



What About Vietnam - S3-21 – Learn the best Vietnamese words to use when shopping for bargains

Kerry Newsome: 00:26

Xin Chào and welcome to [“What About Vietnam!”](#). I'm delighted to have you back for the last in our little mini-series on learning a few words and phrases in Vietnamese with Ms. Hà. This is the last in the series. Just over the last few weeks, we've been going through some settings in which you may find yourself and certainly to have the advantage of being able to use some key words, in those circumstances, it's going to make your experience so much richer.

01:13

In the first episode, we covered some greetings, words like please, and thank you, and hello, of course. Those beautiful words that just say that I've taken a little bit of interest about your country. And I understand that these words are words of welcome. And I'm glad to be here.

01:35

In the second episode, we look at dietary requirements. And I thought that was important, I hope you get something out of that. Because when you're in a restaurant and you do have certain dietary requirements, sometimes I do see people struggling, trying to get that request across to the waiter. So, words on how to summon the waiter to your table. If you're gluten-free, some of those words, it's not that easy to point to a picture that says 'gluten-free', 'or no spicy'. So, hopefully the words in episode two of this miniseries will help you there.

02:14

And today's episode is about shopping. And it's one of the best things that you can do in Vietnam, the shopping is wonderful. It's wide and varied. So, you're going to some shops. There are malls, there's everything, a western country would have, certainly in the major cities. And there are boutiques also that have fixed prices. But when you go to some of the markets and things like that, you are going to be bartering. So, making sure that you've got some words so that you can feel a little bit confident in that bartering space.

02:51

Now I have to admit, I'm not the best at bartering. But I never want to walk out, feeling like I've been ripped off. So, I try and play the game a little bit and Hà in this episode explains a little bit about that game. And the words to make that a fun experience. You don't want to get to hit up about 5000 Dong, when in your own currency that's only a few cents. So, just some key words to make that shopping experience fun and you walk out with what you want at the right price. Please welcome Hà back to the program. I'm sure she's going to share with you some really great insights, especially one of the last ones will really come in handy. Let's welcome Hà back to the program.

03:52

One last scenario, which I know, will come up for anyone who's traveling in Vietnam. I hope it does, anyway, is their experience in shopping and in a market. The market is a wonderful place to get to understand Vietnamese culture and all the rest of it. Sometimes I will look at something and I pick it up

and I try and figure out how much it costs. But if I don't know the product, or I don't know the store owner or I don't know it well. I want to know how to say, 'how much'.

Hà: 04:30

Bao, B, A, O. Bao nhiêu tiền?

Kerry Newsome: 04:39

Bao nhiêu tiền?

Hà: 04:41

Perfect.

Kerry Newsome: 04:42

Bao nhiêu tiền?

Hà: 04:44

Wow.

Kerry Newsome: 04:45

T or tiền? Bao nhiêu tiền?

Hà: 04:48

T.

Kerry Newsome: 04:48

T. Bao nhiêu tiền?

Hà: 04:50

Bao nhiêu tiền? How'd you get it right-

Kerry Newsome: 04:52

Okay, am I going up or down with tone?

Hà: 04:57

So tiền is a down tone, so bao nhiêu tiền?

Kerry Newsome: 05:01

Bao nhiêu tiền?

Hà: 05:03

Yeah, perfect. Yes.

Kerry Newsome: 05:05

How much? Okay. And then another funny scenario. I actually did this with a girlfriend of mine, who's quite amazing, we sometimes travel together and when something is too expensive, she will go 'chúa ơi'. Yeah. And that is like, 'Oh my God'. Is that right?

Hà: 05:30

Yes. Yes. That's correct.

Kerry Newsome: 05:33

Yeah. Okay. When she says, 'chúa ơi', I always quickly turn around, because she doesn't normally say that but she's obviously shocked at the price they have given her or whatever. But if you want to say it is too expensive. What would you say?

Hà: 05:53

You say 'đắt quá'.

Kerry Newsome: 05:58

'Đắt quá'?

Hà: 05:59
Yes, đắt quá.

Kerry Newsome: 06:00
Đắt quá.

