minh City Chapter)

<http://www.sbgHCM.org>

Overseas Singaporean:

<http://www.overseasingaporean.sg>

International Enterprises Singapore

<http://www.iesingapore.gov.sg>

Hanoi City: <http://www.hanoi.gov.vn>

Ho Chi Minh City: <http://www.hochiminhcity.gov.vn>

Hanoi International Women's Club: <http://hanoi-iwc.com>

Vietnam National Administration of Tourism:

<http://www.vietnamtourism.com>

The National English Language Daily:

<http://vietnamnews.vnagency.com.vn>

Government Web Portals:

<http://vietnam.gov.vn>