



COURSE INFORMATION – HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

The following contains very important information to help you pack and prepare for your stay in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, as well as details regarding the training location and training course itself. Please read this thoroughly and keep it for future reference.

Deposit

If you have not yet paid a deposit and received confirmation of payment, you are not yet "officially" registered for a course. Should you still need to make a deposit, please review the available payment methods in your original acceptance letter.

FINAL PAYMENT

Final payments must be received by first break on the first day of the course. Cash on arrival is NOT an acceptable method of payment.

You have the following options for final payment:

Pay by credit card either before or upon arrival. Go to our secure server at [HYPERLINK "https://www.teflife.com/payments.html"](https://www.teflife.com/payments.html) <https://www.teflife.com/payments.html> and follow the instructions. You will only need to fill in your name, email address and credit card details in the billing section. We will usually respond within 12 hours confirming receipt of payment.

Pay by personal check to:

TEFL International
1200 Belle Passi Rd
Woodburn, OR 97071 USA

Personal checks MUST BE drawn on a US bank from a US account and it must arrive 2 weeks before the course start date.

*Please write your name, the course location, course dates, and your Email address on the back of the check. This is very important so that we can immediately notify you when the check has been received.

Pay by bank transfer:

Bank of America

Routing No. 02600959-3

Swift Code BOFAUS6S

Account No. 004541342524 FOR WIRE IN ONLY

CREDIT: TEFL INTERNATIONAL

Bank of America, N.A.

110 South Pacific Hwy

Woodburn, OR 97071

Tel. No. 503 982-2265

The bank transfer should be sent in US DOLLARS. Your local bank should convert the currency. IF THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE they can ask for other instructions at HYPERLINK "mailto:applications@teflife.com" applications@teflife.com

Please arrange to send the bank transfer 2 weeks before the course start date. Kindly send us a scanned copy of your bank receipt at HYPERLINK "mailto:applications@teflife.com" applications@teflife.com. Please do not forget to bring and show the bank receipt to the course administrator upon arrival at the training center.

IMPORTANT: As previously stated, cash on arrival is NOT an acceptable method of final payment and is only accepted under unusual circumstances. If you feel that your case warrants an exception to this policy Email us immediately at HYPERLINK "mailto:applications@teflife.com" applications@teflife.com and we can review your situation. If you fail to gain a special exemption beforehand, cash payments will be charged an additional 10 percent handling fee.

Visa and Passport Information

All visitors to Vietnam are required to carry a passport valid for at least six months after arrival date.

Only nationals of Thailand, The Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan can stay in Vietnam for a maximum of 30 days without a visa. Citizens from all other countries must obtain a valid visa upon arriving in Vietnam.

In most cases, getting your visa from a travel agent rather than directly through the Vietnamese embassy can save time and headaches. The travel agency doing your visa usually needs a photocopy of your passport and two or three photos.

Tourist visa

Tourist visas are valid only for a single 30-day stay. The visa specifies the exact date of arrival and departure, thus you must solidify your travel plans well in advance. You cannot arrive even one day earlier than your visa specifies. And if you change your plans and postpone your trip by two weeks, then you'll only have 16 days remaining on your visa instead of 30 days

Business Visa

There are several advantages in having a business visa: such visas are valid for six months, issued for multiple-entry journeys and will look more impressive when you have to deal with the authorities. Also, you are permitted to work if you have a business visa.

Business visas can be prearranged through a local sponsor in Vietnam. If approved, you must receive confirmation from the sponsor and then go to pick up the visa from a Vietnamese embassy abroad.

It is also possible to arrive on a tourist visa and make arrangements locally for a business visa.

Visa fee

You can refer the price table for the service fee from some well known travel agencies by clicking the links below. Please notice that besides the service fee, you have to pay US\$ 25 (for a tourist visa) or US\$ 100 (for a business visa) as approval fee directly at Immigration Desk.

<http://www.asiatravel.com/vietnam/vnvisa.html>

<http://www.traveltovietnam.com/Guide/General/Prepare/visa.asp>

http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org/consular_services/visa_info/

“You can contact admin in Vietnam to help you about visa.”

Customs

Before picking up your luggage from the baggage claim area you will proceed to the Customs desk where you will be asked to present your passport and completed Entry/Exit Form (YELLOW FORM)

CAUTION: To avoid any hassles that may delay your departure make sure you DO NOT LOSE the yellow form which you are required to return to Customs when departing the country.

