



# What About Vietnam – S4- E20

## Hoi An – A life changing experience for a singer songwriter

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:00:35] Xin Chau and welcome to What about Vietnam? If this is your first listen to the show, I'm very excited to have you on board for lots of fun travel stories with my guests. If you're a regular listener and you follow the show through your favorite channel and our social pages, thank you for being a supporter and please feel free to reach out anytime if you've got any questions. The website's got a stack of information, but I'm acutely aware that, you know, we're all unique, and sometimes just one answer doesn't fit all situations. Plus, I just love hearing from you, so please reach out if you've got some ideas for the show or there's a particular subject you'd like us to cover.

Now, the show today is coming directly from Vietnam, as I've been traveling about, and just checking out some new places, testing stuff for our travel services and for the [Girls Getaway](#) coming up in September. I am truly excited. Vietnam is really rocking at the moment and I'm here in March, so it's just a beautiful time of the year.

However, back to the show. We've got a wonderful show planned today because it's a little bit thought provoking in the sense we explore Vietnam and the high hopes of a young traveller who, through his love of adventure and music, found himself falling in love with the country and its people.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:02:08] Now, I know from me you've heard that all before. But what I think you're going to hear from my guest, Luke Webster, is a little bit unique in the sense it involves the profound effect travel can have on a person and where that adventure can unknowingly take you. Luke talks about his travels and how he found

himself enjoying the pace, a pace he describes as having your foot off the gas instead of on it all the time. He comes from obviously a city in the UK. He comes from a very busy lifestyle. So he kind of recognized this very early in the piece. He says he warmed easily to the happy, smiling people and welcoming feelings of home and family. He describes also that sensory overload that hit him when he first arrived and the beauty and serendipitous happenings that steered him to develop his craft. So while the world was in COVID, Luke was using his skills as a singer, songwriter and English music teacher to further his stays in Vietnam. After exploring the North Hanoi and Cat Bar, he describes falling in love all over again in Hoi An. The vibe of this old town or country town, as he calls it, including the beach area of Ung Bang began to open doors to him, and those doors allowed him to perform regularly and craft his own style and repertoire of music to an ever increasing local following.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:03:51] I met Luke on my first trip back after COVID. And he kind of immediately struck me as a person who had caught the love bug of Hoi An. Luke has written and recorded an album of his original music in Hawaiian with his band called The Langurs, and he hopes to have that released in April this year. And you can be sure I'm going to have links to that as soon as it comes up and I'll share those with you. Luke speaks to all of us who recognize the value of travel, and especially to places where the culture is foreign to us. While it may seem a stretch at the time, he talks about how traveling and working things out as you go develops you as a person and I couldn't agree more. And just how it broadens your mind to think outside the box. Sometimes we get stuck in our own ways, and that creative muscle in our brain doesn't get flex that often, but certainly in a country with such a diverse range of experiences, I think you're going to find you're going to experience things you've never done before, and that's all going to be good for you. Now, without further ado, let's just welcome Luke to the show.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:05:13] Oh, oh, just just one quick one....let me jump in here with a little announcement again about our [Girls Getaway](#). This is one definitely for the ladies. It kicks off 7th to 17th of September this year. Kelley McCarthy is the host of the tour. We've done some of that extra testing, I think I mentioned earlier, and we're really excited. Like when we put this together, we kind of thought, we've got something really unique here. It's going to give you three very different, unique experiences in Vietnam. You're going to experience a vibrant city, the city of Saigon. We're going to take you then to the old 16th century town of Hoi An and then we're going to flip you over to a

beautiful luxurious island to finish off the tour. It is an extremely bespoke tour, really well thought out. I'm hoping maybe going to tell us about that later. But definitely, you know, make some inquiries, ask us some questions. If there's something, you know, holding you back or you're not quite sure about, please get in touch. Kelly and I are more than happy to answer any questions, as we'd love to have you on board. Anyway, without further ado, let's get back to the show and say hello to Luke Webster. It's great to have you on the show.

