



What About Vietnam - Series 1 - 6  
[The culture and Visa Process Mid Covid19 -2020](#)

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

In this episode I'd like to give you some final background to the country you will be visiting, from a cultural and historical point of view, and so there are no shocks or surprises, I will endeavour to explain a few things that might hit you first off.

Plus I want to cover off one of my most asked questions. Do I need a visa .....The answer is most likely....YES...But..I'd like to give you some detail about the process for that here as well.

In saying that ..I am recording this episode in the midst of Covid 19, mid May 2020, so this is what is current as of this date. I may in the future record an update once we are out of the other side of travel bans and it is clearer what the Visa situation will be, moving forward.

However, let me cover off what we know to be true about Vietnam from a factual point of view.

Vietnam, ....officially the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, it is the easternmost country on the Southeast Asian Indochinese Peninsula. It has an estimated 96.5 million inhabitants as of 2019.

It shares its land borders with China to the north, and Laos and Cambodia to the west. It shares its maritime borders with Thailand through the Gulf of Thailand, and the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia through the South China Sea.

Its capital city is Hanoi, while its most populated city is Ho Chi Minh City.

In the whole country there are 45 million registered motor bikes .....with 7.43 million in HCMC alone.

With a population of 8.9 million people, that makes 1+ bikes per person. I mention this because your entry port is going to be either one of 3 major cities - HCMC, Hanoi, or Danang.

So that initial introduction to Vietnam is going to be around the sounds, the heat and the volume of motorbikes you will encounter as soon as you leave the airport. For some it can be overwhelming and that's why I cover it off here.

I can remember my sister's first trip.

Once you know what to expect and you have the right mindset, it's something you can manage.

Vietnam is a beautiful country with so much to see. I am amazed that as many times as I go there, there is always something new to discover.

Often called the Dragons spine..... A long skinny country with a coastline that stretches over 3,200km.

It's a gifted country, with some of the most beautiful beaches, caves, grottoes, waterfalls and scenery, it's not surprising it has won so many Travel awards over the past few years.

Its definitely woken up the world in recent times with how well it took command of the Covid 19 crisis.

With more than 4000 years of history, the soulful culture can be seen in its pagodas, shop houses, art, folk songs, amazing performances, of a world standard, .....but there is so much more in the smiles of the Vietnamese people themselves. Who I guarantee you will fall in love with.

Mostly Buddhist, the Vietnamese are conservative by world standards. They are a country that has been hardened by wars, famines, floods and tyranny. However as you will soon realise they are a hopeful country. It is a country that is now coming into its own. So don't be fooled, the Vietnamese are astute in business and have an eagerness to acquire wealth and status.

But take yourself out into the country regions and you will be overwhelmed by the poverty, the living standards and the lack of infrastructure. It's as if you have stepped back in time. In recognising the poor and humble beginnings of many of its people will give you a deeper understanding and appreciation of how far the Vietnamese have come.

For the tourist, you have been flocking to its shores now in the millions. Tourism to date prior to Covid 19 was 6% of the GDP. The why is easy...as YOU will soon find out once you go there...

As a country recognized as "the kitchen of the world". It's a diverse culture and lifestyle waiting for you to explore.

So.... as we make sure you get on board your flight safely and enjoy your stay without any hassles, lets firstly get that Visa process sorted:-

If your country is NOT Visa Exempt, there are 3 options available to you. Btw...You can find out if your country is Visa exempt by checking your country listing on the immigration website. The link is in my notes.

As we are now In Covid 19, and the world is coming to grips with a new generation of travel, the Visa process may change and I will update as and when that information is available.

So first lets start with the easiest version:

EVISA = Single entry - for an Under 30 day stay

The quickest, simplest and cheapest way to apply for a Visa to Vietnam. I call it the no mess charlie option.

It does not necessitate you having to send your passport to the Vietnam consulate or queue upon arrival in Vietnam for a Visa stamp in your passport. Nominally called VOA - Visa On Arrival.

However, The Evisa has its limitations as it is strictly for single entry only and up to 30 days maximum stay. Its as simple as making your application on the website - the address is noted in the Episode notes - Follow the website instructions and its as easy as that.

Well almost.....I do want to share a couple of "bugs" in the website that can be good to know about so it doesn't muck you about.

1. When it asks for a passport photo to be uploaded. I have found the best process is to take a photo of a Passport photo you have as a spare. NOT the one in your current passport. It doesn't like that one. It doesn't matter if it is not the same as your current passport photo. Once you have photographed it. Crop it to Passport size roughly. Save and upload.