Transportation upon Arrival

Ho Chi Minh City is a 20-minute taxi ride from the airport. A metered taxi charges approximately US\$ 5 from Tan Son Nhat to the city center where our courses are located.

Should you have any problems with transportation going to the training center, please feel free to call us at telephone number +84 (08) 221.56785 or +84 (090) 9.347.324

Time

Vietnam is seven hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Working in Vietnam

If you are planning on seeking work in Vietnam, please bring along your original diploma and transcripts from college, technical school or high school, as well as a copy of your birth certificate. Please bring a copy of your marriage license if you are married.

Job prospects throughout Vietnam and Asia are very good and easily available for citizens from all countries. Should you accept a work position in Vietnam you will need to get a work visa!

A general view of Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is a sprawling metropolis of 7 million people. Still referred to as "Saigon" today, Ho Chi Minh City is the hub of financial activity and is the largest and most developed city in Vietnam. You will witness a mix of the old and new where modern skyscrapers are juxtaposed with faded colonial buildings. Amid the city's modernization still exists traditional elements visible in the variety of Chinese-style pagodas and historical landmarks such as the Notre Dame Cathedral, Old Post Office and the Reunification Hall.

Ho Chi Minh City has a vibrant nightlife with many local and western bars and cafes concentrated in the city center. The city is also the culinary capital where you can sample a variety of foods ranging from Vietnamese regional specialties to international cuisine. Here you can find the best Vietnamese, French, and Chinese restaurants.

Accommodation in Ho Chi Minh City

We could help you book a room. You may choose from the list below.

Thanh Guest House : 171/1E CO BAC St ,Dist 1, HCMC

Tel: (84.8) 3836 8469.

Mobil: 0958 866 618

Price : 220\$/month for single room, 250\$/month for double room.

Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con and free drinking water

Ngoc Hue Guest House: 171/22 Co Bac St, Dist 1, HCMC]

Tel: (84.8) 3836 0089

Price: 250\$/month for single room, 300-350\$/month for double room

Cab television, hot water, shower, air con

Ty Na 2 Guest House: 7/4 Nguyen Khac Nhu St, Dist1, HCMC

Tel: 38371694

Price: 270\$/month

Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con

Dan Le Guest House: 171/10 Co Bac St, Co Giang area, Dist 1, HCMC

Tel: (08) 38 369 651

Mobile : 0903.688.292 (Mr. Dan)

Price: 12\$/ night; 360\$/month

Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con

Ngoc Minh Guest House: 283/11 Pham Ngu Lao St, Dist 1, HCMC

Tel: (84.8) 38365215

Fax: (84.8) 8376407

Price: 450\$/month

Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con

Chau Long Mini Hotel: 185/8 Pham Ngu Lao st, Dist 1, HCMC

Tel: (84.8) 38369667- 38370116

Fax: (84.8) 8370116

Price: 320\$/month for single room, 450\$/month for double room

Laundry service: 1-2\$/ kg of clothes

Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con

ROOM FOR RENT: 113/5 Nguyen Trai St, W. Ben Thanh, Dist 1

Tel: 39087714 (Miss Nhung)

Mobile : 0913881700

Price: 300\$/ month for single room; 350\$/ month for double room.
Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con

Hai Hong room for rent: 27B/8 Nguyen Dinh Chieu St, Dist 1

Tel: 3824 4881
Mobile : 0908 247 910 (Mrs. Truong)
Price: 300\$/ month for single room.
Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con & washing clothes, housekeeping

Sunshine Guesthouse: 236/29/17 (old number: 106/19E) Dien Bien Phu , Dist Binh Thanh

Tel: 3899 6806
Mobile : 0903 827 996 (Mr. Hoa)
Price: 270\$/ month for single room, 350\$/month for double room
Cab Television, hot water, shower, air con, **free pick up at airport (inform arrival details at least 1 week before arrival)**

Laundry

It is rather cheap in Vietnam and generally available wherever you go. In Ho Chi Minh City, clothes are machine dried and can be done in a day.

Clothing

Light, comfortable, easy to launder clothing in natural fabrics such as cotton is most suitable in Vietnam. Good walking shoes and sandals that can be easily removed are recommended especially when entering temples and people's homes.

