



What About Vietnam S2-10 - Vietnam dental holiday- Save money on dental while on your holiday

Intro: What About Vietnam, a podcast with Kerry Newsome. The series where Kerry talks with travelers about their experiences and adventures; find out more about Vietnam from the people who have actually been there. What about Vietnam? Whether it's adventure, exploring the culture and cuisine, shopping, or just soaking up the sun; let Kerry and her travelers paved the way for a magical holiday in Vietnam. What About Vietnam?

Kerry: Xin Chao and welcome to What About Vietnam. Today we're going to be talking about dentistry. Now, who would have thought you'd be talking about dentistry on a travel podcast talking about Vietnam. So, I've added the session in because it's still a very important experience that you may want to investigate when you do visit Vietnam. Kelly McCarthy is my guest, she's a good friend, and she has been traveling to Vietnam over the past 15 years, as it happens, in the past six years, those visits have included a visit to a dentistry surgery in Ho Chi Minh City. She has had extensive work done and her son and her husband likewise. When she compares quotes, she's going to be able to tell you about the massive savings that she's been able to make. And just speak to a little bit about the great experience that she's had with the people that look after her in these surgeries and just the whole end to end communications and everything. You're going to learn a lot about what you could save in dentistry in Vietnam. And I mean, who knows, you may want to use the savings to pave the way for a fabulous holiday in Vietnam. Please welcome Kelly to the program. Let's start with what made you choose Vietnam as an option for you and your family to have some dentistry work.

Kelley: Well, for us, it wasn't a case of, we originally went out searching for dentistry in Vietnam. My husband and I were on holidays in Ho Chi Minh City in 2009, I was six months pregnant with my child. And suddenly, we're at dinner and the husband says "Ooh" I've hurt my tooth, something's gone wrong, only for us to discover he'd broken his tooth. And I'm thinking as men do with any form of pain, it's never just slightly sore, it's excruciating. So with that, I had to sort of rummage around and try and find somewhere that could attend to this. We're looking at two days out from Christmas, so I'm thinking, "Oh, here we go, everything shut down for Christmas. He's going to have to fly back to Australia with this, he's going to be in pain and I'm going to have to suffer all of the above." So, I ventured out and found actually a dentist that could attend to the problem for us and it was on Boxing Day they could attend to us because they were closed on Christmas Day but Open Boxing Day, funnily enough. So, we ventured to the dentist, thinking we were in for numerous amounts of dollars being overseas, being a tourist, they'd take advantage of it, and everything going through our minds, but we still had to attend. They fixed my husband's tooth in speed, the place was amazing and the cost, I think we walked out of there paying \$200 or something to rebuild his tooth.

Kerry: 200 Australian dollars? Wow!

Kelley: 200 Australian dollars and the tooth was completely rebuilt on Boxing Day.

Kerry: Wow!

Kelley: So, that was when we realized that dentistry was an option, so with that, then I delved further into it.

Kerry: Okay, just let me stop there for a minute. So, we're in Ho Chi Minh City; when we think about being in a foreign country, we're thinking possibly there could be some language barriers. How did you find that? Your walking in there with your husband, I guess he's kind of holding his jaw, there's pain written all over his face, so that kind of gets through the language barrier fairly quickly. But, how did you go with managing the language barrier? Was there a lot of people there that spoke English? What was the environment that you were greeted with there?

Kelley: When we arrived, they were absolutely amazing. I was totally astonished at the level of professionalism, the level of hygiene, and also how innovative they were. It was like I'd stepped into the future, to be totally honest with you. They were doing things far more advanced than what I'd seen here in Australia. So before they even look at you, it was straight to MRI, not x-ray, MRI and dollars are just ticking over in my head. Well, fortunately, that actually came out to be a 25 US dollar charge for an MRI on his jaw to see what was wrong. The language barrier, there was no problems with that, everyone spoke fluent English. They even actually had an Australian and a Canadian dental nurse in there who was studying and was doing some time in the surgery. So, there was literally no communication issues whatsoever.

