



Hanoi – Vietnam

Hanoi is the place where the old spirit of exotic unhurried Asia and modern business rush are mixed together. Crazy stream of motorcycles flows like a river between ancient monuments and temples. Rikshis carry passengers in front of modern shopping malls.

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam and the second largest industrial city after Ho Chi Minh City. Hanoi literally means “between two rivers” because it is situated on the banks of the Red River Hong Ha. The population of Hanoi is around 7.500.000 people. The total size of Hanoi area is 3 300 square kilometers which is three times as big as Moscow for comparison. Hanoi is amongst 17 largest cities of the world and amongst 10 most attractive touristic destinations in Asia. The tourists can also get [Vietnam visa on arrival](#) easily at Noi Bai International airport.

Hanoi is the place where you can wander for hours around one and the same place without getting bored like the famous lake “The returned sword” and always see something new. Here you feel very secure; it is lovely to be engulfed by the atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality of the locals.

Main feature of Hanoi is its relative unpopularity with the tourists. You are not risking getting lost in the crowd of wandering vacationists who sometimes make it hard for you to see the country itself. You can confidently plunge into the atmosphere of old centuries – you can just walk narrow streets of the Old Quarter, pop in the local markets out which the flower market Quang Ba and the Silk street are the most popular.

Puppet theater on water originally was an entertainment for peasants. Tired workers amused each other by creating a puppet performance. Today this show is a real exotic find for the tourists. A special theater has been created which can be visited by anyone and the show is almost a must see for anyone visiting the capital. It is worth attending also because it is one of a few things to do in Hanoi at night. Even if most tourists use Hanoi as an entrepot to travel to the ancient capital Hue, you can stay for a couple of days at [hotels in Hanoi Old Quarter](#) and your journey in Vietnam will be filled with pleasant memories of the first days in the country.

Hoan Kiem Lake

Ho Hoan Kiem or Lake of the Returned Sword was once a part of the Red river (song Hong). Through thousands of years of changes in the geography, the lake moved eastward to its present position many kilometers from the river. The lake was once called Luc Thuy or Green Water because the water was green year-round. In the 15th century, the lake was named Ho Hoan Kiem, based on a legend that is quite similar to King Arthur and the Lady of the Lake's legend. While fighting against the Chinese, King Le Thai To has in his possession a very valuable sword. After 10 years of continuous struggle, the King finally defeated the Chinese and reclaimed Vietnam's independence. One day, while sailing on lake Luc Thuy, a large turtle appeared. The king drew his sword and pointed at the creature. The turtle immediately grabs hold of the sword with its mouth and submerged. The king

mourned the loss of such valuable sword, demanded that the lake be emptied and dredged. Both the turtle and the sword were not found. The king realizing that the gods must have lent him the sword to drive back the enemy, but now that Vietnam is free, the sword must be returned. King Le Thai To has named the lake Ho Hoan Kiem or Lake of the Returned Sword. Since the reign of king Le Trung Hung (XVI century), every king in the Le dynasty, and Lord Trinh have all contributed to the beautification of the lake. Lord Trinh Giang built Khanh Thuy shrine on Ngoc island on the north end of the lake. He also had the two man made hills built across from Ngoc son Shrine. At the end of the Le Dynasty, Khanh Thuy was destroyed by Chieu Thong. A philanthropist named Tin Trai built Ngoc Son pagoda. Ngoc Son pagoda was renamed Ngoc Son shrine during the reign of Thieu Tri III (1843) because it was no longer a Buddhist shrine. Instead, Ngoc Son is a shrine to Van Xuong, a deity, in charge of literature and the various tests required to become a mandarin. It is also a shrine to general Tran Hung Dao, a national hero responsible for many victories against the Mongols. Since then Ngoc Son has gone through many renovations, one of which was the addition of Thap But (Pen Tower) on the hill which was once called Dao Tai. Three words inscribed on the tower "Ta Thien Thanh" or "write on blue sky". Inside the gate a pool resembling the shape of an ink well was added. Beyond the ink well is The Huc bridge or "where the sun light is absorbed". The bridge leads to Dac Nguyet Lau or "Moon Light tower" - Ngoc Son shrine. Beyond the gates to the shrine, there are two walls called bang Rong and bang Ho (dragon and tiger slate) where the names of those who passed the national test are inscribed. On the southwest end of the lake is Thap Rua. It was rumored that king Le Thanh Tong used to fish here. Lord Trinh also built the structure to house his entourage while visiting the lake.

