



What About Vietnam - S4 - E17 – The Best Vietnam traveller insights from 2022

Kerry Newsome: [00:00:35]

Xin Chau and welcome to What about Vietnam for 2023. Chuc Mung Nam Moi, I hope you're having a wonderful celebration for the Lunar New Year for 23, the Year of the Cat in Vietnam, which is a little bit different to the Year of the Rabbit, which is more traditional for Chinese, but for Vietnam, it's definitely the Year of the Cat. We've got a really big year ahead. I want to say welcome to all my new listeners. I hope you're going to enjoy the show this year. We've got some really great guests on, and I'm hoping you're going to learn lots of things and I hope it's going to help you with your planning and trip planning for your next holiday.

I want to give a big shout out and thank you to everybody that got in touch with me over Christmas, sent me messages and emails and who's supported the program and given me just great feedback. Really appreciative. Thank you and I hope to really support you in the future as well, and I hope you'll stick with the show. I'm delighted to be back with the 2023 new series. And I just wanted to, I guess, take this opportunity to share with you a little bit about some of the stories that we covered in 2022 and especially those that I know from feedback that has resonated with you that you have used to build your trips and plan your trips and and just help you give. I know I don't know some some more thought or consideration as you may not have known about those areas or those experiences over the break.

Kerry Newsome: [00:02:35]

THE YEAR AHEAD

I hope everyone had a good time and got a chance to be with family and friends and just chill out a little bit. For me, it was a chance to kind of step back and just have a bit of a breather. And I was really, really thrilled to receive lots of emails and messages and stuff through social media, just giving me some more feedback about the show, the ones people liked, the ones people used and the

information they used, and even warmer than anything else was just the encouragement that it gave me to keep going.

I guess that leads me into some exciting news where I, I really want to engage more with you this year. I want to open up opportunities for us to interact. And I'm going to be talking to you a little bit about that later. And I really do want to hear what's important to you, what stories, what subjects, what experiences, what information is of the most importance to you when you're thinking about your trip and how can I help deliver that trip to you? So I just wanted to thank everyone again for those emails and for the feedback and again, a thank you for your support. The other thing that happened was that I got to release my book in December 2022 Book Pack and Stay A Travel Guide to Vietnam.

Kerry Newsome: [00:04:23]

I can't say enough just how wonderful it's been to get the reviews that I've got, the personal emails to me thanking me for the book, for writing it, for including the information that I had put into the book. So once again, just a big thank you to everybody who has purchased the [book](#). It is available on Amazon for \$4.99.

[00:04:58] Most people for their first time listening to the show or finding the show are doing so through a podcast channel. And that can be a Spotify, that can be a iTunes. And there's many other channels. I know that you listen from around the world. In fact, the show is now going to 70 countries and we've got I think last count was 34,000 listeners. So the additional information I want to share with you is that whilst there are show notes for the show in your channel and in each episode and it has links, etc., you can also go to the whataboutVietnam.com website? Now I bring this up because some of the information that you shared with me was about; Being able to capture some of the information. I had a fabulous story from one lady who lives in New Zealand, and she had been inspired by the podcast to plan a trip to Vietnam. Originally, she'd planned the trip for about ten days, but had since gone on to listen to more and wanted to extend her trip. So she took on an additional job and that was like a Uber deliveries or food deliveries job. And she said she was cycling around and doing the deliveries, but had to stop every now and then to stop the podcast that she was listening to while riding and then write down some notes as she didn't want to forget them. I truly loved that feedback. So, in response to that, this is kind of where I'm going.

