



## **The What About Vietnam Traveller Insights Podcast – Transcript**

### **What About Vietnam - Series 1 - 2 - When is the best time of year to travel to Vietnam? Show notes and links:-**

#### **[What About Vietnam Podcast – Best time to visit](#)**

Xing Chau and Welcome to What About Vietnam.  
My name is Kerry Newsome and I am your host.

You are listening to the everything you need to know before you go... series where I take you through the process of planning your trip to Vietnam. My aim is to pass on as much information as I can to ensure you have a great trip.

In the first episode we covered off some of the factors influencing your decision to visit Vietnam through a better understanding of the food, the people and the experiences you can expect.

I hope you found that interesting.

Today we take you one step closer to getting you on your plane to Vietnam.

As we discuss the “when” to go?

This is probably one of the most common questions I get asked as a travel blogger.

The reason being is..... “its important”.

Its where you move into that commitment phase.

And in the case of Vietnam, the timing of your trip is crucial to ensure you get the experience you want. Its not a “Once size fits all answer, as it depends on the experiences you want to have during your trip, as they can be drastically impacted by the “when you go”. So do give it due consideration, whether you are traveling solo, in a group, or as a couple or family... So I want to take you through 2 factors you need to consider :-

1. Festivals that can impact your trip
2. The weather across the North, Central and southern regions.

Lets firstly cover off the fact, that Vietnam celebrates many festivals across the year. In fact,... I used to think they had a festival for everything. Then I learned that as a country they are such a grateful nation of people, full of history which they honour in pilgrimages and special events; all in the advent of thanks and praise.

Some of the festivals are amazing, they attract wide audiences, and you would want to be there to witness them. See in my notes a link to at 14 of the most famous ones. But the biggest one of all is TET, and this has a monumental effect on your holiday stay.

**What is TET Vietnam?** Not to be confused with the TET offensive.

Tet as it is so often called, because its too difficult to say the Vietnamese name,... is by far the most significant holiday and season in the Vietnam Calender. It is the Vietnamese New Year, based on the Lunar calendar, .... It also marks the coming of Spring.

It celebrates the "Feast of the very First Morning." This will make more sense once you appreciate the importance of Vietnamese traditions. Who and what happens on the first day of the New Year can set the tone for the rest of year so it is a day to be treated with respect.

TET – Dates

TET takes place from the first day of the first month of the Lunar calendar (around late January or early February) So it varies from year to year. See in my episode notes a link to a calender for the next 5 years for TET.

When you are checking on your dates, take note that TET is known to Vietnamese as NEW YEARS DAY, and the day prior being New Years Eve.

I can't stress enough the fact that TET is not just a day, it can consume up to 9 days. It becomes an attitude. Everything either happens before TET or after, but not much during. By that, no big decisions will be made during TET. It is mainly about paying respects and just about "being" with the people you love.

I am not going to go.... into too much more... detail here, other than to say, it is a beautiful time of the year especially building up to TET. Flowers abound and the whole country goes into a mode of gift giving, house cleaning and preparations for New Year.

**As I have travelled many times to Vietnam including during TET, I would like to give you this advice:**

1. Planning:- Buy your travel tickets for travel during the TET season well in advance ( 3 days before New Year and 3 days after). This is for internal travel mostly, as there is a lot of movement within the country as Vietnamese travel home in droves to visit family and friends.

2. Scheduling - Be early at the airport, bus station or train as this is the busiest travel period for Vietnamese who travel long distances to visit family and friends and carry lots of luggage.

3. Trip bookings confirmations- Make sure you bring all your travel documents confirming all your travel arrangements, tickets, and emergency contact details. Don't be sloppy with paperwork, it just adds to your time in a queue and holds everyone up. Expect queues.

4. Activity - Don't expect to do too much activity wise on the actual National Holidays as many tourist attractions will be closed or at a minimum their hours will be reduced, and they may even charge an extra TAX. Be prepared to just chill out!

