

# Vietnam

*today*



# **VIETNAM TODAY**

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## NATIONAL ANTHEM

## Moderato - Marciale.

**ĐOÀN I** Đoàn quân Việt - nam đi. Chung lòng cứu quốc. Bước chân  
**ĐOÀN II** Đoàn quân Việt - nam đi. Sao vàng phấp phới. Dắt giương

dân vàng trên dương gặp ghèn xa. Ca in máu chiến thắng mang hồn nước. Súng ngoài  
 nơi quê hương qua nơi lèn than. Cùng chung xác phên đầu xây đời mới. Bùng đầu

xa chen thục quân hành ca. Đường vinh quang xây xác quân thù. Thắng gian  
 lên gông xích xa đẹp hơn. Tự bao lâu ta nuốt căm hờn. Quyết hy

ANTHEM

lao, cùng nhau lập chiến khu, Vì nhân dân chiến đấu không ngừng Tiến mau  
sinh, đời ta hoi thắm hơn, Vì nhân dân chiến đấu không ngừng Tiến mau

ra sa trường, Tiến lên ! Cùng tiến lên Nước non Việt -  
ra sa trường, Tiến lên ! Cùng tiến lên Nước non Việt -

nam ta bên, 1. 2.  
nam ta vòng bên, 1. 2.





## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*By their solidarity and patriotism and with support from the people of the world, the Vietnamese people are struggling victoriously against a fierce enemy: U.S. imperialism.*

*Readers and friends of many countries including the U.S.A. who have been following this struggle with sympathy and wholehearted support, suggested us to provide them information regarding other aspects of our country and people. We have endeavoured to put into this cover what may interest them.*

*If our work is of any use to them we shall feel rewarded.*

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE  
HANOI



## CHAPTER I

### GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



Vietnam lies along the coast of the Indochinese peninsula, bordered in the north by the People's Republic of China, in the west by the Kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia and washed in the east and south by the Pacific Ocean.

It is located in the centre of Southeast Asia between  $8^{\circ}30'$  and  $23^{\circ}22'$  North latitude and between  $102^{\circ}10'$  and  $109^{\circ}29'$  East longitude.

Hanoi time is 7 hours ahead of Greenwich time.

Vietnam covers an area of about 329,600 square kilometres, its coast line has the shape of an S. From its northernmost to its southernmost point, the distance is 1,650 kilometres, the widest part has 600

kilometres (in Bacbo \*) and the narrowest part, 50 kilometres (in Trungbo).

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

Four fifths of the territory of Vietnam are covered with mountains and hills which form a system running from north to south on a length of 1,400 kilometres and is divided in two directions by the straight valley of the Red River.

The first branch running eastward forms the mountains and hills of the northeastern region of Bacbo, disposed in concentric arcs and composed of numerous chalky massifs relatively low, but markedly uneven and broken between deep valleys. The second branch runs towards the south of the Red River delta, forming between it and the border large massifs running obviously from northwest to southeast (highest peak: Fansipan 3,142m.). It stretches till the

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\* Vietnam is divided into three parts: North, Central and South Vietnam. After the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam these are called respectively Bacbo, Trungbo, and Nambo which correspond respectively to the former appellations by the French colonialists: Tonking, Annam and Cochinchina. The 1954 Geneva Agreements have taken the 17th parallel as a provisional military demarcation line and the zone lying north of this line is called North Vietnam (including Bacbo and North Trungbo) and the zone lying south is called South Vietnam. In this book we use the French or Vietnamese appellations when referring to the period prior to or after the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The terms North and South Vietnam are used when reference is made to the present partition of the country.

seashore in the north of Trungbo, then turns southward, to follow the coast and form the Truongson Range.

The southern section of the Truongson Range is a region of mountains and high plateaux, its directions are north-northwest south-southeast, then north-south and finally northeast-southwest, it spreads in a wide arch looking to the Pacific Ocean. These high plateaux, commonly called Taynguyen or Western Plateaux, are mostly formed by basaltic rocks which, worn by the time, turn into red soil of great fertility.

The plains of Vietnam are all alluvial river deltas lying along the seacoast.