Where to go for more in-depth information

You can go to the website and you can listen to every single episode there for free. So if you're not on a channel or you don't recognize the podcast channel on your phone, then you can literally go to

the website and listen to that for free. In addition to that, on the website is a transcript. (This is an example transcript) So while the transcript is long, so if I'm doing a show for 20 minutes or 30 minutes or 40 minutes, and while there's a few kind of nuances in it not being exactly perfect English, all of the information is there and you can print it off. Some feedback I also had was that people were downloading the print PDF version and then just getting their highlighter pen out and highlighting the key areas of interest. So I wanted to share with you about that on the website. Now, the other thing you can go to on the website is my blogs. And what I'm trying to do and I'm going to get a little bit more vigilant in this is putting together a small blog centered around one or two of the podcasts that I've just recorded so that if you want a kind of a brief or summarized version and, you know, with some of my takeaways and some of my interpretations, then likewise you can access that on the website through the blog.

Kerry Newsome: [00:08:40] There's also the advantage that you can search on the blog, so you'll see that there's various various subject matters that are listed. There's also a search that you can go by areas so you can search for podcasts that are about the northern regions in the central regions and then the southern regions. Or you can just type say you wanted to put visas or visas. So what will come up will be the podcast that have that included and also blogs describing what you need to do to actually apply for a visa. So that's just kind of an extra thing that I thought I would mention. In addition, if you're not quite sure what you want to listen to or even if you want to listen to the whole episode, you can also see some or listen to some of our trailers. So I try to, you know, just grab a small snippet from an episode just a couple of minutes to feature something I think is notable all in the podcast that I've recorded. And then I load them up on the YouTube channel for What about Vietnam? So please go there also and have a look at the playlists, have a look at some of the series, etc.

Kerry Newsome: [00:10:07] that you can also listen. And also it's a nice easy way to share if you wish to do so. Coming up, I'm also going to be adding a feedback tool so that when you go to the website that you can you can send me some feedback, you can send me a request, you can suggest a subject, and I'm going to be able to grab that and then, you know, put some homework into trying to find the best way to answer that for you and feature it in podcasts coming up.

2022 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

[00:10:54] So we started off 22 in what I think is a really positive light where we looked at the comedy scene and how it is developing in Saigon. And traditionally you probably wouldn't have thought about Saigon as offering English speaking comedy venues and an artist that can appear there. But it's really becoming a booming area and the tourists and the locals and everyone is just

loving it. Niall Mackay is heading up a lot of that and he came on the show and was able to share with us some more information.

Go directly to the Comedy show [here](#).

We then went on to the language. You cannot go to Vietnam without thinking about the language because. While it's great to be able to use some language when you go to a foreign country, Vietnam is quite challenging in the sense that the language has some tonal effects which make it quite a bit tricky to get that tone right.

Kerry Newsome: [00:12:07] But what I tried to deliver in the podcast was just some handy words in the areas of greetings, special dietary requests, and maybe some words to use shopping wise, because we all don't want to think, you know, are they are they giving us their best price? Are they are they just kind of playing a bit of a bartering game or are they just being a little a little bit mischievous? It doesn't matter. It means that you've got a little bit of a dictionary in your vocabulary. And we had a lovely girl on the show that was able to share with us how to use those tones to the best ability. And I shared my ability or inability in some cases, but you've got that as a reference. And as I said, use the transcript and go back and highlight those areas.

Go directly to the Greetings language show [here](#)

Go Directly to the Dietary Requirements words show [here](#)

Go directly to the shopping words [here](#)

We also went into one of the most famous caves, the Son Doong caves in Phong Nha, and we got to meet Howard Limbert. Now, how he was one of the nine British explorers that actually discovered Son Doong. He still has a very active role in looking after the caves and ensuring and working with the government to protect them so that even as tourists, when we get to explore these magnificent caves, which now have reached worldwide, notary, that when you go there, you're going to have some insights in what to do in a one day tour, a two day tour, a three day tour and a four day tour.

Go directly to the Phong Nha Caves show [here](#)

Kerry Newsome: [00:14:07] Believe it or not, some of these caves and in particular, Son Doong actually takes four days to go through the whole cave. It does take a little bit of skill and there are bookings, I think right through the year. They only take very small numbers in each group. So you may have to prepare for that well in advance. Once again, check out the transcript and the notes for that.

