



What About Vietnam – S1-E10 – No Visa or Evisa – Getting it right in 2025

Kerry Newsome:

Xin chào and welcome to the What About Vietnam podcast. OK, picture this, if you will. You're at the airport, passport in hand, bags checked. Vietnam, here you come. Then the airline staff looks up at you with that face, you know, the one. And they say, oh, look, sorry, madam, we can't let you board. Your visa doesn't match your flight. Your heart sinks. Holiday over before it's even begun. You look around. Q is a mile long. What do you do? Look, I really, truly don't want that to happen to you. That's why today we're going to talk about how to nail your Vietnam visa, if you even need one. No stuff ups, no dramas. Hello, everyone. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Kerry Newsome and I invite you back to the What About Vietnam podcast. I've been helping travellers like yourselves navigate Vietnam for years. And believe me, the e-visa process is one of the simplest, but also one of the easiest, believe it or not, to get wrong. One wrong date, one missing detail, and suddenly you're scrambling. But the good news is, if you know what to look out for, you can avoid the stress altogether.

If you've been planning a trip, especially like this year 2025, you've probably heard the rules have changed again. E-visas are now open to all nationalities and exemptions have been extended for some countries. But the catch is this, a small mistake on your application or assuming your passport makes you exempt could mean you never even get off the ground. Today I want to help you cut through the noise and explain in plain English who needs what, how long you can stay and what you must do to avoid being denied access to your flight and boarding and arriving in Vietnam.

The good news is Vietnam has one of the most inclusive e-visa systems in the world. Open to all nationalities, you can apply online, choose between single entry or multiple entry and stay up to 90 days. But don't assume it's foolproof. That's really the basis of this show. If your name, date of birth or passport number on your application doesn't match your

passport, the airline staff will stop you at check-in. And believe me, they won't let you board. We need together to stop that, to not let that happen.

So in today's episode, I'm going to break it down. What an e-visa really is, when to apply, common pitfalls and mistakes, what documents you'll need ready and how to track and fix things if they go wrong. Think of this as your personal travel checklist straight from someone who's been there many times with hundreds of travelers just like you. And oh, by the way, if you've got any of your own e-visa stories, maybe a funny stuff up or a hack or something that saved the day, please share it with me. I love bringing real stories into the show and I would gladly share it with the audience if you'd like to share it with me. All right, let's get started. First up, what exactly is an e-visa? Who needs it? And why is this PDF really that can make or break your whole Vietnam adventure so important? Let's go.

Firstly, let's get to the crunch and try and decipher just who needs a visa in the first place.

As 2025 has announced new visa free country exemptions. So you need to know about those because, you know, whilst I'm going to be focusing a lot on the e-visa process in this show, you may not even need one. So, let's be clear that there is, you know, now there's 29 countries in total that are exempt. And that means that you can travel to Vietnam for 45 days without any visa, without any fee and without any application. So, I'm going to put a link in the show notes and this is the government link. It's not going to send you to agencies or off to places where, you know, you're going to feel unsure or not quite confident that it's credible. This is the visa page that explains it all and it is straight from immigration in Vietnam. So, establish first whether you fit into the category of a visa-free exemption country. And on that basis, you are allowed to travel to the country for 45 days. Like, how good is that? And in addition, you can jump out of the country to go and visit Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, anywhere you like and then hop back in and As you hop back in, as long as you have proof by your ticket that you are only going to stay another 45 days maximum, it all restarts.

So I really stress for everyone before jumping into any visa application that you check whether or not you're visa free. This new announcement came out, I think, around about March 25. But it's a big deal because it does give you that 45 days and a reset when you come back in. Now, just one little caveat with it, be mindful if immigration see that you're doing this a lot, like as in back to back entries, they're probably going to ask some questions. So, I'm just putting that out there that You know, visa-free country exemption access to the country is definitely available and you should use it. But for those who are using it for other reasons and extensions to stay, You know, back to back may cause you some issues at some point. You've heard of people talk about doing visa runs. This might fall into that. And that may be just getting you out of the country, across into Thailand or across into Laos to be able to come back in and reset depending on your situation. But the basis of this podcast and what I want to do today is to take some of the issue out of the e-visa application and to ensure that people know what they're getting and what they're doing, what importance there is on each factor of the application, what the immigration officials are going to be looking for and how easy it is to get kind of denied or no answer or you can't kind of find out what is going on because the little tragedy with the eVisa application is getting feedback or getting, you know, someone to answer a question or whatever. I mean, it was built so that you didn't have to go to embassies and you didn't have to go to your consulate or whatever