Kerry: Ah, fantastic. So, like paperwork obviously, financially, it's more than affordable. So, kind of did that start the journey for you because I know you've done a lot since then, tell us about that.

Kelley: That sort of put me on the road of what I was wanting to do because I had throughout my pregnancy numerous problems with my teeth. And so, we returned back to Australia after that and then I had problems with my teeth after the pregnancy, which then I thought, "Well, I'll go and get a quote here to see what's going, you know, look for this." And the cost was through the roof; it was actually \$46,000 Australian to have my teeth removed.

Kerry: Sorry, just say that slowly again, were you getting a whole new mouth with that.

Kelley: Because all of the enamel had cracked off my teeth, it was basically down to the resort of false teeth, which at 40 years old was not going to be an option. I didn't really want to be gummy, so I then went down path of crowns. So, in Australia it was a \$46,000 cost for those crowns, which then just threw it right out of the ballpark. So with that, I said to my husband, "Well, we had such a great experience when we were in Vietnam maybe this is an option I can look at." So, we traveled to Vietnam usually

once or twice a year, so I started researching dentists and then when we went over there, I actually then visited the dentist, just the one that I'd seen had good reviews.

Kerry: And this one now different from the dentist that you saw with your husband back in 2009. So, you found another dentist.

Kelley: It was, I found another dentist, not to say that this first dentist wasn't great, they were amazing.

Kerry: No, understood.

Kelley: It just opened up my eyes and then provided to me with what's out there, so that was why I looked into it further. And to be honest with you, I actually came across a lady in a day spa when I was over there one day and she'd given me the particular dentist that she had been to because I saw her teeth were amazing and I commented on them and she said, "I'll let you in a little secret. They're all crowns, I had them done here, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah," went on, gave me some details, and then that was when I started looking into the particular dentist that I now regularly visit. So, that was where that went to. And then I started communicating with them and trying to build up a bit of a rapport, a bit of an understanding, everything was done by email. Every email was professional, and then I decided on one of our visits to go and check the surgery and see what I thought of it and that was when I became basically sold on the whole idea. So, I sort of sat with them, they did quotes, did MRIs. Once again, another place that did MRIs, they did quotes, they gave me a fixed quote. And then that was when we made the arrangements for me to return to Vietnam on another occasion to go through the process.

Kerry: Right, so, this kind of started a journey, I guess, didn't it?

Kelley: It did, definitely.

Kerry: Because obviously, it isn't a one hit wonder that kind of work. Can you tell us, like, what was roughly the saving? Now, if we were talking about \$46,000, was it half, was it 75%...?

Kelley: This one is going to shock you. Like I said, I'll reiterate \$46,000 in Australia. And when I got the quote from Vietnam, it was 5,500 Australian dollars.

Kerry: Oh, my God.

Kelley: There really wasn't any second thoughts after that because that little bit of [inaudible 10:02], Scrooge McDuck in all of us where there's a savings...

Kerry: I would have been smiling already.

Kelly: Yeah, it was like I can get a great holiday, save all this money, as well as get my teeth done, so I...

Kerry: But what comes with that, and I think sometimes the next question on everyone's lips is, but you've got to keep going back and forth to Vietnam. Now, you, and I wouldn't find that a tragedy, I mean, that would be great, what a terrific excuse. But I guess for some people, depending on where they are in the world so, you know, coming back and forth could be an additional cost they have to add to it. And so, just talk about maybe how long your visits and kind of walk us through that journey from yes, lets go start to kind of finish.

Kelley: Okay. So, that definitely is something to consider, and that would be something you would need to consider depending on what you need to have done. For example, I know if you have to have implants done, you basically have to go to the dentist, you have the implant socket placed into the bone of your jaw, and then they won't actually put any teeth or anything into that socket for three months, so that is a definite consideration, if that's the path you're going down. If you're not going down that path and it was something like myself, from the quotation had we discussed it, they told me to allow 10 days. Now that was not 10 working, that was 10 days, so they work across the weekend if needed for you to come in and have that dentistry done. So, I then just thought, I would do it smartly and I booked an extra couple of days, purely for I was traveling by myself, so it was some peaceful mommy time. And also, it was just to put a little contingency in there just in case anything went wrong.