Food

One of the delights of Ho Chi Minh City is the amazing cuisine. You'll never have to look very far for food. Both Vietnamese and Western food are widely available and English-language menus are becoming increasingly common. One of the characteristics of Vietnamese food is that it is always fresh being bought the same morning straight from the market. Rice and noodle dishes are the staple of Vietnamese food. Fish, chicken, and/or pork dishes along with cooked vegetables and rice form a typical meal. The dishes are usually not spicy and are accompanied with a variety of condiments, including chili sauce, fish sauce or 'nuoc mam' (smells like anchovies), and soy sauce. It is advisable to have hot, well-cooked meals (including vegetables) until you think you get used to the Vietnamese foods, which always have lots of fresh vegetables. Typical Vietnamese dishes you can expect to include "pho", a type of rice noodle soup eaten for breakfast, "cha gio" ("nem"), deep-fried spring rolls and "goi ngo sen", a delicious salad made with lotus stems, shrimps and peanuts. Sea products are also super: fresh fish, lobster, crabs, Cuttlefish. Eating utensils will mostly be chopsticks. Just request for a fork (pronounced "nia") if you haven't mastered the chopstick.

Central Saigon is the place to look for fine Vietnamese and Western food. The prices vary from US\$1-1,5 (Vietnamese office set lunch) to US\$3/dish (western food).

Many local Vietnamese restaurants do not have prices on the menu. You must definitely ask the total price when you place your order because overcharging is quite common.

Vegetarians

Due to the strong Buddhist influence in Vietnam, vegetarian food is widely available. Vegetarians will have no difficulty eating in Vietnam as fresh vegetables and fruits are in abundant supply, in addition to a number of vegetarian restaurants. All fruits and vegetables should be cooked or peeled.

Tipping when eating

It is probably the most asked question. It is a western introduction. In the large cities when dining in large hotel restaurants tips are included. If you feel the service was good you can tip around 10,000 – 20,000 Dong (around US\$ 0.80 – 1.50). As you travel and eat on the roadside it is not required that you tip. If you feel compelled to tip because the service was good then an amount of 2,000 – 5,000 Dong (US\$ 0.15 – 0.30).

Drinks, Snacks, Personal Food Items

Coffee, tea, soft drinks and snacks may be purchased at a small cost from the shops across the street or down the road. Drinks may be taken into the training room during input sessions.

Bottled water and mineral water are obtainable at any shops in most cities but remember to check the seal for possible contamination. Ice cubes especially served on the roadside or small towns should be avoided. It is advisable to drink boiled water and not to drink ice and tap water. Just request for chilled drinks (pronounced “Op Lan”). The trend is starting to move towards chilling the drinks instead of putting ice in it.

Telecommunications

IDD Calls normally cost **US\$ 1 – 1.5** per minute to US or Europe.

Fortunately, there is a service using IP technology called “Call 178”, charging only US\$ 0.75 per minute (the calling quality is not as good as the other one, of course). To use this service, you dial 178 before dialing 00 + country code + area code + phone number. If you can use this service at a post office, there will be 500 dong/ minute (about 3 cents) surcharge

However, the best choice may be the internet telephone service which can be found in many internet cafes. The cost is only 1,500-2,000 dong (about 15 cents) per minute. Make sure you go into an Internet Café with ADSL connection for better talking quality.

Local calls (within Ho Chi Minh City) from public telephone service vary from **10 cents** (to home phone) to **20 cents** (to mobile phone).

Local calls from your mobile phone cost about 1800 dong (10 cents) per minute.

Internet

There are internet/computer shops near the training center. They usually charge 4,000 dong (about 25 cents) per hour.

Mail

There are many post offices around the city where you can send mails.

You may receive mail at this address:

TEFL INTERNATIONAL

UNESCO Language Center, 3rd Floor,

68 Vo Thi Sau street,

District 1, Ho Chi Minh city.

Valuables

Please put all valuables and excess cash in the safe at the front desk, and put away other valuable items when you are out your room. Do not leave cameras, tape players, etc. in the classroom overnight.

First Aid

All minor injuries can be treated at the training location. Medication for food poisoning - including antibiotic drugs - is available at local drug stores. In the case of food poisoning or other stomach problems trainees are advised to temporarily avoid eating. Drink only bottled water until the symptoms subside and then gradually introduce other foods into your diet beginning with steamed rice.