to do this, to get the eVisa. And it is a really simple, fantastic system. And I encourage you, if you fall into every other nationality, that isn't visa free and I fall into one of those, believe it, Australia is one of those, you definitely, the only way to get to Vietnam is to get an e-visa. It is the way to go. So I firstly want to cover off the e-visa has two options. One, a 30 day option, which is 25 US dollars, and that is single entry. I'm going to come back to that in a minute. The other is a 90 day option and it's 50 dollars, but it is multiple entry. Now, if you are planning on and you want to have a little bit of you know, fluidity around, you know, your decisions and what you want to do. And you might want to go to Angkor Wat or you might want to go to Thailand and then come back in. You know, you definitely have to get that multiple entry, even if it's not up to the total of 90 days. And we're going to talk about what preparation you need and things you need to avoid as far as pitfalls in the actual e-visa in a minute. But I just wanted to stress that the e-visa is for all other nationalities that do not fall into the category of a country that is exempt. Now, what is an e-visa? It's a digital visa linked to your passport. Get that kind of fixated in your head. It kind of makes sense because it's why they're so pedantic about the information matching up.

So when you are side by side with your computer next to your passport, next to your ticket, Making sure that all of those things match up kind of makes sense and makes the digital version of it make sense.

So let's get to it. Prep for the application for an e-visa. We've established you need one. So firstly, your passport has to have two free pages. I mean, if you've done heaps of travel, I'm so envious. But if you have and you don't have two free pages, then you need to get a new passport. Secondly, you need at least six months eligibility in the life of the passport. So let's tick those two boxes and say we've got those. Next, you're going to need to arrange two images on your phone or you're going to start on your phone and then you're going to kind of send them to your computer to upload them. But you need to get a passport photo in a PNG. Now, some people, including, you know, myself in the early days, tried to just take a photo of the photo in my passport of me, just the face. And cropped it, created it as a PNG. But for some reason when I tried to upload it, it just didn't like it. It was like there was a kind of a bug in the system. I've since asked some people in authority about it. They've kind of said that there might be a film or something over the top of the photo in the passport so that when you actually take the photo it picks that up and it doesn't like it. So the best way around that is to get another passport photo. You might have some spares left over like I have from years ago. And I literally just take a photo of that photo and I crop it to the size created as a PNG, not a PDF. It will not accept PDFs as a PNG or a JPEG. but a small size and I've never had any issues. It does not have to be the exact photo to match the one in the passport. They're not unrealistic about that. I understand that the life of a passport might be five, ten years. So you cannot expect that. But they do expect it to conform to the formalities that are required to do a passport photo. So that's your number one photo.

The next one that they are happy to receive a photo of the passport as it is, is literally the main page of your passport. So take a photo, downsize it by cropping it to the right size, create it as a PNG. And literally you are then good to go alongside your ticket and also your first location that you're going to arrive into because it's going to ask for an address of where you're going to stay. And I mean, let's face it, you're probably going to stay in multiple locations. But just in case they need to contact you for any reasons, never known it

to happen, but they want you to put down your first address. I commonly suggest to people that they put their first hotel or Airbnb or location of where the group is or whatever, but it needs to have an address and all the details that they ask for. I think even a phone number. I'm not quite sure. I can't remember. But so with that armour, you are ready, set, go to start your e-visa process. probably not a good idea to have a glass of wine or to do it late at night or when you're tired or when the kids are driving you crazy or whatever because you do need to concentrate. You do need to make sure everything syncs up. And that links back to what I said about the e-visa. It's a digital representation of your passport. So whatever names in your passport needs to go on that application, whatever dates are in your passport that it asks for, you need to match that up. So be careful of typos. Be careful of when you type something in, it kind of jumps or bumps. It's it does have a few bugs. So be aware birth date has to be correct. Country, sorry, location of entry and location of departure needs to be exact. And you have to arrive into that city and you have to depart. Otherwise, once again, it's going to say no go for you. You cannot exit or you cannot arrive. The other thing to be important about is your name, address details, your date of arrival. Your date is the date you are flying there. The date you are departing is the date you are leaving the country and catching that flight back. You need to make sure, as I said, it matches your ticket. So in the case that you have got a 30 day visa, you need to depart before the 30 days. You need to make sure that your departure matches your ticket as it is displayed to the check-in counter staff. So everything kind of just goes tick, tick, tick, tick, and everything is fine. And really, once you've done that, you're good to go.

Now, in the event that things don't go, there is workarounds. They're not cheap, they're expensive, and they take your ability to contact the right agency with the right information and the right ability, credibly, to be able to deal with immigration to get you some sort of VIP or a letter to enter and then apply as a VIP on the spot and things like that. You know, I kind of talked through on the show a couple of examples of that. And, you know, it's a tragedy when, you know, people are so excited and then they get to the airport and this kind of little mishap happens. And it's all just about a name or a date or a place or a hotel or just something really, really silly. It can even be that they thought that they were visa exempt and they're not. So, you know, I really stress that you really pay attention and really look at some of the details around applying because it's worth it. it's really worth it. It avoids having to do that, you know, change of plans, that cost of change, and finding someone credible to do that on the spot. Because, you know, you're upset, you're kind of put in a position where You're not sure what's going to happen and it can impact your whole first impression, I guess, of Vietnam. So we definitely don't want that to happen. And I'm hoping that by just following these steps and this process, that I'm going to eliminate this for you, that we can get you to Vietnam with an e-visa application Simply, easily and well done.

