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U R B A N E N O T E S

Vietnam Starter Guide

A practical introduction to arrival, daily life and local setup in Vietnam. Built to help new arrivals avoid common mistakes and make better first decisions.

LOCAL GUIDANCE FOR TRAVEL & LIFE

WELCOME

Start with the essentials.

Whether you are relocating for work, planning an extended stay, or exploring Vietnam before making a bigger move, this guide gives you a clear starting point. It is designed to help you understand the basics, avoid common first-week mistakes, and recognise where personalised guidance can save time, stress and money.

How to Use This Guide

Use this Starter Guide as a general orientation tool. It gives you practical direction, but it is not legal, immigration or financial advice. Official or time-sensitive details should always be checked before you act.

What This Covers

- Arrival preparation
- Where to live
- Banking and wallets
- Useful apps and daily setup

What Personalisation Adds

- Advice based on your reason for coming
- Relevant local watch-outs
- Area and service suggestions
- Practical next steps

INCLUDED IN YOUR PERSONALISED VIETNAM GUIDE

Prepared Around Your Situation

Your personalised guide is built around your travel reason, selected services and specific questions. These sections cannot be written properly until we know more about you.

Personalised section

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Prepare the basics before you land.

Your first few days in Vietnam are much easier when your documents, money access and communication tools are ready before arrival.

Documents

- Save passport, visa, insurance and accommodation details offline.
- Keep digital copies in cloud storage and on your phone.
- Have your accommodation address ready for forms and transport.

Money

- Carry some small cash for arrival costs.
- Do not rely only on airport Wi-Fi or card payments.
- Keep a backup card separate from your wallet.

Watch-outs

- Airport tiredness leads to rushed decisions.
- SIM cards, taxis and exchanges are easier when you know your plan before landing.

Arrival Checklist

- Offline documents
- Cash and backup card
- Transport app ready
- Accommodation address saved

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Your First 72 Hours

A tailored first-steps plan based on your arrival city, travel reason and most urgent setup tasks.

Unlocked when personalised

WHERE TO LIVE

Choose an area that fits your life, not just the internet.

Vietnam's major cities have very different neighbourhood rhythms. The right area depends on your work, transport, budget, social life and tolerance for noise or distance.

General Rule

Do not choose a neighbourhood only because it is popular with foreigners. Popular areas can be convenient, but they can also be expensive, crowded or disconnected from your actual daily routine.

Viewing Checklist

- Visit during rush hour and at night.
- Check noise, flooding risk and parking.
- Confirm what bills are included.
- Ask who handles repairs.

Watch-outs

- Photos can hide building noise, damp issues or access problems.
- Short-term convenience can become long-term frustration if your commute is difficult.

Before You Commit

- Compare at least three options.
- Ask about deposits and notice periods.
- Check the surrounding street at different times.

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Area Suggestions Based on You

Instead of giving generic district advice, the personalised guide compares areas based on your lifestyle, budget, work location and priorities.

Area match preview

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BANKING AND WALLETS

Plan for a transition period.

Banking in Vietnam can be straightforward once your documents are ready, but many new arrivals need temporary workarounds during the first few weeks.

Requirements

Most banks will ask for your passport and visa. Additional documents may depend on your status, purpose and intended length of stay.

Digital Wallets

Digital wallets and payment apps can be very useful, but setup requirements vary. Keep cash available while your banking situation is being sorted.

Watch-outs

- Do not assume card payments are accepted everywhere.
- Keep enough cash for deposits, repairs, taxis and small vendors.

Practical Next Steps

- Keep passport and visa details accessible.
- Ask your employer or landlord which banks are easiest locally.
- Maintain an international backup card.

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Personalised Banking Watch-outs

This section highlights banking issues most relevant to your visa, work status and setup plans.

Tailored guidance

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ESSENTIAL APPS

Download the tools locals actually use.

A few apps make daily life much easier in Vietnam. Install the essentials before arrival so transport, communication and navigation are ready from day one.

Transport

- **Grab:** rides and food delivery.
- **Google Maps:** navigation and route planning.

Communication

- **Zalo:** widely used for local messaging and services.
- **Google Translate:** helpful for menus, signs and quick conversations.

Watch-outs

- Prices and availability can change in heavy rain or peak times.
- Some services require a local number to function smoothly.

First-Week Download List

- Grab
- Zalo
- Google Translate
- Google Maps

INCLUDED IN YOUR PERSONALISED VIETNAM GUIDE

Your Recommended App Setup

Your personalised guide prioritises apps based on why you are coming to Vietnam, where you will stay and which services you need first.

Custom app stack

NEXT STEP

Want guidance built around your move?

This Starter Guide gives you the essentials. Your Personalised Vietnam Guide goes further by using your answers to create recommendations, watch-outs and practical next steps that fit your actual plans.

What You Receive

- Personalised local guidance
- Relevant watch-outs
- Selected service notes
- Practical next steps

Best For

- Relocation planning
- Long stays
- Work setup
- First-time arrivals

Why It Feels Different

Your guide is not a generic download. It is prepared from the information you provide and reviewed so the final version feels relevant, practical and easy to use.

Create Your Personalised Vietnam Guide

Tell us what brings you to Vietnam and what you need help with. We will prepare guidance around your situation.

[Start My Guide](#)