So I booked my trip for 12 days, I had a full mouth of crowns all but three. And in that I also had three of those were bridging crowns. So, for anyone that doesn't know what a bridging crown is, that's where I actually had teeth missing in a couple of spots and they actually crown one tooth but have a false tooth attached to that, that sits in that socket where your original tooth would have been, so it gives you a full appearance of full teeth. So, I had basically every tooth but three crown, and from start to finish, it took seven days. So, the process was, when I landed, I let them know when I was landing, and they actually arranged and send someone to pick me up.

That was part of the journey as well. So, if somebody is out there thinking about traveling by themselves, like I did, I was comfortable with catching taxis or transport, but some other people might not be. So the dentist that I go to, they will arrange to pick you up, they can also arrange accommodation for you if you're totally unfamiliar with the area and that goes on a budget level of what you can afford as well. So, they brought recommendations of that. So, it was kind of like a package for me, but after being a comfortable traveler and traveling to Vietnam quite a few times, I was totally okay with organizing my accommodation and everything. So yeah, I was met with them so that sort of ease you a little bit for somebody who is worried about it.

They picked me up, they said, we'll see you this afternoon if you're okay with that. I said, yeah, that's fine., so I went in that first afternoon, they just took further MRIs just to check that nothing had moved from the six months previously. Then they talked about what they were going to do across each couple of days. And there is two days that are quite intense, and they are the days of you're having crown work, where they shave your teeth down and prepare all the bone and everything. So, it can be quite

intense for two days of that, but with that, if you are having crowns, don't be afraid because they don't send you out with little shark's teeth. They actually made temporary molds of your original teeth to walk out the door with so you are totally comfortable. I'm the person that's not afraid of the dentist and all one of the days because it was a lot of work.

I will admit for anybody, I was a little bit overwhelmed on that day. However, if you've got a traveling partner or whatever, it was probably just because I didn't know realistically what I was in for, but if anyone's interested, I can always be happy to chat to them afterwards and give them a little bit of what you're really in for. Pain-wise, I was pretty much pain-free. It was probably just more of an emotional thing for me, more than anything but pain wise, they also provide you with scripts to...

Kerry: Manage the pain.

Kelley: To get any pain medication and in fact, now, since my return prior to COVID in Vietnam, so it was actually 12 months ago, this time I would have been there. They actually now have got a pharmacist downstairs, so you don't even have to go to a pharmacy now to find your medication. They give you the script, go downstairs, it's filled within the building, so, it's really quite helpful. So, depending on your work, but they will give you a guide of how long you need to be there. Like I said, mine was roughly, they said 10 days, it was all completed within seven. So, quietly I had a couple of days up my sleeve, which was quite nice.

Kerry: Yeah.

Kelley: But it's a great experience, it really is for dentistry and the whole time you're sitting in the seat, you're thinking I've just saved \$40,000. So, that keeps you quite motivated.

Kerry: And I think we need to also speak to the concerns that some people may have is just around the safety side of it, the products that they use, like the quality of the products and just you know, long-term management like, do you go back to Australia and then get an Australian dentist to, I don't know, keep a check on them or something like that. Talk to us a little bit more about what you finished because you didn't finish with the crowns, did you? You went on to get...

Kelley: No, I finished with all the crowns and they gave me the full cosmetic smile. So, however I have had other family members have other dentistry work. For example, my mum had dentures done, my husband's had laser whitening and had numerous fillings done over there. And I had even taken my ten-year-old son over there last year to have some dentistry work on that was quoted at three and a half thousand dollars here. And it arose from the fact that it was an error in dentistry here. The dentist, I go to didn't really want to touch on being a young child and not knowing the repercussions of it. However, I just asked my dentist here in Australia to provide me with the x-rays and the report of what was going on with his teeth. And I actually sent that through to my over there and they agreed to do my son.