In the North, the Red River delta, with its summit at Phutho covers a fairly wide area (15,000 square kilometres). Along the bank of the Red River and its tributaries, appear strips of land more elevated than the surrounding ricefields, on which dykes have been built to divide the plains into sections. The silt carried by the Red River invades the sea at the rate of 100 metres a year and forms alluvial plains.

Except the plains of the Ma and Ca Rivers, the plains of Trungbo are but narrow strips cut by counterforts into parts running along the seacoast as a fringe to the Truongson Range.

The plain of Nambo extends over 40,000 square kilometres, constituted for the most part of new alluvium, homogeneous, low and sometimes swampy. The Mekong is of regular flow and needs no protecting dykes. Apart from filling the plains, especially the lowland, the alluvium of the Mekong expands the area

of the delta to the southwest and invades the sea at the rate of from 60 to 80 metres a year.

## SEA AND SEACOASTS

The sea which borders on Vietnam is rather shallow, and has a broad continental platform except along the Trungbo southern coast.

In Vietnam the tiding system is a complicated phenomenon. In the Bacbo Gulf, the tide is setting in and out once a day, in Nambo twice, while in Trungbo it is once or twice a day.

Vietnam has 3,260 kilometres of coast line. In Bacbo the coast is winding and is noted for the presence of picturesque lime stone reefs to which world-wide famous Halong Bay owes its original beauty. The most zigzagging coast line is in South Trungbo, with its earthy capes, stony walls and deep and well-sheltered bays; Camranh Bay is an excellent natural roadstead for sea-going vessels.

Vietnam's coast is dotted with beautiful seaside resorts such as Traco, Doson, Samson, Cualo, Cua-tung, Nhatrang, Cape St. Jacques.

## CLIMATE

Vietnam lies in the tropics, in the monsoon zone of Asia. Its climate varies from one region to another according to its latitude and relief.

In Summer, the heat prevails all over Vietnam. From South to North, the temperature varies very little :

	<u>Hottest month</u>	<u>Average temperature</u>
Saigon	April	28° 9 C
Hue	June-July	29° 4 C
Hanoi	June	28° 8 C

On the contrary, owing to the influence of the Northeast monsoon in Winter, the temperature varies a great deal from North to South :

	<u>Coldest month</u>	<u>Average temperature</u>
Hanoi	January	16° 5 C
Hue	January	19° 7 C
Saigon	January	25° 8 C

Therefore, the discrepancy between the seasons is more felt as one goes further to the North.

Temperature drops as the altitude rises especially in the North where Chapa (1,570 metres above sea level) has in January a temperature of 8° 3 C and sometimes 2° C. Sometimes snow can be seen.

From November to April, the cold and dry North-east monsoon prevails in Vietnam coming from China. From May to October blows the Southwest oceanic wind, bringing with it huge quantities of water. Also prevailing in Vietnam are the trade-winds specific of the tropics.

Every year, Vietnam has to weather typhoons which are great whirlwinds. Their velocity can reach 80-120 km/hour, sometimes 200 km/hour. Usually these typhoons start from the Pacific Ocean (east of the



Philippines) or even in the China Sea, sweep northwest or west and usually hit Vietnam from the 14th parallel upward (July-November). They are accompanied by torrential rains and play havoc among the people.

Rain falls abundantly in Vietnam, the delta receives 1,500 mm. a year, the mountain region 2,300 mm. and even 3,750 mm. in certain places. Rainfall depends on monsoon. In Bacbo and in Nambo, the dry season takes place from November to April during which the Northeast wind prevails, and the rainy season lasts from May to October when the Southwest wind prevails. Exception is made of Trungbo, east of Truongson Range which receives rain from August to January.

The irregular rainfall causes water-logging, floods and drought very harmful to Vietnam which is mainly an agrarian country.

In North Vietnam, the period of year running from October to January is cool and dry. It is the most propitious season for tourism.

## RIVERS

Vietnam has many rivers which usually drain northwest-southeast and flow all into the China Sea. Except the two biggest rivers, the Mekong and the Red River, all of them are short. Their headwaters are cut by waterfalls and rapids.

Vietnam has two great river basins. In Bacbo lies the basin of the Red River and Thaibinh River. The