5. Check with your hotel or Homestay about what services will be operating for meals and what are the closest alternative eateries open.

Now lets look at how weather will impact your choice of dates to travel.

Firstly, the country is divided into 3 main regions,

- North/ Mountain areas
- Central
- South

### *The North*

(Hanoi, Halong Bay) is monsoonal with hot and humid weather from April to September, which is when most people will travel. They do have an extremely cool dry season from October to March. Where it is puffer jacket weather and freezing cold and wet. I have had... back luck... on trips in late March at Halong Bay where it rained heavy and we all sat on the top deck of the junk with blankets provided by the staff watching the rain drop like pellets on the deck of the boat. All the while sipping ginger tea to keep warm.

October and November are the best months to visit since you avoid the domestic tourist flow and also experience a more comfortable temperature and humidity compared with other months.

The mountain area in Northwest, (Areas like Sapa, Mau Chau, Be Be Lake, etc) see little fluctuation in weather conditions. It is fairly cool all year round and a great place to escape the heat from cities. However, if you are a trekker you might want to consider the rainy season is from May to September.

March /April is cool and ideal for outdoor exploration. At the extreme side of things you can see snow or flurry in December or January in Sapa. I've seen it in February. February in Be be lake was freezing - but gorgeous all the same as we had caves and grottoes all to ourselves, and the lake was crystal clear. So it depends on the kind of experiences you are wanting to do.

### *The Central Region*

(Hue, Da Nang and Hoi An) receives dry and hot Southwest wind which makes it strenuous for any brisk walk during the day. Closer to the beach, the level of severity reduces and the dry wind is replaced by cool ocean breeze.

Because of the limited land area, central Vietnam is also most susceptible to natural disasters such as hurricanes or flooding. The paradox is, it is also where most of the beautiful beaches lie.

Jan- early March certainly are the cooler months. Beaches may be too cold to swim in unless you are a real cold water swimmer.

By April through to October the weather gets warmer as the months of the go on, with June, July, Aug being the hottest.

For people wanting to do any adventuring, ie Marble Mountain, My Son, etc you will find handling the heat and humidity a challenge.

I mention this about this region, as it is one of the most popular long stay areas, Hoi An and Hue are super popular and for many good reasons. ....but I have witnessed travellers in our groups suffer badly as the weather takes a toll on the body when doing any significant walking etc. I have also known people endure the floods, which can come unexpectedly but most probably during the monsoonal months of November/December.

Its worth doing some homework on weather as it impacts your preferred style of travel.

### *The South*

(Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Trang, Mui Ne) is typically hot all year round with two main seasons: rainy and dry. It is also the most predictable region in terms of weather. Summer months from May to August might not be the best time to hit the road since most tourists destinations are packed with tourists and downpours happen quite frequently. For milder weather, where at least you can walk around comfortably, I

would suggest February, March, April. In fact March April, across the whole of Vietnam is my favourite and most highly recommended time of the year to do almost anything.

In terms of cruising and experiencing the Mekong delta, due to the heat and humidity aspect in the middle of the year, I would suggest looking at Feb March

In the summer months (June- Aug) it can be hard going, where mosquitoes are rife, and the experience can be made difficult for children, the less fit and mature travellers.

However, if you love the heat, keeping hydrated is key, “slip slop slap” sunscreen, and make sure you wear strong insect repellent. More on that in another Episode.

I hope in this session I have been able to outline some of the key factors in considering your dates for travel as they truly can make it or break it.

Please check with the Episode notes for the links mentioned and feel free to contact me anytime. I look forward to paving the way for you to have a magical time in Vietnam as I share more trip planning tips over future episodes ...

....stay tuned for more to come in the super 6 series, Whatabout Vietnam - before you book.

Thanks for listening.

Listing for all the festivals across Vietnam;- <https://traveltriangle.com/blog/festivals-in-vietnam/>