So, my son and I went over, and they fixed up his tooth. So, the tooth here was quoted at three and a half thousand dollars to save a tooth, fall out in two years' time. And so, I took the opportunity to go over to the dentist, have a little bit of a holiday one-on-one with my son. We went over for a week, our accommodation, and airfares because I live in Perth. So, chances of getting in and out of Asia are really easy, we did everything on a budget airline just to outweigh costs. And we traveled over there, had a great week together accommodation, airfare, spending money was about \$2,000 and his tooth that was quoted here in Australia for three and a half thousand dollars, cost me \$105 Australian. So, we had a holiday and everything for less than the tooth.

Kerry: So, you know, everything is kind of pointing to me to some real level of confidence that you have, like confidence in their ability, workmanship, safety, communication. Because I know when I book a dentist here and as I've told you, like once every 10 years I go, like I hate the dentist at any time, but I think dentistry moving to this role that you're describing as being a little bit more than just your average walk in the door and they don't give a hoot thing. Like if they're picking you up from the airport and they've obviously got some serious care factor going there. So, I mean safety wise, do we give them a 10 out of 10?

Kelley: I would definitely, give them a 10 out of 10. They will even like anywhere when you're traveling, you always have the risks of bags snatchers or anything. And that's in any travel, you always have your cautions but they even... if you're uncomfortable with traveling to and from the dentist yourself, if you explained that to them, they would arrange for you to have a driver or an Uber or something picked you up every day and drive you to the door. When you get to the door, they've got security at their door and that's just to stop hawkers coming in. It's not for any you know hold ups or anything like that, it's just for hawkers. But safety wise[inaudible20:29] for starters, so it is safe as anything. Hygiene is amazing. Everything I feel supersedes Australia. The products, so all my crowns from Switzerland, they're Swiss crowns, they do their training. He travels all over the world training staff and learning the most innovative products. I'll give you an example so, I've had my crowns now for, I think it's coming up six years. I returned to Vietnam last year when I took my son over and there was just one of my teeth that I wasn't really happy with at the top, I just noticed a few changes in the last 12 months from it. I showed it to them, they weren't really a hundred percent on what I was saying, I thought was wrong with it, but they did all the tests and everything. And to give me some form of satisfaction and knowing that I'm a returning customer all the time, which is an option they provide to everybody, you get a lifetime guarantee on your crowns.

So, I wasn't a hundred percent, they realistically got to the point where they weren't a hundred percent. So, they said no problems, Kelley we'll replace it. So, in the time I was there with my son, they remove my crown, replaced it, and I've walked out the door with no charges for that because there's a lifetime guarantee. Now, I don't know any dentists in Australia that will give you a lifetime guarantee on crowns. So, it was just, yeah, the service is definitely their customer services there. I've referred a lot of friends; I have another lady in Queensland who is a friend of mine who is now a pensioner. She was quoted \$19,000 in Queensland for her teeth, she flew and spent six weeks traveling through Asia, her dentistry, accommodation, airfares, everything spending money. And she came home, and she'd spent \$10,000, so, she was at half and she could basically...

Kerry: Including the teeth?

Kelley: Including the teeth, she had amazing experience.

Kerry: Wow!

Kelley: I could go on and on with friends and family that I've actually referred. I've got friends that live in Singapore that fly to Vietnam now to have their teeth done because it outweighs the costs of Singapore and the hygiene. I've got other people in South Wales I referred and same similar thing, they wanted to do bone grafts here for their teeth because they were so poorly. And then when they went to the doctor, he did it in the chair over there and they've never looked back. So, all the experiences or referrals that I've provided to them have come back as positive. So, I guess for me that's just another tick in their favor and reassurance that it is safe, it is hygienic.

Kerry: And good value.

Kelley: And really good value, you get a holiday, and you get your teeth done for a fraction of the cost.