We also got to talk about wellness and we got to do that with Hilton Lipkin and his lovely wellness retreat just outside Hue. I got the chance to visit there this time in September when I was there, and

I can't speak highly enough about the value of spending time in nature, and spending it with professionals that are going to really tailor a program for you and what your goals are. The accommodation is just delightful. The professionals that you work with are skilled and they work in a very personable way about what you want to do and what you want to get out of your visit. So we've got a really great feeling for how wellness is evolving in Vietnam. Hilton shares some very deep passions for wellness and really wants to see wellness retreats and wellness holidays grow in Vietnam. So we're going to feature more of those in 23 as we scour the country for more locations. **Go directly to the Wellness show [here](#) and check out the Offers page.**

Kerry Newsome: [00:16:02] Another place that I am actually planning to visit again, and this is. Phu Quoc. We got to visit, and hear some insights with Patricia Marques. And Patricia was really great at giving just some insights into how the Fuqua Ireland can treat you as a visitor and some of the locations and some of the things to do on the island. Now, the last time I was in Phu Quoc was 2018. This is so that's pre COVID, and there was a lot of building and construction going on. So I can't say At that time I was experiencing the best of Phu Quoc as it was in that progress and development stage.

So in 23, I really hope to get back there and just experience it on the other side as I'm hearing really great things. So check out the Phu Quoc episode with Patricia as I think as a hop across from Saigon. It's only an hour flight and you could find some really great deals on the island for your stay.

Go directly to the Phu Quoc show [here](#)

Now, I also had to share with you as a recap the trip I did with my grandson. So my grandson was 16 at the time, and I got to take him to Vietnam for a week. Now, I'm going to be honest with you. I wasn't quite sure how he'd go. I was taking him away from, you know, 90% access to devices and taking him outdoors. And he'd never been away with his grandmother before.

Kerry Newsome: [00:17:54] And here we are going to a Southeast Asian country that he really would have only scantily known about. But he really embraced it. He got to experience cooking tours. We climbed Marble Mountain. We got to experience some food. Food. I never thought he would try. He just thoroughly enjoyed. He couldn't get over the beauty, the landscape, the people. It was really just the best thing. So I really encourage you to hear his take on it. He came on the show and, you know, I asked him to share really openly and honestly, and he did. And I think if you do have a young family that you'd like to bring and you've got teenager amongst them, I think you can feel really confident that they will experience something that they'll never forget. And I think they'll find the Vietnamese very welcoming and they're going to have a wonderful time. There's lots to do

for kids in Vietnam. And in 2023, we're going to include a lot more of those experiences with some of my special guests.

Go directly to the Teenager show [here](#)

Continuing on, we got to really dive deep into the art scene in Vietnam, and I was able to begin that with Bridget March and we talked about the storytelling side of art and how artists can express themselves through their vision, their experience, their history, their culture, and tell the story through their art. I think sometimes when we see art in Vietnam, it's a big learning curve to really appreciate the story behind it.

Kerry Newsome: [00:19:56] So Bridgett was great in sharing with us some of the some of her favorite galleries, and we even took it another step further and talked about contemporary art with Suzanne Lecht. And my visit with her in Hanoi was just amazing in the sense that I got to see how young artists coming through are seeing Vietnam and how without any limitations, they're able to express themselves and tell their story and how they see Vietnam in a more contemporary light.

Go directly to the Art – Story Telling with Bridget March show [here](#)

Go directly to the Contemporary Art show with Suzanne Lecht [here](#)

So check those episodes out with Bridget March and Susan Lecht. I think you're really going to get a lot out of them.

And a podcast that talks about travel in Vietnam would nowhere near be complete if we didn't cover food. And during the year, I was able to get on the show some really interesting people to give us some of the diversification in food that you can find in Vietnam, and also just how food and the flavors and the influences change from south to central to north. We touched on street food and we did a great story with Corin Carlson and really went deep on the food options available in Hanoi. And she was fabulous in sharing some great bites, great places to go. And then we went a little bit upscale and I had Raj Taneja on and just his input in talking about the development of fine dining in Vietnam and where that is heading and his involvement with **La Chaine** des Rotisseurs and just, you know, I think that was insightful for me, especially as I probably had focused more of my time in previous visits on street food and cute local cafes.

