



## **S5- E12 – Out & About in Mui Ne – Laying bare to the winds of change**

**Kerry Newsome:** Welcome everyone to the What About Vietnam podcast and my little mini series that I'm calling Out and About in Vietnam.

Today I'm going to ask you to join me as I tell you a little story about my Out and about experiences in Mui Ne.

Now a little bit of funny background to this visit in the sense that I actually went to one of my own previous episodes as some inspiration for it. So I'm talking about the episode I did back in December 21, would you believe, with a lovely lady by the name of Nikki Cornish. So it was episode, I think, [S3-E17](#). I was talking about Mui Ne.

Nikki was GM of the very luxurious resort there, the Sailing Club Resort, and I kind of used her storytelling and some of the things that she mentioned as a bit of inspiration to visit this place, because it has been touted as a very famous beachside location. And because I'd just come from Ho Tram, I sort of wanted to continue on that seaside excursion, for want of a better word, to explore beachside locations that are just a little bit out of the way or off the beaten track in amongst the other more famous ones.

So, today's story is definitely about Mui Ne and my experiences there. So, that was the first inspiration for going. Secondly, I have a lovely friend who has family and a farm in the city or just out of the city of Phan Thiet. So Phan Thiet is located about 20-25 minutes out of Mui Ne. So I thought well this was close enough to get access to her. And then just out of that city is her farm. So I got to go and visit her, see the farm where they farm dragon fruit and melons and things like that. So that was kind of another motivation for me to visit this location. And then, you know, lastly, I was looking for some contrast, some contrast to other beachside cities that I have visited. So that would be Da Nang, that would be Hoi An and the beachside area there of An Bang, and of course, just coming from Ho Tram.

So, let's get stuck into it. So, what can I tell you about my first impressions? Well, first impressions is or has to start with getting there. So, from Ho Chi Minh City, we opted for a driver, private driver and getting a car there. Now, that's not to say that's the only way to get there. The other option is definitely by train. Now, the reason I chose car was at the moment I'm traveling with a lot of luggage. And with the train, the train doesn't come into Fantip, it sort of comes into Place just about I don't know about 15 K's out of the city. So even if you come into that train station You still have to arrange like a taxi or whatever from there to you know, whatever your hotel Location is so if you're staying in Phan Thiet, you'd have to still get into the city or for us we had arranged accommodation actually at in or in Mui Ne So that was the motivation by the car choice, a private driver. And it's a speedy trip now. The highway has really shortened the trip.

When I was talking to Nikki about this it was really a four hour at least drive. Now you can kind of get there in probably three hours. So it's really quicker and the road is good and it just makes that experience so much easier and more comfortable. So options are car is one option, train is the other. There's no airport so bus is another option but that's just kind of not my thing with luggage and bus travel etc. When we arrived into Mui Ne, I guess what was clearly apparent and it's well known in the city to be It was very windy. Now, for most people, you go, blah, you know, who cares? But it is seriously windy. And for the beach locations that you may be looking for as in accommodation, please take that into consideration, because we actually chose the cliffs, which is kind of up on a hill. And it left the beach very exposed. So while you may think in your head long walks on the beach and you know strolling along the beach and you know in a comfortable environment, It didn't really offer that for us because of the wind. And it was crazy that the hotel like all day has these kites that just continually can fly all day and into the evening because the wind is just so consistent. So, hand on heart, I can say I honestly didn't do a stroll on the beach. I saw the beach from my hotel, but on the beach front, in front of our hotel, I chose not to because it was just uncomfortable.

However, there are better locations where you're going to get a bit more of a sheltered stay, and the sailing club is one of those. And I didn't want to stay there because I knew all about that location. So I wanted to stay somewhere else. So I would just have something to compare it to. But I did go and check it out and it is much more sheltered. It's boutique. It's really lovely. But there is a plethora of accommodations on the beach. So, my tip for anyone wanting to explore this as a beach side escape from Saigon, I would definitely put some work into or some thought about the kind of location accommodation that you want and the experiences that you want to have. Now, let me talk to you about the main experiences that I got to enjoy at this location. Firstly, it was definitely catching up with my friend Linh and going to the farm and experiencing that side, the agricultural side of Vietnam in small kind of hobby farming. So, you know, it's an experience you don't get to do that often as a tourist. So, for me, that was very special and also spending some time with her family. Secondly, was doing the major tourist attractions that this place is noted for. One is the sand dunes. And for me I'm not your energy bunny kind of girl, I'm not one seeking that kind of adrenaline, I don't need that kind of adventure but I wanted to see the sand dunes for myself and I wanted to kind of see that in action. So I did get to spend the day to go out and have a look at them And they are quite staggeringly beauty, beautiful.

They are quite staggeringly amazing in the sense of them featuring just so much sand. And then with the wind, you can imagine that that sweeping kind of terrain is It's just fascinating and we did see some people out there enjoying, you know, June buggies and really having a fun time and tobogganing and things like that. So, it's definitely up there. If you like that kind of stuff, it's definitely there to do and I would suggest you go and check it out. The very cool thing that I really did enjoy was the fairy stream. Now, at first I thought in my mind when I had spoken to Nicky Cornish about the fairy stream, I imagined that quite a way out of town as well, because you're talking about, you know, an area of sand dunes again, and an area that you would think would not fit in the town, but it actually is in the town. So you go to this entrance and you go down some cement stairs and then you find yourself wading through kind of ankle deep water. of a stream and the stream just meanders on and on and on through these eroded walls of sand dunes and of course as they appear they're very weathered and you can see the various levels of erosion and the colours that that kind of features and shows. So, you know, you're paddling along and walking this, I don't know, could have been maybe up to a kilometre long. And that's the fairy stream. What was interesting was because Linh was able to join us on this day, she had said that they were actually much wider a few years ago. So, you know, probably four or five years ago, they were twice the width that they are now. So, it's very shallow water and it's getting narrower and narrower each year. So, who knows how long it will be before it like just disappears. So, it's a very simple thing to do, you know, there was a mix of couples and families and some small children and, you know, it was just very easy to just wade through that and it was

quite pleasant and a lovely thing to do. period I would think that you would need to encompass these things is probably what we did, which was about, we did a 3 night stay.