**Luke Webster:** [00:06:50] Thank you very much for having me. I'm very excited to do my first ever podcast.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:06:55] Oh, that. Oh, that makes me feel special. Fantastic. Look, for everyone listening, I'm a little bit of a fan of Luke's, actually. I got to hear him play at a gig in Hoi an in my last visit in September, and I just knew when he was doing some intros to his songs, some that he's written and some of the covers that he played. I just knew that Vietnam had got to him. So it's great to have him on the show, and I think we're going to focus on one particular place in Vietnam that I think has won his heart. Luke, do you want to tell us about that place that's sort of got under your skin a bit?

**Luke Webster:** [00:07:42] Sure. Absolutely. Yeah. So I'll give a very quick kind of backstory of how I ended up in Vietnam. So I was I just finished university and I went off to do Camp America for the summer because my friend was doing it. And from there I met some people and we went and did a ski season in the south of France and I ended up doing this after graduating for a couple of years doing America in the Summer and ski seasons in the winter. And I'd finished my third Camp America, and I knew I wanted to go to Asia, but I didn't know where I wanted to go. And everyone had said like Thailand was like amazing. And Cambodia had rich history. But Vietnam I fell in love with. They always kept coming back to the fact that they had fallen in love with Vietnam. It was amazing. It was the best place on earth. So one day I came back from work and I just booked a one way ticket to Hanoi on New Year's New Year's Eve. So I went out there right at the start of 2020, arrived in Hanoi, traveled from the north to the south, met amazing people, immediately fell in love with the place, the culture, the the pace of life, the slow down of the pace of life.

**Luke Webster:** [00:09:00] But then there was this one place that I went to called Hoi an, which is right in the middle of Vietnam, right below Danang, which is the big major central city. And when I went there, I like I'd already fallen in love with Vietnam, but then I like fell in love again with this particular place. And I, I still can't quite explain why. I almost feel like you need to go there to understand, but I don't know whether it's because it's right next to the beach and it has this beautiful pristine beach or the fact that it's in the rice fields and it's got this very country. I'm from a country town back in England, so immediately when I got there, it felt very homely to me. And yeah, I just I almost didn't continue my travels because I planned to go down to Saigon and see the rest of it, and I almost was just going to throw it away and say, Hoi An is like this. I've already found where I want to be, but I continue to go. Went to Saigon. That was fun and then just flew straight back to Vietnam and um, and then, yeah, just stayed there.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:10:10] And, you know, the way you speak about Hoi an is very typical of a lot of people, strangely enough. I know for myself, my first visit was back in 2007 and then I didn't go back again really to spend any serious time until 2014. But from then on, I was hooked. I was just, as you say, caught up in the ambiance of the place. And it's very hard, as you say, to describe. It's got a certain vibe about it. It's got a certain energy. Would you agree energy to it? And yeah, it's got kind of two scenes going on. There's definitely the beach scene, so that's out at An Bang. And then when you go into the old town, that's another kind of scene. But the both seem to just meld together so beautifully and come together, uh, and, and operate, even though they operate in kind of different spheres because the beach is kind of a little bit more touristy. Oh, I guess parts of parts of the old town is as well. But I think from a person looking in to Vietnam, Hoi an kind of has to stand out on its own separate from all of the other cities because it's just that unique look. Now I wanted to just maybe touch on some of the first impressions that you had. Now, you know, you've just come out of a Camp America season and a ski season in France to get hit with, you know, Asia and Vietnam and every every smell, every sound and everything that that comes with. What were some of the first impressions that you had like immediately?

