



What About Vietnam – S1-E11 – Last words for 2025

Kerry Newsome:

Xin chào and welcome to the What About Vietnam podcast. This episode is going to be a little bit different. I wanted to take this opportunity to say hello to everyone and to kind of embrace this time of the year as we get closer to Christmas and turning over the calendar to 2026.

If you are here, then I'm thinking that you are thinking about a trip to Vietnam and I definitely hope that through the podcast series and the website whataboutvietnam.com, I can offer you lots of information to help you plan your trip. Conversely, you can always reach out to me to create an itinerary for you. So, as I said, the episode is going to be very different. Today, instead of taking you somewhere new in Vietnam, I wanted to take you somewhere a little closer to home to reflect, to thank you and to share what's next.

When I first started the What About Vietnam podcast back in May 2020, Really my only goal was to share the magic that I felt every time I traveled there. The smells, the sounds, the people, just those really genuine moments that made me fall in love with the country. Now, if you recall, at that time we were all home during the pandemic, so travel felt a long way away. The podcast became a way to travel through stories, to meet locals, guides, expats, returnees and to kind of shine a light on the Vietnam that lives beyond the brochures and the guidebooks, etc. Try and put some feet on the ground to it, I suppose. And certainly, you know, through the show, I can't help but share with you my experiences and my takes. But as we understand, everyone's experience is different. Now fast forward three years, a bit over three years actually, a hundred episodes later this podcast has become so much more than I ever imagined. It's been downloaded in over 70 countries and I've had the joy of talking with people from all walks of life. Historians, chefs, wellness leaders, adventurers and of course travellers just like you. To every guest who gave their time and voice, I want to send you a very sincere thank you. You brought this show to life. You, in fact, gave it the personality, the energy, the self-expression and the passion that you have. are for the country and for your time there.

So extremely grateful. To my listeners, your messages, your questions, your stories about visiting Vietnam after hearing an episode They have meant the world to me. You've kept me inspired through every series, every late night edit, every challenge, every thought provoking thought I've had about, you know, what can I do differently? What can I do better? You know, what is important to you? What do you need to know? And how can I bring that to you in a way that is understandable and easy to comprehend?

One of the things I love most about this show is that the stories are evergreen. Whether you're listening today or three years from now, the insights and emotions are still there, waiting to be discovered. If you've just joined us, There's a whole library of episodes to explore, from street food adventures in Hanoi, to the quiet beauty of Yen Bai, to the joy of wellness retreats, and even a few episodes about dental and cosmetic travel. It's all there, told through real experiences and open hearts. So even while this mic takes a rest, the stories live on. Okay, time to pause. After three wonderful years, it feels like the right time for me to take a step back and take a deep breath. I want to give myself space to reflect on everything what about Vietnam has become and to imagine what it could be in the future. I kind of need to put my tourist headset back on and have that freedom of curiosity to expand what I want to do with what about Vietnam in the future and how I want to bring the stories to you. So it may not look the same. Maybe it returns in a new form in 26, maybe with fresh voices or a new way of storytelling. I'm not sure yet. And I hope that's OK with you. But unless I do that, I just don't feel I'm going to give you the best of me. Sometimes, as we say, you have to stop for a while to truly move forward. While the podcast takes a little time out, I'm not going anywhere. I'm not dropping off the planet. My love for Vietnam and helping people experience it is still very much alive. So if you're planning a trip, I'm still here through my trip planning and itinerary building services at whataboutvietnam.com. You've only got to see the pages there to reach out to me to request a trip plan. So that's where I'm going to be focusing most of my energy, creating bespoke journeys for travelers who want something authentic, something crafted with care for them in particular as a private tour. And I'll continue to share travel updates, news on visas, and some personal stories through my social channels and website. However, I may not be as full throttle in social media as I am currently, as I want this pause to be in content creation as well. Otherwise, you know, one kind of cancels the other out.