Another thing is to not leave putting in your information and applying too late. Some people think that they're going to get this as a kind of an immediate turnaround, like a 24 or 48 turnaround. The average is about three to five days. So, if you can, give yourself the luxury of time and even give yourself the luxury that if there is any issue or they come back to you with a question that they're not happy with your answer, then you've got time to fix it. So I also ask all my clients to try and get it done, you know, a couple of weeks beforehand, even though it's only three to five days. It just means you've got it done, print it off. It's with your travel documents or you've saved it on your phone and you can kind of

tick that box. But when you do get the PDF back after you've checked on the application process, You really do need to go line by line matching ticket, passport, and the visa. They all need to line up sweetly. So, I think we've covered off name, no typos, the photos, you know, date of entry, date of exit, address, city location of entry, city location of exit.

One of the other things they ask about is if you've been to Vietnam before, you know, and sometimes people say, oh, gosh, I can't remember, you know, when I went. Very quick, easy way for you to find out when you went is actually to go to your passport. and you'll go into the book itself and it'll show you where they have put, sometimes it's been in a written format, of your last dates. So if you've done a couple of trips before you'll be able to go and see the exact dates and once again they're going to love that because it matches up exactly with their system and you've got a proof in your passport to say, you know, you came six months or two years ago or three years ago and you can put that in and know that it is exactly matching what's in your passport. I think these are the main things that people tend to get trapped with. They sound small and They are, but they are the things that are going to make that girl's face at the check-in counter look at you and go, oh no, we can't let you board because there's this error.

So I'm hoping that just by giving you these tips and hints that we're going to make sure no stuff ups for you. I have to tell you, I have a very funny personal story to share on this. As in my husband and I traveled a couple of years ago and I left the job of him doing his e-visa application to him. And he said, yeah, yeah, yeah, got it covered. Yeah, you know, I've been hanging around you long enough to know what to do, blah, blah, blah, blah. Anyway, didn't think a word about it, got on the plane, everything was fine. However, what he had done was put the incorrect date that we were departing. So he was departing two weeks earlier. earlier than me when he should have been departing with me. So what did we need to do with that? **So one of the traps with this pitfall category of the e-visa is you cannot reapply while you're in country.** You actually have to leave the country and apply externally. So, he had to fly to Singapore, actually spend the night in Singapore. So, he had to go through immigration and then I had to arrange for a VIP option which is expensive and that would allow him to just turn around the next day. Now he could have applied for another e-visa but working on the basis that that could have been three to five days in processing it would have kind of mucked up our plans totally. So we had to go through a different option with a company that has the means to be able to get this through immigration. And this allowed him to come back in the next day and get through immigration okay. And then we carried on. So, you can see there's workarounds, but they're not easy and they're not cheap.

Another client of mine was trying to board in San Francisco. The husband and wife team that were traveling, the wife did not put the middle name in on her e-visa. They knocked them back to get on board. So we did a similar thing. However, we got an introductory letter through immigration where they would let entry into immigration into Ho Chi Minh City on the basis that when they got there, they would apply again through a VIP channel. It's not something that you should consider as a roadblock to come to Vietnam. You know, every time I go, I think, yeah, I just need to get that e-visa knocked over and make sure that that's totally correct in my planning. It's one of the things I do stress to everybody. Just get it done. Allow yourself plenty of time and all is good. So there you have it. Vietnam's visa rules in

2025. It might sound a bit complicated at first, but once you know which category you fall in, it's really about being thorough, double checking your documents and planning ahead.

The last thing any of us want is to see a dream trip delayed or worse because of a small detail that could have been caught earlier. I like to think of these as not as red tape, but as the gateway to an amazing experience. Once you've cleared that little hurdle, the whole of Vietnam is yours to explore from its bustling cities to its quiet villages, its world class food and its warm and welcoming people. And trust me, it's worth every bit of effort to get here.

If all of this still feels a little overwhelming, don't worry. That's exactly why I created What About Vietnam travel services to take the guesswork out of planning. My team and I can help with every aspect of your trip from a visa guidance and fast track airport services to curated itineraries that bring Vietnam to life. in the way that suits you best and according to your budget. If you like that extra peace of mind, just reach out. I'd love to help. The fast track service has just come into vogue in in such an easy format now. So if that's something that you'd be interested in, likewise, please get in touch as I can arrange that and at a fair and reasonable price. Thank you for joining me today. I hope this episode leaves you better prepared and more excited than ever to start your journey. And when you finally touch down in Vietnam, I promise you'll know it was worth it. Until next time, I'm Kerry and this is the What About Vietnam podcast. Safe travels, everyone.