**Luke Webster:** [00:12:24] I would say at the start. I was just everywhere I was going. I mean, I arrived in Hanoi, so I got on a bus, went into Hanoi, and it was it was 5:00 in the morning on New Year's Day. So I arrived there right when everyone had been partying all night. And everyone was probably, I don't know, very intoxicated. And I got there and

I was just it kind of it kind of hit me all at once. Like I got off and there was just smells and sounds. It was like sensory overload. And I just couldn't I just was looking around and I couldn't stop smiling because I'd been kind of dreaming about doing this Asia trip for a while. And I was just walking around and my eyes couldn't stop looking around at, you know, like all the street vendors and the people on the bikes and people asking me, you know, where are you going? Where where do you want to go? Trying to get me to, you know, buy food and and it was just the word I would use is colorful. Like it was very colorful. Like the the sounds were colorful, the smells were colorful, the sights were colorful. Um, and everywhere I went, it that continued. Like, I went straight from Hanoi after three days to capture in the north, which is, you know, Halong Bay, the big mountains coming out of the of the water. And I went to Cat Ba and it was a different vibe. It was a lot calmer. Um, there were, you know, beaches and everyone was a lot more relaxed than Hanoi. I needed it after three days in Hanoi, but it was exactly the same. People were relaxed and everyone was just chill. Everyone. It was like taking your foot off the gas. Everyone had taken their foot off the gas from wherever they'd come from.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:14:21] Did you feel welcomed? Did you feel, like, comfortable and welcome and did you feel like you could fit in and get around easy or, you know, did you because you go to some countries and you know, you can feel that estranged feeling. I've never got that in Vietnam. But, you know, I'm just keen to see for you whether you felt like I you know, I feel really welcome here. The people feel friendly and open.

**Luke Webster:** [00:14:51] Yeah. I never felt like, um. I guess when you land in a country, a lot of the times people are trying to hustle you and make money from you because you know you're a tourist. But I never. I never really felt that from the start. Like, everywhere I went, I always felt like I was from the get go, getting, you know, like local prices on food and. And another thing is just people were smiling like the Vietnamese people. Just they love to smile Everywhere I went. They would especially the women, they they look at you and they just give you a big smile. And yeah, I don't know. With Vietnamese women, especially the older women, I feel I always feel like all all of them are are like are like my mum. Like when I go for food or anywhere, they're always like, Come on, eat up growing boy. And you know, they'll give me more or whatever. And it's, yeah, I just sunk into it straight away. It was very open and welcoming.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:15:46] I would say. Yes. And I think you're right. I one of the things that I enjoy about the Vietnamese and yeah, probably more so with the women is, is their child like attitude. They're kind of light and breezy. They don't trudge around even though they live in, you know, some kind of simple ways. They all are always smiling and light and bright and optimistic and fun loving and childlike. And, you know, I swear to God, I lose ten years when I'm over there just because they bring that out in me. You know, I think, oh, I can do anything in Vietnam because there isn't that ageism as much, I don't think.

But yeah, I always feel very welcome. I think the people are very gracious. I think they're very open and welcoming and friendly. They don't seem to have any, uh, ways about them that is going to make things awkward. They kind of go out of their way to bring you in and to, you know, make you feel like part of their family. Or even if you go to a restaurant or automatically you can feel like you're part of that family who owns that restaurant within minutes, you know, you sit down on a little red chair and all of a sudden you've got a kid or a dog or somebody coming up to you and you just don't get that in Western society. You just that's that that's gone. That that kind of that feeling. So, as you say, it is really hard to explain to people what it's like. But we're going to give it a we're going to give it a shot in this show, Luke We're really going to try and dig deep, okay? So you've chosen an as pretty much your your main stay place. Is this to do with you doing some gigs there as well? Like did the did the music scene or the, the opportunity to do gigs there for music? Was that, you know, another allure of Hoi An.

**Luke Webster:** [00:17:55] Yeah, definitely. Like I knew I wanted to try and play music when I came to Vietnam and Hoi An it's a very touristy destination and there's lots of bars that do live music there. Um, and the benefit is you also have Danang, which is the, the main city, which is only 30 minutes north. So you've almost got two bases in order, you know, in which to play music in. So actually, when I got there, I tell you another small story, which is quite important too, you know, like my musical endeavors in Vietnam, when I was in the North in Cat Ba, I was at an open mic and I ran into an Israeli fella, Nethanel his name is Netanel Sabag, and he was hosting this open mic. And I went up and I introduced myself and I said, Can I play some songs with you? And he said, Yeah, sure. You know, go ahead and we ended up playing all night. We had the best time. And we really hit off. And I ended up spending the week with him at this

bar hosting these open mics. And we became friends very quickly and we went our separate ways.