Go directly to the Hanoi Foodie shows [here](#) – 1

Go directly to the Hanoi Foodie shows [here](#) – 2

Go directly to Fine dining show [here](#)

Kerry Newsome: [00:22:04] So to step up into fine dining, I think is definitely an episode you need to check out. I hope you enjoy the foodie episodes that we have coming up as well. So stay tuned for 2023,

Another episode, which I got to do with a lovely lady who plans weddings. So I know it's early in the year and it's a good idea to put this in my recap and to talk about because, you know, I think in the beginning of the year, we do like to make plans and plans maybe, you know, long way down the track. So, if you are considering a destination for a wedding, I really invite you to have a listen to the wedding podcast that we did. And I think you're going to be quite surprised at just what's available and just the value that is there for people and the variety of experiences that you can offer in your wedding and obviously allure your guests. So maybe check out if you're thinking about planning a wedding to go to that podcast.

Go directly to Wedding show [here](#)

The other area, which I really did need an update on was Nha Trang, and I did that with Colm Hutchinson and Colm works in the media and advertising and marketing industry.

Kerry Newsome: [00:23:40] He's now living there as an expat, married with two beautiful children, and he was able to give a really good list of some of the things that you can. Do in Nha Trang. Gosh, I hadn't been there since about 2014, so I knew I was out of date with how the location had developed. So from hotels to experiences, I think we got a list together about ten things. So if you want to consider Nha Trang as a bit of an offshoot for some experiences with family, with snorkeling and with water sports and culture, I really suggest that you have a look at the Nha Trang episode we did with Colm.

Go directly to the Nha Trang show [here](#)

In addition, we kind of jumped to experiences and some of the things that are really coming on in Vietnam. And one of those is the craft beer scene. And I got to talk to Gary Bett in Da Nang, and Gary is the founder and the head brewer of the Five Elements Brewing Company. And Gary was really insightful about craft beer. I mean, I know very little about craft beer as a beverage. But just getting to understand some of the Vietnamese influences and flavors available and just the scene itself and how it's growing and developing was enlightening, to say the least. So once again, if you want to have a look at the craft beer scene and look at some of the big players across all the major cities in Vietnam, I'd invite you to have a listen to that one.

Go directly to the Craft Beer show [here](#)

Kerry Newsome: [00:25:35] We also had some time with a really interesting chap who knows the history of the city of Hue, the Imperial city of Hue, and why its extremely popular for its food, its perfume River, the Citadel and deep, deep history. And he was able to really explain it in a way that gave context to some things and some images that you might see about the city. And I'm sure you're going to really enjoy that one. If you'd like to know more about Hue.

Go directly to the Hue show [here](#)

We also were able to look into some islands and one of the set of islands which comes, you know, up quite a bit now and has certainly done so in the last four or five years. And that's the Con Dao Islands. And I was able to do that with a guy who just did it by impulse. He went there with a group of friends & he was able to share with us just some of the things that took him by surprise. And one of those things was possibly the underdevelopment of the region. And whilst there is plenty of places to stay, you'll find that from his aspect, he really enjoyed its uniqueness in beauty, its quietness, its serenity and just some of its complex history. So that's another one to check out.

Go directly to the con Dao Island show [here](#)

And then we jump to a really interesting subject, the subject of being a solo traveller to Vietnam. And I got to do that with Camellia Dinh and Camellia and I have done some work together and she was able to kind of express the differences between her travelling as a Vietnamese solo traveller versus mine as a solo traveller, which, you know, I do more often than not.

Kerry Newsome: [00:27:49] And it was just intriguing to hear how her perceptions are not that different from mine and to learn that she just feels as safe as I do when I travel to Vietnam. I mean, no city is absolutely 100% perfect, but the crime rate in Vietnam is what I would say, considerably lower than many other Asian countries. And I think using common sense, as we say, always in travel, you know, you can feel that you can do most things in Vietnam feeling very safe. One to definitely want to check out.

