

# VIET CONG TUNNELS WELCOME TOURISTS



Vietnam is one of Asian most rapidly developing countries. Its economy has been growing in the recent years, the level of services has improved and the potential of local tourist industry has massively increased. Even though the Vietnam War left the country and its people in a terrible state, it appears that the painful memories are gradually settling down and the Vietnamese are ready to tell their stories to the world. Many tourists who come to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) are attracted by the nearby Cu Chi Tunnels.

This intricate underground system of passages was used by the Viet Cong guerilla fighters as a refuge and center of operations during the Vietnam War. The tunnels are located about 70 km of the city of Saigon and all together feature a surprising maze of 250 km of underground corridors and rooms. The entire system dates back to the 1940s and enabled the Viet Cong to control the surrounding rural area.

What is fascinating here is the diversity of the tunnels - people in fact lived here, spent years and years underground without seeing daylight for weeks at a time. There are kitchens, living areas, improvised hospitals, weapon factories and operation rooms, simply an entire city below the surface.

The strategic value of the tunnels was immense; they offered convenient access to U.S. military bases and enabled communication between the guerillas. Simply enough, the tunnels were a major and constant worry for the U.S. soldiers.

Nowadays, tourists are welcome here. They may learn about the life in the tunnels, about the tactics of guerilla fighters as well as what life in the war felt like for common people. It is a very beneficial and deep experience for anyone. Being in Saigon and missing out on this impressive tour is from a tourist's point of view simply unacceptable.

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