**Luke Webster:** [00:19:09] And when I went back to Hoi An after going to Saigon, he was also there by chance, and I met him on the beach and I said, Oh, nice, you know, nice to see you again. And we started hanging out and playing music together and writing music together. And very quickly we kind of were like, Let's make a band. Let's form a band together. And we started as a two piece, and at the start we would go to all the bars in Hoi an In the Old Town. This was before COVID and it would be very, very, very busy. And a lot of the bars would say, you know, you need to have played here for two years. You need, you know, experience. And so a lot of the bars wouldn't take us. And for a while, we just we weren't having any luck. And we ended up going to this bar called [Bungalow Beach Bar](#) and meeting this wonderful American couple, Rhonda and William. And we went in and we said, Can we play? And they said, Of course you want to come and play tomorrow. And we were like, Uh.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:20:16] Sure, why not?

**Luke Webster:** [00:20:18] We were like, you know, Yes, absolutely. So we went in and played and we had a great time. And, you know, people seemed to like us and they said, Do you want to come and play tomorrow night? And we were like, okay.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:20:31] Yeah. Like there isn't kind of like any contracts coming out or, you know, serious conversations about, you know, payment and timing and how long will you be here? It's just so casual. It's hard to imagine. I know.

**Luke Webster:** [00:20:46] Yeah, Yeah. It was almost like they were going to be like, you know, like play, a song for us now, you know, win us over. And we'd be like, Oh, okay, okay. Um, but yeah, that was and that was the only bar at the start that would kind of have us.

And we, we would play there three, four nights a week. And that was when we, me and Nethanel, we started to kind of learn our craft like how to be because before we would, I don't know, we were boys who would play in our room and stuff and we'd never played for an audience. So we definitely crafted ourselves in that particular bar. You know, we would learn to, you know, mic up everything and do the sound and make a set list that

was, you know, had highs and lows and interact with the audience. But yeah, as you say, it's it was very it's a very easy place if you find the right place that wants to have you to, you know, get a gig, there's there's not really any contracts. You just kind of rock up, play, they pay and then you kind of go on your way.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:21:47] And if you come back again, you knock on the door again and you see how you know things are traveling and if things are traveling okay, and you know, there's room for you, then you know, you can come back in. That is just that is that is the standard rule of thumb in Hoi An. So when I saw you when because I knew some other people in Hoi An and they said, oh, there's this really great guy called Luke Webster, he's playing at the Bungalow Bar, I think you should definitely aim for that. I think you were starting at 7:30 or 8:00 or something and I said, Oh, right, you know, it was a new name. I didn't know of you from previous trips. And you've got to remember, this was my first trip coming back after COVID. So I know you were, for want of a better term, stuck there during COVID. Well, you know, I was stuck in Australia not being able to get back. So, you know, I was keen to just see if Hoi an and An Bang had kind of come back from that from COVID and you know, I'd heard. Lots of stories where a lot of places had gone to the wall. And, you know, what was comforting was to go back and, you know, hear great sounds like you playing in bars, get that good feeling. And I thought, its come back. It's definitely on the road. Everyone is optimistic about foreign tourism coming back so. Yeah all good. I wanted to ask you a question. It's a little bit of a touchy feely question, for want of a better word. But because you write music about touchy feely things, I think you'll be able to relate to it. But would you say that Vietnam has changed you in any way? Yes. Yes.

**Luke Webster:** [00:23:49] Yeah, definitely. I would just having a little think.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:23:56] I kind of got from your bio was the fact that you believe that travel does change you and that travel is something that everybody should be required to do to help develop themselves as people develop their appreciation of the world and to better understand themselves. So I guess from that I was keen to know just how Vietnam had impacted you from that perspective.

