

# HO CHI MINH CITY - A HOT TOURIST DESTINATION



Vietnam's commercial hub has become a very hot tourist destination; the attractions range from the colonial past to the horrors of Vietnam War or today's economic success. Ho Chi Minh City is all about diversity and charm.

For a significant period after the war in Vietnam, tourists were reluctant to come here for a visit. However, decades have passed and the Vietnamese managed to turn their luck around and use the past to their advantage.

**Ho Chi Minh City was formerly known as Saigon.** In 1976, the city merged with the neighboring province and was renamed after the national hero, who fought for the country's independence. **During the 1960s, the city was swarming with the Viet Cong fighters and became the centre of resistance.** Not 75 km north of Ho Chi Minh City are the Cu Chi Tunnels. Definitely a challenge for all visitors, these 70 cm wide and 90 cm high underground routes offered refuge to thousands of Vietnamese in times of war. Many spent years living down here.

**Ho Chi Minh today features some charming colonial architecture as well as museums dedicated to retelling the country's past.** The War Remnants Museum is an eye-opener, as it presents a rather vivid account of the Vietnam War. Even here visitors may enter a network of underground tunnels, one of which leads to the Revolutionary Museum, where visitors learn about the Vietnamese struggle against French colonialism and the American invasion.

Even today, **the French influence is very visible in the wide boulevards and colonial buildings.** The most beautiful are now the Reunification Palace, City Hall, Municipal Theater and the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Visiting the Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens, which date back to 1865 is a great family day out. Ho Chi Minh City is now the commercial hub, a blend of cultures and a vibrant tourist magnet which embraces all with an amazingly sparkling spirit.

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