2. When asked to upload a photo of your passport. Once again. Photograph your current passport and then crop to neat size, save and upload.

3. Double triple check .... You have spelt your name correctly, in the order shown and all details.

**MOST Important.**

Once you are approved, you will need to go back to the website and using your reference number print out the "Visa letter". You will not necessarily get an email advising you the application is approved. It is up to you to go back into the website, using your reference number and check if it approved. ....allow up to 3 working days to process.

This letter serves as your Visa (there will be no stamp in your passport) and you will have to present it at check in, and at immigration with your passport when you arrive in Vietnam.

Do NOT lose this letter. Keep it with your passport at all times.

NOTE: This letter is NOT the same as the Introduction letter they talk about when or if they are references the VOA...Visa on arrival.

So just remember processing time of about 3 business days

COST: As at 2019 \$25 USD

Check my link in the episode notes.

See link below for the Visa application: - ONLY USE THIS

LINK <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/>

The second Option - Option 2 – is for Multiple entry – Visa on Arrival (VOA)

VOA as it is commonly referred to. Watch out for many websites trying to sell this service to you for exorbitant prices. Many are hoax sites, some offer VIP services mostly for those people who want to skip the queues and get special treatment..or they just plane forgot or left it too late to get the Evisa.

Simply put, if you follow the instructions in the link on the website you will receive a letter by email with your name on it, which is your "letter of Introduction", along with a form with your name on it.

There is an initial fee for this first step. By taking this letter together with your 2 passport photos and completed Visa Application form you will be able to ;-

- Check in to your flight. If you do not have your letter of introduction they won't let you board. Please take care to bring the letter and the pages with your name on it to confirm you have been accepted for this kind of Visa. The forms with your name on it are often separate to the main Introduction letter
- Once you arrive at your first point of entry to Vietnam, which from Australia will most likely be Hanoi, or HCMC you will go to the "VOA "Counter located just before you go through Immigration. By handing them your letter + form + photos +

passport and fee, they will take it and stamp your Multiple Entry Visa into your passport.

- Try and get to this VOA counter asap, as you may have to wait a while for them to call you, and if you have a connecting flight, that can make it a bit stressful. It can take up to 30 minutes if the queue is long.

Once gaining the Visa stamp, you can progress through immigration and every time you go in and out of the country you will be covered; as per the Visa, you have applied for. You will see it says Multiple entry.

See the link in the Episode notes.

The fee is \$25USD

( This may have changed as at 2019) so it helps if you have the correct currency to pay when you arrive as there are NO ATMs inside the arrival hall before you go through Immigration. However, I think they do now accept other currencies.

NOTE- You can use VOA for single entry as well, but why would you bother with all that when Evisa now is much simpler.

[https://www.vietnamimmigration.com.au/faq/how-it-works?qclid=EAlalQobChMlil\\_gu\\_fF2wIVzhwrCh3ESgrBEAAYAiAAEgKuCPD\\_BwE](https://www.vietnamimmigration.com.au/faq/how-it-works?qclid=EAlalQobChMlil_gu_fF2wIVzhwrCh3ESgrBEAAYAiAAEgKuCPD_BwE)

The last option and for some the most preferred

Visa – Applications can be made direct to Consulate (these include single and multiple entries)

For direct applications, you can download the appropriate forms from the Consulate website. By completing the form along with getting 1 Passport Photos you can hand them in along with your passport over the counter or mail them to Consulate's office, in your country.

In Australia where I am speaking from it is in Edgecliff, Sydney. Allow minimum 2-3 days for processing plus postage. There are options for quicker turnaround if urgent, but you will pay an extra fee for that service. See the Consulate website below for all the details.

For a general single entry - Cost \$90

For a Multiple Entry Visa - \$140

<http://www.vietnamconsulate.org.au/>

A few Words of caution

There are a lot of Visa Service organizations out there. Some are not regulated.

Some charge more for the same service you can do yourself and some are illegal.

Please be careful when making your selection as some VIP ones charge more but do not provide a quick and efficient service, if you have forgotten to get a Visa and you are about to check-in and realize this.... One of the legitimate VIP services may be your only option. But expect to pay through the nose.

So there you have the Visa process....

I hope you have gained a little bit more insight into some of things to consider when planning your trip to Vietnam, in this ..... Our first series. Keep a look out for updates in coming months.

....stay tuned for more to come in the NEW series ...Whatabout Vietnam..... A Travellers Guide to Experiences ..... - I can't wait as you are going to meet so many interesting people who will tell you their tales of adventures in this amazing country.

Thanks for listening.