Hà: 06:02
Chúa ơi! Đắt quá!

Kerry Newsome: 06:06
So, you can put them together?

"Oh, my God. Too expensive!"

Yeah, that makes sense.

06:19

Just another one, because sometimes in the markets and you're dealing with people, I'm not very good at bartering, like the haggling the price. I just want to know what the bottom price is. So, I just say, "What is the best price?" They seem to understand what that means. But I don't say it in Vietnamese.

Hà: 06:43
"What is the best price?" You can say...

Kerry Newsome: 06:47
Is that a good thing to say? To get the bottom price.

Hà: 06:51
Yes, it is a good thing to say. But then you come up with kind of strategy. I'm just like... So, we don't directly say it, basically like, literally say,

"What is the best price?"

We try to use such things to make them say the best price. So, it's kind of very hard, and not for me to sum up with a sentence, say,

"What is the best price?"

Of course, I can give you the literally, how you say that.

Kerry Newsome: 07:26
But you're saying, in this scenario, you wouldn't use it.

Hà: 07:30
I wouldn't use it. I would just somehow do some trick to make them say the best price they got for me.

Kerry Newsome: 07:38
Is it Chúa ơi!?

Hà: 07:41
No, if you say "Chúa ơi!", they will say Chúa ơi! back to you and say,

"No, this is not expensive at all."

Yeah, but I can give you the literal sentence, what to say,

"What is the best price?"

'Giá', which means price. 'Tốt, nhất', N, H, A, T. 'Của bao là'.

Kerry Newsome: 08:20

Is there a simple way to ask or get to the best price?

Hà: 08:25

No, no, because the best price is- it's literally saying, 'Giá tốt nhất', or you just keep saying, 'bao nhiêu, bao nhiêu'. And then you say,

"I want to buy it" and "bao nhiêu".

So, you just say-

Kerry Newsome: 08:41

What does 'bao nhiêu' mean?

Hà: 08:42

'Bao nhiêu' means 'How much', as in, 'Bao nhiêu tiền'. Yeah, you keep asking. For example, they say a 200,000 VND. And then you think, it's too expensive. You say,

"Không! bao nhiêu?"

And then you keep asking them. Không means no.

"No! how much? How much it actually is?"

And then you just keep asking, very politely, very calm. Because I think it's just the game, you don't get excited, and you don't get-

Kerry Newsome: 09:16

No, I agree.

Hà: 09:17

And then you just calmly say that. And then finally you get what you want. And she gets what she wants. So, win-win situation.

Kerry Newsome: 09:26

Sometimes I just kind of see some people and I wanted to stress this for everyone listening. Sometimes I see people getting upset or angry over like 5000 Dong, which is a very small amount to be getting upset or angry or causing disruption. And I want people to remind themselves of what 5000 means in their currency, because with the Australian currency, it's kind of under \$1 and it's not 60 cents, it's like nothing.

Hà: 10:05

It's like nothing. Yes, true. It happens with me too as a Vietnamese when I do bargain, it's not only to Westerners or tourists or foreigners. It's happened to me too, because sometimes you get in too much into the game, you forget how it [inaudible10:19], so it was like,

"Let my evil win." I

just want to win. [laughter]

Kerry Newsome: 10:27

Yeah, and I didn't understand, I didn't actually understand that it is a bit of a game, isn't it? Like, I know, my Vietnamese friend. She says,

"We're just having fun."

Like, "She understands I want to buy it. I will buy it. But she needs to give me good price. And don't worry, we're not upset with one another."

Yeah, because sometimes it goes on and on.

Hà: 10:50

And on and on. Yeah.

Kerry Newsome: 10:52

I just want to get it and go, etc. Okay, so when I decide, I don't want to buy it, because I just changed my mind. And I want to say,

"No, thank you."

Hà: 11:08

You say, "Không, cảm ơn."

Kerry Newsome: 11:15

So, you just put those two together. And that's okay.

Hà: 11:18

"No, thank you". Yes. Say, "Không, cảm ơn."

Kerry Newsome: 11:19

Yeah, okay, good.