If there is any serious injury, please inform the Course Director or one of the staff and transportation will be provided to a local hospital for treatment. An emergency contact list is posted in the classroom.

COURSE ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Training Course Schedule

The first class and orientation will take place Monday morning at 8:30 a.m. The course schedule will be provided on Monday morning. Sessions generally run between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. with appropriate breaks.

Trainees are expected to attend all input and other sessions included on the schedule unless they are sick and require medical treatment. This is particularly important for Teaching Practice (TP). It is very difficult to arrange an alternate TP time and there will be an additional fee for rescheduled TP.

Course Dress Requirements

For all input and tutorial sessions at the training location, there are no specific dress requirements, yet we ask that you be mindful of your peers and respectful of the fact that you are a visitor in another country.

During Teaching Practice, however, there are specific dress requirements that adhere to the local working culture

and basic ideas of professionalism. All trainees are expected to dress “casually smart” according to the following guidelines:

Women:

Shoulders should be covered; sleeveless shirts are acceptable, but very thin straps or tank tops are not. No low-cut necklines or very short skirts. Bare midriffs must not be visible, even when lifting arms up. Open-toed shoes are acceptable.

Men:

Long pants; no raggedy jeans. Short- or long-sleeved shirt with a collar; a tie is not required. Loafers or dress shoes, sandals are not acceptable. Long hair should be neatly tied back into a pony-tail.

Resources

Please bring a pen and a notebook for taking notes during class. All relevant forms and instructions will be provided, as well as notes from the input sessions.

You may want to bring a walkman with you, especially one which records. It is not required equipment, but many trainees have commented that the possession of their recording walkman made the course easier for them (in preparing tapes, interviewing and listening to conversations with students).

Various books are provided for use by trainees. However, no books should be removed from the classroom without specific permission from the Course Academic Director. Inventory of all books will be conducted at the end of the course to ensure that no books have been accidentally removed.

You will be required to prepare materials for your Teaching Practice. The school keeps an initial supply of basic tools necessary to make student materials. However, the trainees are responsible for providing additional poster board, markers, glue, pens, paper, etc., for creating teaching materials. These can be purchased at a local stationery store in Ho Chi Minh City.

There is a photocopying machine just next to the school. They charge 200 Dong (about 1.26 cents) per page.

TRAINEE COURSE FEEDBACK SESSIONS

There will be a trainee feedback session at the end of the course and we try to schedule after the first two weeks as well. These sessions are aimed to give trainees the opportunity to provide feedback regarding anything to do with the course, accommodations, and so on. We welcome your open and honest feedback so we can continue to improve the training course and the facilities provided at the training location. Although there are scheduled feedback times, please feel free to give feedback to the Course Director or the Academic Director at any time. Of course, we welcome all positive comments as well!

Problems and Complaints

If any trainee has a personal problem which may interfere with course studies, please talk to one of the trainers.

If any trainee has a complaint about any aspect of the course or about any of the trainers, please see the Course Director. If you feel that you would like to keep your complaint anonymous, please write or type your complaint and leave it in the suggestion box at the front desk.

*****ADDITIONAL INFORMATION*****

In-town Transportation

Motorbike and bicycle rentals are readily available at many travel agencies and backpacker Cafes located along Pham Ngu Lao Street. Motorbike rentals usually are US\$ 5-10 per day and bicycle rentals are US\$ 1 per day. In Vietnam, car rentals are accompanied with a driver. If you have witnessed the chaotic streets in Vietnam you will understand why it is best to leave the driving to the locals! Car rentals can be arranged by a local tour company. Prices will vary depending on the distance traveled.

Shopping

In recent years, Ho Chi Minh City has blossomed into a shoppers' paradise, catering both tourists and the local market. To the Western mind, one of the odd things about shopping in Ho Chi Minh City is the tendency for vendors of the same product to congregate all in one spot. The shops offer little to choose between them – prices, quality and selection are nearly identical in all adjacent businesses. At least in theory, cut-throat competition like this should create a buyers' market. In practice, Vietnamese shopkeepers wouldn't be in business if they were not making a profit.