**Luke Webster:** [00:24:30] Yeah, I would say it. It just opened my mind for a start. As soon as I got there, the culture was so different and the feeling was so different from



where I was living or where I had been living for, you know, 23 years of my life back in England. Exactly. And, you know, it's almost like another great thing about Hoi an especially is it's this melting pot of cultures. There are so many different people from, you know, like from France, South Africa, Israel, America. So there's so many different cultures mixing that there's you're never lost for things to do. There's people teaching different things about their, you know, their cultures. And so when you travel, I feel like your mind opens up and you become very receptive for taking everything in and learning from people and the conversations you have. And because you're traveling, it's almost like a natural thing to. You want to be open and you become more talkative because it's like being in the playground again on your first day of school. You don't know anyone and you want to talk to people and make friends. And so you'll be in a bar and you'll see someone and they'll look at you and you'll be alone. And you just say, Hi, my name is Luke. And they say hi. And you say, Where are you from? And then the next minute they say, I'm going to Cat Ba tomorrow with some friends. Do you want to come? And you're like, Yeah, I've got no plans. Great.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:26:13] And that's how I met people also in Hoi an. When you're not gigging. And obviously I know that is your number one fun thing to do. What else do you love doing in Hoi An?

**Luke Webster:** [00:26:33] I've got to say, going to the beach? Yeah, it's.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:26:35] That's got to be the first one. Yeah, for sure. Yeah. It's really lovely. Beach. Yeah.

**Luke Webster:** [00:26:40] It's a really lovely beach. As long as you don't go now, as long as you don't go during, you know, October.

**Luke Webster:** [00:26:50] Or rainy season. Yeah. Mid mid-December. Yeah.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:26:52] No, no, no, definitely not. No, definitely. So that's good to mention.

**Luke Webster:** [00:26:57] So yeah, obviously in Hoi An throughout the nine months of the year, it's beautiful, hot sunshine. You get a bit of coolness for the spring in kind of February time. But then, yeah, September through maybe to December, they have the rainy season and it's like, you know, in Forrest Gump when he says it started raining and it didn't stop raining for four months. It's true.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:27:21] It is true. And once again, like, like I, I managed to get September in. I always can manage to get a pretty good September in Hoi An, but as soon as it kicks over into October it's gone. Yeah you're right very big droplets of rain and the ocean goes crazy with waves and you know, everything at the beach. The beach just gets smashed. When you spend most of your time there, do you choose to like, do you live in a homestay or do you kind of rent a place? Or how do you how do you like to kind of accommodate yourself when you're in Hoi An and playing gigs and stuff.

**Luke Webster:** [00:28:13] So yeah, I rent a place. It's very again, it's very easy to do. You know, most of the time you don't need a contract. You just, you look, you look on Facebook marketplace or whatever and you look for houses and you find a house and it's got the price. And you go and you say, you know, I want to rent the house. And a lot of the time they'll be like, Great, can I have a deposit? You give them the deposit and you can move in the next day.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:28:41] And they'll help you. Move in sometimes.

**Luke Webster:** [00:28:43] Yeah, they'll help you move in, they'll bring you food, they'll bring you fruit. A lot of the landlords, they're super kind, super accommodating. You know, they'll just. They'll do things. They'll come and garden for you if you, you know, if you want them to. Um, but yeah, it's and there's so many beautiful spots in hoi an that's the, that's the nice thing about living there. You can live in the town and it feels very kind of townie town like and halfway between the town and the beach you got the beautiful rice fields so you can have a house that literally looks onto the rice fields and you get the, you know, the sunset in the evening and the sunrise. And then if you want to, you can literally live like on the beach. Yeah. So, you know, you you wake up in the morning and you're tired and you come out of bed and you can literally just zombie walk yourself

through the sand down to the beach, two minutes down and you just jump into the sea and that just wakes you. That's the best way to wake up.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:29:43] It is. And you don't have to navigate a serious car park or there isn't like cordoned off areas where.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:29:51] There's full access and it's all free. So, you know, these are kind of the little things that people don't take into consideration with the beach itself. So tell us, if you were to talk to your friends and family and about Hoi An and about Vietnam, what are the key things that you want them to know or things that you know they should be aware of if they come?