So that allowed us the first night to get in and then two extra nights and kind of two full days. And that meant that we could kind of do it and experience these things at a pace that was really easy. Of course I'm visiting it in the month of March so it was it was hot. You know we we added on one extra experience which was a journey out to they called the lighthouse. Now that was about an hour's drive out of Mui Ne and you know it was so hot and so blindingly are hard to experience on the white sands because these are just pristine white sands that the reflection you couldn't see your phone to take you know you couldn't really do much out there because the sun was just blaring down on it and so trying to take photos of, you know, the fishing villages and the locals, etc., with their nets, and that was really quite difficult, you know, even at about 9 a.m. in the morning. The other thing I want to mention when you are out and about in Mui Ne is it is not really a city, in my opinion, that is catering to Westerners. Now, it has been known to be a city very much favoured by the Russians. And, you know, we found it quite common to go to restaurants or bars, etc. And, you know, some menus were written in Russian and English, of course, in addition to Vietnamese. So that was quite fascinating in itself. And we did see a lot of Russians staying at various locations. Now, that may have changed a little bit post COVID, but certainly it was definitely known for it prior.

But what I'm really wanting to hearken on here is that It is a remote fishing village by nature. I think the domestic tourist is going to be keener than the westerner to visit this location, purely because to get about, to do stuff there does take some extra planning, some thinking about it and some research. I think you'd be crazy to come to Mui Ne without having done some homework or, you know, talking to an agent or talking to a local who can speak English to give you the best advice for the best stay. you know, it's a four-hour commitment out of Ho Chi Minh City. So, you know, getting there, I wouldn't want you to try and get about by yourself without kind of knowing where you're going. I mean, when I send people there, I definitely make sure they are aware of the lack of ease of getting around. Like, for instance, they don't really have a strong grab comMui Nety. So you are going to be relying on taxis and you are not going to get that many people out of the hotel that speak good English. We were able to experience some great food like seafood is just obviously because it's a fishing area. The seafood was cheap and it was good. It was well cooked. It was made a lot easier for us because those three days we had access to Lin and Lin obviously being Vietnamese was able to translate for us and deal with the menu ordering and things like that. So it just made it all that much easier and gave us a little bit

more of an authentic experience. So I think a guide would definitely be the go if you wanted to really get the full authentic immersion in that city.

Because, you know, like when we went out to the lighthouse, we, you know, the car arrived into this very small village, which you and I wouldn't have a clue to know that that was where you went to, to arrange with one of the local fishermen to take a boat out to the lighthouse because it sits on an island.

Fantastic views back to Mui Ne to get there. But there was no signs, there was no kind of easy instructions about that this was the place to come to, to arrange that kind of thing. So you'd have to be dealing with someone in the know of how to get around that city and how to access, you know, the next biggest city being Phan Thiet City. So, that was kind of my very clear takeaway was that we had the distinct advantage of being able to get a bit closer and see a bit more, understand a bit more about the city because we had access to a Vietnamese and a local at that point because she and her family live just out of Phan Thiep City. So that was kind of my main takeaways from being out and about in Mui Ne. It certainly does have the aspect for, I think, the budget traveller and certainly the adventure traveller who has an interest in kite surfing, wind surfing, any of those wind kind of sports on the water.

We saw hundreds of them, people flying kites as well as actually kite surfing. And it was spectacular. So, I can understand why it is a hub for that sport. and to the extent that it's well known for major competitions to be held here. So, you know, for the, I guess, the more budget-minded, the single travelers, etc., you know, you would definitely love that. And because the weather is fairly consistent at about you know, 28 degrees plus, you're going to get most of the year to come here to do that sport with comfort and the kind of the heat that you need and the winds to do it.

For anyone looking for a remote beachside location, it would definitely be the go. The sports are definitely ocean, wind options. The two main attractions being the ferry stream, the sand dunes is definitely there. But once again, they would only fill a couple of hours of your day and your stay. So if you're coming here, think chill out vibes, nice hotel, nice pool, eating tasty food, relaxing by the beach, and you're done. I think that would definitely be my wrap up for one of a better way of describing Mui Ne. I try to say to people as much as I can is that because Vietnam is just not a one-dimensional country, firstly decide yourself what you want to get out of your stay. If you want relaxation, if you want immersion into culture, if you want adventure, then it's easy to marry the place to those desires, to those travel experiences that you want to have.

So for this one, I want those people to think about Mui Ne as a chill out vibe place, doing some small activities, or if you are the adventure traveller and you love kite surfing and you

want a kite surfing location, bang that's your place. I hope you'll continue with the series with me, I hope you're enjoying it. I would love to get your feedback on as they're coming through. I will be able to share with you another out and about very, very soon in another beachside location, very different to Mui Ne and I look forward to sharing that with you. Please follow the show on your various platforms or you can listen for free on the website [whataboutvietnam.com](http://whataboutvietnam.com). You know I'm always around to give you any advice plan your trip A to Z or as much as your trip you'd like some help with, I'm definitely available to do that.

Thank you for being such great listeners and I hope this is going to help you with your trip planning for Vietnam.