



## **Ancient Hoi An Town**

Not far away from Danang (30km) where foreign tourists can [get Vietnam visa on arrival](#) at airport, Hoi An town is small and peaceful, the kind of place where you may get stuck for a few days, whether it is intentional or not. Originally known as Faifo, this antique town is bordered on its southern side by the Thu Bon River, along which there's a number of small cafes and [boutique hotels in Hoi An](#). Despite the fact that it is now a tourist haven, the artistic atmosphere and local friendly people create an inviting environment.

Hoi An was an important port developed in 17<sup>th</sup> century and remained so for a long time. There used to be canals parallel to the streets, so merchandise could be loaded straight from the back of houses onto the boats. Hoi An's continuance as a port lasted right up until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the river became silted up forcing the cargo ships to call at Da Nang instead.

In the past Hoi An has been used by the Japanese, Portuguese, Dutch, French and the large remaining Chinese community where all sorts of produce and wares were traded. Remnants of these past traders' influences can still be seen lining the streets of Hoi An. There are nine different types of historical sites in Hoi An with an average age of 200 years. They include private houses, family chapels, community halls, communal houses, temples, pagodas, bridges, wells and tombs. Many of these buildings have been maintained close to their original form, allowing you imagination to recreate a prosperous trading town. The houses are small and colorful with wooden doors and two round "wooden house's eyes" above, window shutters and ornamental furniture. A pleasant change from the iron bars and metal grates of other towns.

Hoi An is full of shops selling artwork, from lifelike memorial family portraits, to stylized images of Hoi An houses and streets. Next door to the art shops are places selling souvenir statues, ceramic plates, and 'antique' bowls. At the market place beside the river, you can pick up almost anything you want. Tourists are often being lured into the markets to buy silk and to have quality garments tailor made. You can have anything from dresses and trousers to shirts and hats made for a cheap price.

Another noticeable quality of Hoi An is its relative silence. There are few cars and people do not feel the urge to use their horns every two seconds. The streets are filled with the hum of voices, motorbikes and the shuffling of thongs along the ground. Hoi An is small enough to get around on foot, and you will need a set of wheels if you are going to Cua Dai Beach, An Bang Beach, or on a day trip to the Marble Mountains or Da Nang. A relaxing activity around sunset is to hire a boat from the waterside by the market place. Many of the locals will wait on the river and offer you this service throughout the day and night.

## **Dalat Travel Guide**

In 1897 a French doctor by the name of Alexandre Yersin spread the word of Dalat's charms to Saigon's European community. By 1912, the town was a favorite with homesick French colonialists, drawn by the area's Fresh Mountain air and pastoral

landscapes. The natural beauty also inspired Vietnam's last emperor, Bao Dai, to build a summer home in Dalat in 1933. Now open to the public, the art deco royal villa and its surrounding gardens provide a lovely view of Dalat and the hills beyond. Golf enthusiasts will thank Bao Dai, who commissioned Vietnam's first golf course in Dalat. This original course has been redesigned and expanded to a plush 18-hole course, which consistently earns high ranks from international sporting magazines and draws golfers from all over Asia.

Like the golf course, many of Dalat's colonial-era villas and stone churches have survived the years. While some of the colonial mansions have been beautifully restored, others remain neglected, and the sight of these majestic villas, their roofs covered in moss and their tennis courts choked with weeds, lends the town a poignant air of faded elegance.

Dalat is the destination of choice for Vietnamese honeymooners. Smiling young couples drift across Xuan Huong Lake in paddleboats shaped like giant swans, while brides in flowing white dresses clamber aboard ponies and pose for photos. Romance is also in the air at the city's various flower gardens, including an amazing orchid garden, where visitors can see rare blue orchids. More utilitarian but equally colorful is the town's central market, overflowing with fresh-cut flowers and an incredible variety of fruits and vegetables. No matter when you visit, spring will be in the air.

Source: [www.dulichso.com](http://www.dulichso.com)