

TRANSPORTATION

Travelling to and in Vietnam is quite convenient. There are several means of transport to choose from depending on the budget and time.

AIR

If you intend to visit only a few cities in Vietnam and do not want to spend too much time on transporting between different destinations, flying is the most convenient way to travel. **Vietnam Airlines** operates on domestic routes and flies to places like Phu Quoc Island and Rach Gia that are difficult to reach by other means. Domestic air travel is time saving especially for long distance.

There are **16 domestic airports** in Vietnam servicing air passengers. They are located in:

- + **Hai Phong** (Cat Bi Airport)
- + **Dien Bien** (Dien Bien Phu Airport)
- + **Thanh Hoa** (Tho Xuan Airport)
- + **Nghe An** (Vinh Airport)
- + **Quang Binh** (Dong Hoi Airport)
- + **Hue** (Phu Bai Airport)
- + **Quang Nam** (Chu Lai Airport)
- + **Binh Dinh** (Phu Cat Airport)
- + **Phu Yen** (Tuy Hoa Airport)
- + **Daklak** (Buon Me Thuot Airport)
- + **Lam Dong**(Lien Khuong Airport)
- + **Gia Lai** (Pleiku Airport)
- + **Vung Tau** (Con Dao Airport)
- + **Can Tho** (Can Tho Airport)
- + **Kien Giang** (Rach Gia Airport)
- + **Ca Mau** (Ca Mau Airport).

There are **direct flights** on Vietnam Airlines to **Hue, Danang, Dalat, Nha Trang, Dien Bien Phu, Phu Quoc, Quy Nhon, Pleiku** and **Saigon**. To connect the two major cities like Hanoi and Saigon, Vietnam Airlines run more than 20 flights per day.

There are **five international airports** welcoming tourists to Vietnam. These are **Noi Bai International Airport** in **Hanoi**, **Danang International Airport** in **Danang**, **Tan Son Nhat International Airport** in **Saigon**, **Cam Ranh International Airport** in **Khanh Hoa** and **Phu Quoc International Airport** in **Kien Giang**. Tourists can apply for visa on arrival at these airports if they have an invitation letter obtained prior to arrival.

Most of Asian countries, including China, Japan, Korea, and Russia have direct flights to and from Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi.

CARS AND BUSES

Vietnam has an extensive road network which covers almost every part of the country. Coaches are the most popular means of transportation for intercity travels. To cover a distance by road, it is reasonable to count a **minimum speed of 60 km/hour**.

Vietnam has a regular bus service that connects even the remotest areas of the country. It is very cheap but the emphasis is on economy rather than comfort.

TAXI

In the major cities the easiest method of transport are taxis. Most are relatively **new models** of car and are **air-conditioned**. Prices are **quite cheap** and most trips within a city cost between US\$2 and US\$10. Contrast this with the price of a cyclo trip (about the same), and except for the novelty of the transport, taxis provide a better service. Tourism authorities advise tourists not to take cyclos at night.

BOATS

Boats are **widely used in the Mekong Delta area**. There are some boats between the mainland Vietnam and the surrounding islands i.e. Saigon and Vung Tau, Vung Tau and Con Dao, Hai Phong and Cat Ba, Ha Tien and Phu Quoc, Rach Gia and Phu Quoc ect.

HONDA OM

On any street corner in Vietnam, travelers will find **men with motorcycles** willing to carry them anywhere. This mode of transport is known as Honda Om. It is usually cheap and reliable although the **fare should be negotiated** before commencing the journey.

TRAIN

Travelling by trains provide a good opportunity to mingle with local people and experience their ways of living. That makes it a popular way of travelling through the length of the country. The passing scenery along the journey is pleasant. In general the train are **safe**, and **rather inexpensive compared to other means of transport**, but **slow** and **not really comfortable**. But for a short-term journey, it is an interesting means of transportation and way to see Vietnam.

Vietnam Railways operates the rail network in the country which connects the main cities. There is a **regular train service** between **Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City**, **Hanoi to Hai Phong** and **Hanoi to Lao Cai**. Tickets allow passengers to stop at regional cities like Hue, Danang, and Nha Trang. The trip from **Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City** takes **between 36 and 48 hours**, depending on which service is used. The five classes of train travel in Vietnam are hard seat, soft seat, hard sleeper, soft sleeper and soft sleeper with air conditioning.