Kerry: Yes, and I think that's kind of the message I want to get across here is that, sometimes people kind of poo poo the idea about, you know, traveling to an overseas destination to have this kind of work because there is the fee of factor that the quality of the workmanship can't be guaranteed. Well, we've just found that out, that there is a lifetime guarantee on things like crowns, the service level is there, languages isn't problem, you know, you're saving money, serious money and guess what, guys, you get a little bit of a holiday at the same time. I can't remember having a holiday attached to any teeth work I've had done, let me show you. Kelly, I want to just say, how great it is to get your insights because I know for yourself have had this work and family and friends, but if you were to give some tips to people thinking about this idea, what would you say?

Kelley: I would say if you have already had the work quoted here in Australia or...

Kerry: Somewhere else in the world.

Kelley: Or anywhere else in the world and you are able to without making a trip there, because of course that's a cost as well. It's not something... it would be get your dentistry reports and your lab ask for these, wherever you go, because you've been in as a patient and you're allowed to say, I'd like a second opinion from another dentist. You don't need to say where that dentist is and email the dentist over there and ask them to quote it for you, or they will give you back the advice. And then, you start the communication with them that will probably then build your trust that you know, what they are doing. And then, you can make times to either what suits in your travel period. I usually tell them, I'll be there between such and such a date, I need to have this done, or I'd like to have this done. They'll give me a timeline or now at the stage where I'll be there for 48 hours. I need my teeth cleaned, I need to check out and they'll fit me. So, also if you're over in Vietnam, currently traveling and you decide after you've heard this podcast, oh, this is something I really like to do. Just give them a call, or if you're in Ho Chi Minh City, you could pop into the dentist and they will fit you in, it's amazing how much [inaudible25:56]

Kerry: Is not like you have to do it in advance or anything?

Kelley: No, definitely not and I've just found one dentist that I've been absolutely amazed by and follow through. There would be numerous ones out there, so this is not a plug for any particular dentist. Just do your research and there is presently it doesn't come to my mind, but there is actually a website out there where you can actually see where they rate in the world as dentist. The dentist I currently go to when I last checked, he was third best dentist in all of Asia. So, that was a little bit more reassuring as well, but like I said, I've been going to him now, this particular dentist; it would be 10 years, we've been going to him off and on, on our travels, whenever we go over. Now, it becomes part of our travel, were every year, my husband, son, and myself, we always go via Ho Chi Minh city now it might be just for three or four days that's to go in. Hubby is a diabetic, so he actually does get quite a few fillings. We go in, we have our dentistry done on the first day we land, we have it all knocked over either first or second day, depending on what usually what he needs, not what we need and that's it, it's done and then we continue on with our amazing holiday. So, it just becomes part of our routine and once you've got that trust with it, which I'm sure give it a go guy, just give it a go.

Kerry: It was simply great, having Kelly on the program, really appreciate her insights into the experience of having dental work in Vietnam and in particular in Ho Chi Minh City; great to get some background to some costs involved and how much she was able to save. Let me assure you, Kelly is definitely the kind of person who does a lot of homework before she entertains anything like this. She's a gorgeous looking girl with a beautiful smile and fantastic teeth, let me assure you. Look, we don't have any affiliation with any particular dentist surgery in Vietnam. I have however, put the links in the episode notes just from Kelly so that if you do wish to make contact with those surgeries in Ho Chi Minh City, it's all there for you to do.

So, it's been great to have you on the program as always. Look, we cover all and every kinds of subjects on this program. So, please share, please give me your feedback. We have a Facebook page called What About Vietnam. Please throw your comments on there, let us know what you'd like to hear about, I'm sure I can track it down for you. In the meantime till next time, stay well and we'll talk soon. Let me assure you, we will be traveling soon, so stick with us.

Outro: Thank you for listening. Check out the episode notes for more information. What About Vietnam. Don't forget to subscribe, rate and review and stay tuned for more fun adventures in Vietnam.

Kelleys' Dentist referred to in the podcast –

See reference here - <https://dentalcentervietnam.com/worldwide-beauty-dental-hospital-is-proud-to-be-ranked-in-the-top-5-cosmetic-hospitals/>

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