I had some great feedback from some female solo travellers in particular over the Christmas break saying that they were inspired to go after listening that. So that was really terrific to get.

Go directly to the solo traveller show [here](#)

And we finished up the year talking about a beautiful place called Ninh Binh, you know, a place just a couple of hours out of Hanoi. It is often compared to Ha Long Bay but the Halong Bay on land. It's quite mystical. Jack Taylor talked about his visit there. He did some beautiful drone photography and all in all, I think it was worth getting some insights about this place for you to get some comparison, I guess, to Ha Long Bay.

Kerry Newsome: [00:29:25] They are both beautiful sights to visit, but even in their classic beauty, they have some distinguishing differences, which, you know, will appeal to one person, possibly more than the other.

So it was a big year. And we got to we got to get through the post COVID tensions. And we talked about just how we saw travel evolving and how we saw the country opening up. The visa status is pretty much set at the moment. I mean, I'm talking to you now in January 23, and we do have the visa free countries and the evisa status for 80 countries. So, you know, it is pretty set at the moment, but it may change. I know there's been lots of conjecture about that and it's a bit of a "watch, wait and see". And I'll certainly be keeping you up to date on that if and when that changes.

As I said at the very beginning of today's podcast, I do really want to make the show about YOU this year. So, I really impress upon you to reach out to me. You can do that through the website. You can do that direct at what about whataboutvietnam@gmail.com and you know, suggest a subject, if you have a concern, if you have a response to one of the podcasts that I've done that you know, you'd like extra information. I'm happy to respond. I try and get to everyone I can, you know, personally and give you the best of my knowledge.

Kerry Newsome: [00:31:21] If I don't have the knowledge, you can be damn sure I'll be going out to find it. I wish everyone a very happy, prosperous, safe, healthy, 3023 and I do hope the podcast does continue to inspire you to visit the country as it is evolving. It is a beautiful country, and if it's not the food, the people and the landscape that get to you, I'm sure you're going to find an experience that will and will keep in your memory for a very long time.

I can't let you go just yet. I just wanted to tell you a little bit about the book that I released in December 22 called [**Book, Pack & Stay - A Travel Guide to Vietnam**](#)
This is the link to Amazon.

It's a very different style of travel guide book in the sense that it's not a destination guide book. It's more about the things that you need to look for when you are booking your tour, thinking about the kind of trip that you want to design. And you know, when you're sitting down with a travel agent or

you're looking to do it yourself online, you've given some thought to the kinds of experiences that you want to have because depending on what time of year and those destinations that you choose, you really do need to kind of manage your expectations a little bit. So, you know, time wise, you've got enough time to enjoy it all and you know, you've got the right weather and the right conditions.

Kerry Newsome: [00:33:16] We talk about in the book about what to pack the right kind of apps and bits of research that will help you in enjoying the trip and being well prepared for the trip. I don't know. So many times I've seen people with the wrong shoes or the wrong clothes or just feeling the heat, and some of these things can be managed so much better with a little bit of insight. And then, of course, your stay, what to expect. You know, you're going to trip over wires. You're going to see thousands of motorbikes. And just I hope the guidebook is going to help you understand that, kind of get it in context and some tips and hints on just being able to make your stay is so much more enjoyable. So that's the book Pack and Stay Travel Guide to Vietnam. It's a nice easy price of \$4.99. So not a huge expense. You'd have it on your phone and you're always going to be able to interact with that with the links to various apps, videos, podcasts and of course, Amazon is going to allow you to do that very easily.

Please send me any feedback or suggestions as I will be updating this version later in the year because Vietnam is just that country. It's evolving fast and I want to make sure I get you the information you need that's relevant at the time. Thank you very.

Kerry Newsome: [00:34:50]. Check out the episode notes for more information. What about Vietnam? Don't forget to subscribe, write and review, and stay tuned for more fun adventures in Vietnam.

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