Ho Tay Lake

Ho Tay is the largest of all the lakes in Hanoi. The lake is on the northwest part of the city. Long ago, the lake was a branch of the Red river but later, as the river changed course, the lake remained a body of water just west of the river. There are many legends associated with West Lake. The most popular is the legend of the golden buffalo.

As the story goes, there once was a medicine man who was a giant. He is well known in Vietnam for his medicine practice and the king often used him to treat the royal family. His fame reached China and he was invited to China to treat the king. He was successful where others have failed so the king was going to reward him with great wealth. He refused offerings of gold and only requested that the king give him all the black copper in the king's vault. The king agreed and the giant left for Vietnam with vast amounts of black copper. In Vietnam the giant molded a giant bell of black copper. The giant rang the bell and the sound resonated all the way to China. In the king's vault there was a golden buffalo. Upon hearing the sound of the bell, the buffalo came to life (because he thought that his mother was calling him) and charged southward. Upon reaching Ha Noi, the buffalo trampled the land in the area near Red river. Over the years, this area filled with water and became Ho Tay or West Lake.

Ho Tay has always been an area for vacationing royalties. When Ha Noi was still the capital city, the kings from the Ly and Tran dynasty-built summer homes along the lake. In the north end of the lake there are several villages famous for their flowers and fruits plantations. Most famous is Nghi Tam village, the birth place of Ba Huyen Thanh Quan, one of Vietnam's premier Poetess.

Van Mieu, Hanoi

Originally built in 1070 in the Ly dynasty, the temple is a shrine to Confucius and his disciples responsible for spreading his teachings. Six years later, Quoc Tu Giam or School for the sons of the Nation was established for the princes. The school later admitted sons of mandarins and finally commoners were allowed to attend but, only after they passed a rigorous examination at the regional level. In 1484, Van Mieu became a place to memorialize the most brilliant scholars of the nation. In 1484, King Le Thanh Tong decreed the names of all those who have attained the doctoral ranks in the national examination be inscribed on stone stelae carried on the backs of giant tortoises. In all, 2,313 individuals were awarded the title of Tien si. However, detailed records were kept only between 1442 and 1779. According to records, there should be 112 stelae in all but only 82 stelae are still standing. Each represents a single examination year. The name and native village of the students who were awarded the title Tien Si or doctor laureate were inscribed on the stone. Tien si was not a diploma of graduation from the royal college. This title was awarded to those who have successfully passed the 4 royal examinations. Scholars from all over Vietnam could participate only if they had passed the regional exam. Courtyard of the Sages is located beyond the Garden of Stelae. Entrance to the courtyard is through Dai Thanh Mon or Gate of Great Success. The Great House of Ceremonies is located here. It was here that all new doctor laureates would come to pay respect to Confucius. The king would also come to pay homage to the great teacher at Dai Thanh Mon. Inscribed on a wooden panel above the altar are the words "Teacher of Ten Thousand Generations".

Behind the Great House of Ceremonies is the Sanctuary, with statue of Confucius flanked by his four closest disciples, Nhan Tu, Tu Tu, Tang Tu, and Manh-Tu (Mencius). Quoc Tu Giam or School for the Sons of the nation is located in the last courtyard. During the time when Van Mieu was used as a school, this area housed classrooms, housing facilities and a print shop. When the university was moved to Hue, Quoc Tu Giam was turned into a shrine to Confucius' parents called Khai Thanh.

Source: [Đặt khách sạn](#)