11:27

You just want to go in and you just want to do looking. So, I want to be able to say,

"I am just looking, just looking."

Because I want them to understand I don't want to get in a game with them, I pick something up and they automatically think I want to buy it. I'm just looking at it.

How do I say, "Just looking!"

Hà: 11:47

"Just looking!" Just is 'chỉ'. Looking is 'xem'. X, E, M. Chỉ xem.

Kerry Newsome: 12:07

Chỉ xem. So, if I just go in and I'm looking at something, but I'm not really sure I'm going to buy anything, I just say, "Chỉ xem."

Hà: 12:20

Or you can say, "I'm just looking."

You can say, 'tôi', which is T, O, I, tôi, it means 'me'. You can use it in every sentence.

You just put the word in. "Tôi chỉ xem."

Kerry Newsome: 12:35

Good. That's handy. Because I love shopping in Vietnam, but I look around a lot. Okay, that is fantastic. I think we covered good conversation; do you think? And good markets. Good restaurants. Basic. Are there any other words you think would be good for us to know?

Hà: 12:48

"Where is the toilet?"

Because actually, that is very useful because when you are in the market-

Kerry Newsome: 13:11

Yes, it's very good one.

Hà: 13:13

So, you can say, "Toilet ở đâu?"

Kerry Newsome: 13:22

"Toilet ở đâu?" Is that down tone?

Hà: 13:28

Yes, đâu is a neutral tone. And ở is a little bit-

Kerry Newsome: 13:35

"Toilet ở đâu?" That's a good one.

Hà: 13:42

Yeah, I think that's a very common- I don't I think, as a tourist, I would like to ask where's the toilet when I'm in the market? Yeah.

Kerry Newsome: 13:51

Yeah. Do think maybe it's good to have one about taxi or...?

Hà: 13:57

Taxi. Yeah, you can try it, or taxi. How can you say, you can say...?

Kerry Newsome: 14:11

Where do I go to get taxi?

Hà: 14:14

You can say, "Taxi ở đâu?" Which is ở đâu, it's the same with the last sentence that I just said. "Where's the toilet?" Ở đâu were. Yes. "Taxi ở đâu?"

Kerry Newsome: 14:27

"Taxi ở đâu?" So that's: "Where is taxi?"

Okay, Hà, that's terrific. That's really, really great. I feel like even I might improve on my next visit. That is wonderful.

Hà: 14:38

I hope, yeah.

Kerry Newsome: 14:45

Anything else you want to add? Or do you think we've got enough for-

Hà: 14:49

I think that's pretty much- every basic thing that you need. But I think, I just want to give you a tip, to all the tourists that want to visit Vietnam, and you want to be a little bit polite. You can say, 'Em ơi'. If you want to call someone, you can call them, 'Em ơi'. Em is for the big brother, who's older than you. Like for example, if you see a taxi driver, you can call them 'em ơi', which is also common for Mister. 'Em ơi.'

Kerry Newsome: 15:33

'Em ơi.'

Hà: 15:35

It's very polite and I think a lot of people will like it. Yeah.

Kerry Newsome: 15:38

Okay, that's good.

Hà: 15:40

Okay, thank you.

Pronunciation Notes

English	Vietnamese	Phonetic
No	Không	Khung
How much?	Bao nhiêu tiền?	Bao new ti-en
How much? (2)	Bao nhiêu?	Bao new
Oh my God!	Chúa ơi!	Choy oy
Too expensive!	Đắt quá	Dat koo-aa
Price	Giá	Ya
What is the best price?	Giá tốt, nhất của bao là?	Ya tot ni-et coo-aa bao la
No, thank you.	Không, cảm ơn.	Khung, cam urn
Just looking!	Chỉ xem	Chi sem
Just	Chỉ	Chi
Looking	Xem	Sem
I	Tôi	To-e
I am just looking.	Tôi chỉ xem	To-e chi sem
Where's the toilet?	Toilet ở đâu?	Toilet uh dao
Where's the taxi?	Taxi ở đâu?	Taxi uh dao
Where	Ở đâu	Uh dao
Hi! (To call someone politely)	Em ơi!	Em oy