I wanted to leave you with **five thoughts or maybe five lessons**.

- (1) **Stay curious.** Vietnam will surprise you every time. And that couldn't be more pertinent than in recent months with typhoons, with, you know, weather conditions really changing things up for people. So, you know, keep an open mind about how your trip is going to take form. You know, holding steadfast to some things can, I guess, kill off other opportunities and can also not give you the fluid options that you might discover something else just as wonderful. And even engaging with people under some, you know, conditions which aren't ideal can bring you closer to understanding the Vietnamese and how resilient they are. in times of change and challenges that can come up during a trip. You know, open that door, try that dish, you know, go in through an alley that, you know, in our own country we would never go down and see what you can find. You'll be

amazed. I'm still amazed every time I make that decision to poke my nose in places that, you know, I wouldn't do in my own country.

- (2) Number two is **travel slow**. Sometimes the magic kind of happens in the quiet moments. Give yourself a break. It's really important in the travel mix to build in some days of rest. Otherwise, it can kind of feel like a work plan, like you're going to have to tick off everything every day to make sure that you've You've seen it. So I really stress if you can make some time to just chill out, people watch, muse, read a book, soak up the sun, view a sunset, go for a walk on the beach, maybe even go to a pagoda, say a prayer, read something profound. take in and breathe where you are and just accept that this is an experience that you're never going to get again. So taking those few moments to just slow down is going to help you really appreciate where you are and the aspects of everything you're experiencing.
- (3) Connect deeply is probably my number three thing I'd like to leave you with for 25. It's about connecting with people and sometimes just saying Xin Chao, saying hello to somebody can open a door. I can remember years ago, I did a cooking class and I met the owner of this restaurant that was running it in An Bang in Hoi An. And just through that connection and meeting this lovely lady, You know, I made a new friend. She could speak really good English. She wanted to know. She was just as curious about me as I was curious about her. So, you know, we shared many journeys since then. And just that moment in time when I could have or could have not kind of stepped out of my normal reserved self, it opened a door. So if you can, connect with the people that, you know, are guiding with you or, you know, you're meeting at various locations, etc. You'll find the Vietnamese are very welcoming, very friendly, and as I said, probably just as curious about you as you are about them.
- (4) I think for number four, where you can **support the local environment**, your choices really do help communities thrive. There's lots of opportunities to do that. In fact, I do a podcast about human trafficking with Blue Dragon. and the services that they offer to help rescue people and rehabilitate people who have been trafficked. You know, you'll be surprised that when you walk around various communities, especially in the more rural areas, you know, you will see opportunities to be able to provide some assistance where you can, and it doesn't have to be much. But, you know, making choices about how you dispose of rubbish and, you know, that all sets a really good example as that's not something that, Vietnamese have really understood but are certainly coming to grips with now.
- (5) Lastly, I'd like you to really **keep dreaming** about travel like life. It's an ongoing story. I think as Vietnam is growing and certainly opening up to the world as a fabulous destination, it's a big country and it's got a lot to offer. And I don't ever want to see Vietnam limited to about five places, I think, you know, look left and right, do your research, get in touch with me, ask questions, you know, really do some homework on where do you want this dream holiday to take you. If you want a certain type of experience that, you know, evokes more quietness, more locations that are rural, ethnic, then you might need to kind of get off the tourist

map. If you want beautiful resorts, if you want luxury, if you want fine dining, well, you know, then I'm possibly going to steer you to another part of Vietnam. So don't ever feel limited, keep dreaming and I think you're going to have a wonderful time in Vietnam.

In closing, from my heart to yours, thank you. Thank you for listening, for sharing, for being part of this journey with me. Every download, every message, every moment you've spent here has meant a lot. So for now, this is me, Kerry Newsome, signing off from What About Vietnam. And until we meet again, online in Vietnam or somewhere along the way. Take care, keep exploring, stay curious and have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.