



S5- E13 - Out & About in Nha Trang – The city of 300 days of sunshine a year

Kerry Newsome : Xin chào and welcome to the Out and About series of the What About Vietnam podcast. Today I'd like to invite you to join me on my trip to Nha Trang City. It's March 2024 and I haven't been back to this city since about 2011. Came here with a girlfriend Stayed on a beachside resort Had a fabulous fun few days. So I haven't actually been here since then however, I have been talking to various people and of course because I'm in the industry I'm talking to people about their stays here and But in particular, I got to record an episode with Colm Hutchinson, and it was episode, season four, episode five. And he is an Irish expat and been living here for about eight years. And he was just awesome at sharing some really great insights into the city and was, you know, willing to offer up 10 really interesting, good things to do in the city. So that has always been kind of the basic inspiration for me to come back. Prior to that I had done another show talking about diving with Jeremy Stein who really brought paddy diving and paddy diving training to Vietnam and really the birth of that happened in Nha Trang. So you can also hear, if that's an interest of yours, you can also go back to Season 3, Episode 6 and hear about it from there. I'm getting to share with you know, my experiences, but also my experiences alongside my husband. So for a rare occasion in this trip, I'm able to travel with him. So it's really good to get his perspective on things, his views. You know, he obviously hasn't traveled to Vietnam, you know, anywhere near as much as myself. So, it's really fabulous to get his take on it, just his experience of it and us as a couple choosing different things to do over what I would choose to do myself.

So I think for if you're a solo traveler, if you're you know a couple thinking of coming, if you love beachside locations, this is the show for you as we're really going to get into Nha Trang as a beachside water play destination. Just before I jump into the full length and breadth of the show, I would like to give my sincere thanks to the Potique Hotel. Now, the Potique Hotel is sponsoring this show and just had a fantastic stay at their location in Natrang. A little bit about the hotel for you, It's what I'd call a boutique, very elegant Indochine style.

It's only about three or four years old, so it's brand spanking new, very clean. It's in a fab location, like literally walk out the front door, you've got a block to the beach, you've got views of the beach in most of the rooms. But then you go left or right and you've got easy access to restaurants and, you know, spa centers and everything that you need is right at your doorstep. It's got a great breakfast buffet, which my

husband is a buffet breakfast fan. So, you know, he really soaked up that. It's got a fabulous gym which I was able to use over the stay but we chose to stay three nights there and it was just perfect. I would really recommend it to anyone who wants to be in the thick of things, wants a city hotel, wants those real beautiful spacious type rooms Very elegantly done, really great value for money.

[Potique Hotel](#), link for you to be able to check it out yourself. And go direct because I know they do some really good specials and deals and they really want to look after their customers and their guests. So Potique Hotel, thank you very much for the stay and thank you for sponsoring this episode.

Jumping right into our stay. We had really only planned a three-night stay. The plan was to go to Mui Ne and then go Mui Ne, then Nha Trang. So it's been my plan all along to do three beachside locations. Well actually four if you take in Ho Tram. So we've done Ho Tram, we've done Mui Ne, today is Nha Trang and then following our three nights in Nha Trang we'll be doing Quy Nhon. As a form of comparison, and for my listeners who are looking at beachside locations like, you know, that still include some of the great Vietnamese cultural things to experience, These would be the cities that are a little bit out of the way. I mean, Nha Trang definitely features as a very tourist-based city and has been on the map for many, many years. But places like Mui Ne and like Quy Nhon, Not so, but they're on the potential map. So they are definitely being touted as the cities that are going to really attract the new tourists.

Vietnamese are also taking up a greater interest in domestic travel. So you're going to see a lot more domestic Vietnamese travellers in these destinations because they've Guess what? Finally wised up that they have got some fabulous destinations that they can go and enjoy when they get their holidays. Okay, so getting to Nha Trang from Muni, we could have opted for train, we could have opted for a bus. The only other option was car. We are travelling with a lot of luggage and so I opted for the car. Four hours and around about, you can get that for about two to three million in cost to do that trip with a private driver and a seven seat vehicle. So, that was very comfortable, highway all the way, all along the coast road, really “easy peasy”, four hours, not a hassle.

So, we got into Nha Trang afternoon and, you know, kind of ready to find somewhere to eat, to kind of get a bit of a feel of the city and, you know, it was time for sunset drinks, let's face it. So, that was easy to find. There were lots and lots of bars and restaurants at our fingertips from that location in the city. I did feel the busyness side of it as a beachside location. And having come from Mui Newhere, you know, it's a lot sleepier, it's a lot more casual, it's a lot more very Vietnamese focused, where this is much more multicultural. So, you've got all your brands, all your different cuisines. You've got, you know, chock-a-block streets and cities full of, you know, a really mixed bag of tourists. So, I didn't kind of get the chill-out vibe when I first got here. I got the busy vibe and I got the noisy vibe. So as much as it is a beachside location, I think the best part of, or the best parts of Nha Trang are just kind of beyond that city centre area. And I think you owe it to yourself to explore beyond that, which is kind of what we did. And, you know, think water, think water sports. So diving, as I mentioned, You can catch the cable car across to Hon Tre Island, which is where the Vinpearl land is. And if you're staying at Vinpearl, that's fabulous, but there is other resorts over there and other beaches. But it's about doing a little bit of homework on the access to those other islands. A lot of expats tend to choose Long Beach as their favorite beach. and it's just a little bit further around the bay and a little bit less touristy. So you've got

those options to do. I think if I did something wrong I might have taken it just on face value and I was a bit stuck in 2011 to be honest. I was thinking, gosh, it's just kind of a sleepy town just coming into its vogue. It really wasn't like this when I was here then. But guess what? That's all changed. It's just a really busy tourist city.