**Luke Webster:** [00:30:20] In terms of like for them, as for them as tourists or things for them to kind of see.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:30:26] In terms of them being a Westerner and maybe finding a. Some aspects of Asian culture. Vietnamese culture that, you know, would be a challenge for them. Like not all Westerners gravitate to Vietnam and go, Oh, that was all great.

Some of them find some of the history challenging, Some of, you know, there's not paved roads everywhere. There's not paved pathways everywhere. There's wires hanging from trees. And, you know, that's the wifi system over there. It just wraps around that, that kind of bush over there. That's, how you get free wifi. And it's kind of like I cannot believe that? So it's just some of those things, the motorbikes, you know.

**Luke Webster:** [00:31:22] Be prepared to be out of your comfort zone in any kind of given situation, whether that be, you know, you're on the toilet and you see cockroaches, you know, scuttling around or uh, yeah, you're in the shower and, you know, you don't get that nice, you know, constant warm shower pressure that you've got in your nice shower in England, you know, like, uh, and then, yes, the first and foremost, don't take, don't take things personally when you're on a bike, like everyone is not out to kill you, but you will feel like that sometimes.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:32:05] And of course, let's not forget the karaoke.

**Luke Webster:** [00:32:10] Oh, God.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:32:12] Now you have to talk about the karaoke from someone who is a singer. You certainly have to speak to that.

**Luke Webster:** [00:32:21] Okay. So yeah, that's a massive part of their culture is they sing. They sing like daytime karaoke. It usually happens on a Monday. I think Monday is like their day off. They sit around tables, drink, really. Laru, which is like the cheapest Vietnamese beer. And they'll all sit around the tables, get this massive karaoke machine, like, huge, huge speaker. And they'll have Vietnamese songs playing and they'll sing these Vietnamese songs, but they'll they'll sing it like they're trying to destroy your eardrums. Like they'll sing it into the mic super loudly and it will just be this blaring noise that you kind of hear in the distance. And, you know, sometimes you wake up and you you'll hear it at 8 a.m. and you're like, Oh, no, it's karaoke day.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:33:09] Have you been to a Vietnamese wedding?

**Luke Webster:** [00:33:11] I have a couple.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:33:15] Have karaoke?

**Luke Webster:** [00:33:17] Yeah, they. I was actually playing at the wedding, so I, I, you know, I did my bit.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:33:26] How great to have you there.

**Luke Webster:** [00:33:31] Oh, my God. But it was, you know. I did my bit and then the karaoke came.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:33:36] On. You can't. You can't have a wedding without karaoke. It's just. Just just not done.

**Luke Webster:** [00:33:39] You know, I put it in a bad light. But that's only because of where I've grown up and where what I'm used to. But when you when you see them doing it, they have a they have a great time. They do. It looks like a lot of and you can and you can go to karaoke bars and you can go with friends and you can you know, you can sing. I don't know your Abba and all your karaoke songs. It's just that they have a different way of doing it. They, you know, they get the boom box and the beers and they sit on the side of the road and. And yeah, it's just very. It's very loud and quite unsettling.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:34:16] Yeah. And if you tend to be near a venue like so sometimes people, you know, they've booked their hotel and the hotel's fabulous etcetera, but it just happens to be next door to a karaoke bar and before you know it, they're getting that that sound through their eardrums usually goes for a couple of hours at a time. And, you know, I've known people who have just been outraged, like just just cannot handle it and had to move hotels and all sorts of things. So I mention it because, you know, if you spend at least a couple of weeks or ten days in Hoi An, you're going to come across karaoke and if you don't come across karaoke, you're going to come across the Roosters. Have you had the Roosters wake you up?

**Luke Webster:** [00:35:02] Yeah. so Nethanel my band mate he's gone back to Israel for a couple of months. Um, and I'm staying in his house and his house is like right in the middle of the rice fields and everything. And so, yeah, there's a rooster right next door and he does me the kind favor of waking me up at like 5 or 6 a.m. on most days, which is kind of nice because I'm not actually a morning riser, but now I have. I've been kind of forced to be.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:35:42] And how did you take to the food? Do you love Vietnamese food? Do you have you kind of got some special dishes that you like or.