As a general principle, try to find a shop that does not cater particularly to tourists and puts price tags on all its items. In touristy areas, items sold with no visible price tags must be bargained for – expect the vendor to start the bidding at two to five times the real price. Though the touristy areas are where the best selection of souvenir goods are sold, you may find a better deal if you are willing to hunt around the back alleys and markets of Ho Chi Minh City, the rents are lower.

Central Saigon is the place to shop. Dong Khoi and Nguyen Hue St. are thick with shops geared towards the tourist traffic, but are also where a large number of scams and rip-offs take place. When shopping (or just strolling, for that matter) in this area, be very careful of your belongings: skilled pair of motorcycle cowboys perform like world-class acrobats and can swipe your bag and be hundreds of meters away by the time it registers that you've been robbed!

Pham Ngu Lao Backpacker Area

The Pham Ngu Lao budget zone offers good pickings and has steadily acquired a string of down-market shops geared towards backpackers. Price are reasonable, rapacious bargaining is rare, staff speak English and there is a wild selection of interesting items. Check out the shops along Pham Ngu Lao St., De Them St., and Bui Vien St. It's also productive to look at some of the stalls at Ben Thanh Market.

Money

The official currency, the Dong, is non-convertible and at the time of writing trades at **17,800** Dong to US\$ 1. The US dollar, preferable crisp clean bills, is widely accepted at major shops and restaurants. Travelers checks can be cashed at authorized foreign exchange outlets and banks, and require presentation of passport. There is normally a 2 to 5 percent transaction fee for cashing travelers checks. Credit cards including Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted at most large hotels and restaurants.

Major international banking institutions in Vietnam are: ANZ (Australia & New Zealand), Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, Citibank, Indovina Bank (Indonesian), Thai Military Bank

Things to See

The Vietnam (American) War is a topic that still fascinates foreigners, and many of Ho Chi Minh City's tourist attractions focus on this interest. In central Saigon, the most intriguing sites for war buffs include the War Remnants Museum and Reunification Palace. A day trip to the Cu Chi tunnels is also most rewarding.

If you'd rather pursue the topic of religion, be sure to check out the Giac Lam Pagoda, Jade Emperor Pagoda and Vinh Nghiem Pagoda. A day-long excursion to Tay Ninh is required to visit the incredible Caodai Great Temple. Another worthwhile excursion is to the One Pillar Pagoda.

Boat trips on the Saigon River are always a great way to take refuge from the urban pandemonium. Further afield, beach buffs are sure to appreciate either the glitter of commercialized Vung Tau or the tranquility of barely developed Long Hai.

Local Weather Conditions

Being only 10.5° north of the equator and 5m to 10m above the sea level. Ho Chi Minh City has a tropical climate. There are two main seasons: wet and dry. The wet season (summer) lasts from May to November (June to August are the wettest months). During this time, there are heavy but short-lived downpours almost daily, usually in the afternoon. The dry season (winter) runs from December to April. Late February through May are the hottest months, when it's also very humid, but things cool down slightly when the summer rainy season begins.

Temperatures vary little with seasons, averaging 26°C in January and 28°C in July. Summer daily high are usually in the low 30s, while in January the overnight lows are about 21°C. Average humidity is 80%. Annual rainfall averages 1979mm, most of which occurs during summer. The coldest temperature ever recorded in Ho Chi Minh City was 14°C.

Other Preparations

If you require a particular medication, take an adequate supply, as it may not be available locally. Take part of the packaging showing the generic name rather than the brand, which will make getting replacements easier. It's a good idea to have a legible prescription or letter from your doctor to show that you legally use the medication to avoid any problems.

Sunburn can be more to skin than just uncomfortable – it can lead to skin cancer in later years. Bring sunscreen (UV) lotion and wear something to cover your head. Protect your eyes with decent sunglasses. Please make sure you've got a pair before coming to Vietnam since sunglasses here are not very good!

Get Acquainted!

Before your arrival, we highly recommend you purchase a descriptive guide book or do some online research to familiarize yourself and get acquainted with Vietnam and all it has to offer. For more information on Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City, we recommend the following sites:

Lonely Planet Online www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/south-east-asia/ho-chi-minh

ThingsAsian www.vietnamdestination.com

Asia Travel www.asiatravel.com/vietnam.html

Vietnam Net www.vnn.vn/vnnguide

We look forward to welcoming you to beautiful Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam!