Some of the things that I did really enjoy was the option to do this island hopping. And one of the things I was keen to try, or I was keen to get my husband to try, was definitely the mud baths. So, we were able to combine the two, as in we were able to do a three island hop, and one of the islands actually features the mud baths. Now, originally, I thought the mud baths were going to be something like the Grecian or the Russian kind of mud bath in some kind of spa treatment kind of centre. Wrong. Bom-bom. No go. This is actually an outdoor park. So, it's featured on one of the islands. They have these kind of tubs, these cement tubs with a spout that then spurts the mud or the mud liquid because it's very watery. To me, it just looks like dirt and water, et cetera. And they fill up the tubs and you can go there and choose to have the tub to yourself. or you can share it with your family or as we had a small group because we were part of a tour the whole tour group kind of sat in the tub and everybody had a bit of a chuckle and have a laugh and you know questioning the whole outlay of the place and it was just it was goddamn hilarious to be honest. So, you know, we got to experience the islands, the beauty of the islands, the water. Look, you are going to see rubbish on the islands and in the water. The plastic is an issue. They're aware of it. They're trying to educate and do what they can to rectify that before it gets beyond redemption, I guess. So that's disappointing because The beach, the water is definitely the big attraction for this city.

But let's not forget you can go further afield and experience some of the Cham civilization with the Po Nagar temple and the pagoda out there. So don't think it's just about beach things. You've just got to go a little bit further. Colm Hutchinson on that episode I referenced before, he talked about going out to the salt mines where if you get up very early, and I'm talking very early, like 4 a.m. in the morning, and you get out there in the cooler part of the day, you'll see some of those epic photos that are taken of the Vietnamese working the salt fields. And it's just an incredible scene to have. I wish I'd had time to do that. It's probably a good segue for me to talk about how much time to have here. Originally I thought the three nights would be adequate. I would be able to kind of do the basic things that I wanted to do and be able to talk to you about on the show. But getting here and spending time here, you know, probably my biggest regret is not having more time, as I would have liked to have gone a little bit further afield, because I think the gems are just beyond the city perimeter. And, you know, you can see some amazing pagodas and Buddhas and that Cham civilization and those just really exquisite areas of culture that do exist in those regions. So time-wise, I'd probably allow four to five days to do that. And I think that would just give you ample time to, you know, still soak up the pool, still have time to, you know, check out the rooftop baths, still enjoy a sunset or a sunrise, you know, but do those really super duper great activities.

They don't call it the city of 300 days of sunshine for nothing. You are pretty much guaranteed a big chunk of the year whereby you're going to have sunshine. So if you want to build it into your holiday and you are a sun lover and a beach and a water person, this is definitely the place for you. And don't forget you can do that diving as another option. I think if you were to be thinking about a beachside location, you wanted the option, you know, from budget to, you know, five star, and Trang is really, it's geared for that. That's it. That's its job. It really fulfils that if you're prepared to do a little bit more scouting outside You know the hubba hubba. I think you'd even enjoy it more. You've definitely got Cam Ran we passed through Cam Ran as we came down the highway there's absolutely massive beautiful resorts out there and You know, we've talked about on the show the hotel being the destination. If you're wanting, you know, that really great escape and you want to have, you know, a beach hotel, but you want kids club and you want to be able to relax by the pool for hours, and have choice of restaurants and things like that within the hotel space, then Cam Ranh would definitely be your go. In fact, I've got a really good offer on our office page on What About Vietnam. So go there for move and pick. And I was able to kind of see that as I was driving into Nha Trang. Look, I really enjoyed my time here, had a real hoot with the group when we did the island hop and the mud baths. I think we'll be laughing about that for years to come. My husband, his impression certainly was that feeling of quite busy, quite noisy, quite loud. And I think we got that because we just come from Mui Ne it was quite the reverse.

But I think Nha Trang is and has always been very open to the European, the Russian tourist. It is however now attracting more of the domestic market. And I think if you came here and you kind of followed Some of the advice I've given you here on the show, I think you'd really enjoy your stay in a train. I hope you'll stick with me as I get out and about with the other cities coming up. All in all, I'll be covering 10 cities in this out and about mini series. So we've still got a way to go but I really look forward to bringing them to you and please reach out to me directly if you have any questions that I haven't covered during the show today. But thank you for sticking with me and I look forward to talking with you again on the next Out and About.