**Luke Webster:** [00:35:50] Yeah, absolutely. Hands down, it was I went back to England for three months this summer, and it was very saddening to, I say, saddening. It was I'm so accustomed to eating the Vietnamese food, which is, for the most part, very simple. They eat lots of rice, lots of vegetables, lots of broth and soup. And that's a very if you eat with a Vietnamese family, they'll have a big bowl of rice, maybe a chicken stew broth, and then they have Morning Glory, which is like a vegetable with garlic. And then

they might have another some fried tofu for any vegetarians. Yeah, I like a good Khao Lao. You know, which is like the the local dish in Hawaiian. It's like a Hawaiian noodles. And then they have like a fir, which is Hanoi noodles, and then they have meichuan, which is another, you know, local. It's just awesome. The local. Yeah, the food is just amazing and it's so fresh and it's so cheap.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:36:51] So that was the next thing I was going to talk to you about. Like, how would you describe how much it is to, to holiday in Vietnam? Like, how much do you think it's expensive? Do you think it's hard to manage, you know, like between accommodation and getting around and food?

**Luke Webster:** [00:37:12] I'd say it's really it's a very stress free place to go on holiday because you can you can have you can have whatever holiday experience you want. There are loads of resorts on the beach. So if you're a resort person and you want like an all inclusive package, then that is like available to you equally if you want. If you're someone who likes to find like a house with a pool and do your own thing and, you know, cook yourself, then there's loads of stunning, beautiful villas that are, I don't know, maybe a quarter or a fifth of the price that you would pay if you were going and staying in, I don't know, Barbados or so everything. It's it's affordable. It's very easy to get about if you need to if you need to get out on a bike, you go to a local place and you pay 40,000 Vietnamese dong, which is like a dollar and then you just get a bike for the day, you know? No, no paperwork, No, no, nothing. You just off you go. So it's, uh, I'd say it's stress free.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:38:15] Yeah. And that's a really good thing to say because, you know, part of what I try to do with this podcast is to, you know, do a bit of myth busting and kind of breaking down some perceptions that people have of Vietnam. And, you know, unfortunately for many, many years people only thought of Vietnam as the Vietnam War. And, you know, it's taken a long time to kind of move on from that because, you know, people have just got that stucked perception. But going back to Vietnam now and certainly post-COVID, you know, it's really coming back on. I think I got to spend some time also in Ho Chi Minh City. And, you know, after those serious lockdowns there, I was just amazed how quickly that they had, you know, pivoted and turned things around. It was it was almost like back as it was. And I was there in March

2020, just before the lockdown. I just got back into Australia in time. Being stuck in Vietnam couldn't have been too bad. For. You mean. You wouldn't have wanted.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:39:38] To go back to the UK in that period? Surely.

**Luke Webster:** [00:39:42] Honestly, it's so funny. Everyone I talk to when I say I was in Vietnam for the COVID years, they kind of say, oh, you know, did you get stuck there? And I say, no, There was never a point that I couldn't get home. I could always there was always a way for me to get a plane ticket apart from a couple of times where we had really strict lockdowns and it was hard to get out. I could always get home, but I just I chose not to because I feel like in those COVID years. Vietnam locked down so early and straight away, and they nipped it in the bud so quickly that we we didn't have a lockdown until 21st June 2021. I don't think something like that. And so we just parted on.

**Luke Webster:** [00:40:29] It was so...Bizarre. Like in the midst of this world crisis, I found my dream job playing music for a living. You know, I ended up recording an album of my original music, which was like a lifelong dream that I had. And we just we just partied through. We just partied through COVID. And we were watching the news of all this stuff happening. And we couldn't we couldn't literally believe what was happening to the world because the world that we were living in was so, so different. Um, and it was just a, that's why it's, that's why I wrote that song. So I think I might have played it for you when you came to the bar eight days a week. But I wrote that song Neverland and I wrote it when I was back in England. And I was thinking about Hoi An and the people, the people that were there during that time and, you know, this crazy thing that we went through. And yeah, I wrote it as kind of like a homage, I guess, to, the time. Yeah, a tribute. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. For the people that were there during the COVID years.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:41:37] So in finishing up, why don't you tell my listeners a little bit about your band, about your music, where they can find you and I'm sure everyone would love to, to hear your stuff. I know I loved it. So yeah, So let's tell everyone where they can find you.

**Luke Webster:** [00:41:56] Sure. So at the moment we have we have a band that play in Vietnam and we do a lot of we got a four piece band as myself. Nethanel, Nicholas Davis, an insanely good drummer from where I'm from, Bristol, and Richard Burns. He's been living in Vietnam for quite a while, so we're called the Langer's band. That's l a n g u, r. s. People sometimes ask about the spelling.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:42:26] Is That the same as the monkeys? Like the Langur's?

**Luke Webster:** [00:42:32] Yeah, Were thinking of a name for the band.

**Luke Webster:** [00:42:35] Thought about. Yeah, the monkey band. Yeah, the. We're all a little bit crazy.

**Luke Webster:** [00:42:40] But there's a in Cat Ba where me and Nat met. There's a very rare langur, and there's maybe 60 of them left. And we were thinking about the band and we were like, Oh, this, you know, finding each other is quite a rare thing. And we met in Cat Ba with this langur monkey, so we're going to call ourselves, you know, [The langurs with Luke Webster](#)

**Luke Webster:** [00:42:58] The monkeys. So yeah, we're on Instagram and Facebook and then myself, I also play solo and that's when I play my original music. And if you are looking to listen to that music at the moment, it's only available on [SoundCloud](#). So you type in my name, Luke Webster and I think thankfully there's quite a few Luke Webster's in the world as I'm learning.

**Luke Webster:** [00:43:24] But yeah, but yeah, the, the album that I released, it's called The Road Less Traveled.

**Speaker5:** [00:43:32] Yes, I read the book by Scott Peck

**Luke Webster:** [00:43:33] It's essentially an album of the. Yeah, it's about an album of the last seven years of my life and traveling and what happens along the way and the ups and downs and, you know, the heartbreaks and the highs and lows. But my younger brother actually, he's a producer, a very talented producer. So very soon that album is going to be on Spotify and Apple Music and all the other streaming services.



**Luke Webster:** [00:44:00] You. So yeah, you'll be able to listen to it.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:44:02] Yeah, I had a listen to some of your tracks on the SoundCloud and there's some really nice stuff there. Really nice stuff. I don't know enough about SoundCloud to share it. Can I like share the links of SoundCloud? Like I can put the soundcloud link is [here](#).

**Luke Webster:** [00:44:18] Yeah you can. Yeah. Whenever I whenever I finish a gig and people this is why I'm so excited to get my stuff on YouTube and Spotify because I mentioned SoundCloud and they're like, what? What is SoundCloud? And I, you know, I essentially say it's like Spotify, but you need, you know, it's essentially free for musicians It's almost like a the stepping stone platform you put it up and people are able to listen to it and then once everything is mastered and mixed beautifully, which my younger brother is doing a wonderful job of, it will then go to, you know, Spotify and it will be the final product. Right.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:44:51] Okay. Well, for everyone, I'll make sure I put the SoundCloud link and your Instagram and all of that stuff so everybody can track you down. And I know they'll be looking for the Langur's band when they come to Hoi. An So that's for sure.

Look, I just want to say, Luke, thanks for coming on the show and just sharing with us your thoughts about Vietnam and Hoi an and I'm so glad you've had a good time there and I hope to see you again on my next visit to Vietnam.

**Luke Webster:** [00:45:23] As I say, it was my first podcast and the time flew and I had a lot of fun.

**Kerry Newsome:** [00:45:26] Excellent, Excellent. All right. Well, we'll be back in touch, but be safe. And I'll be seeing you soon.

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.

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