

RESOURCE LIST

Exploring Vietnam: History, Religions, Contemporary Culture and More October 8–18, 2022

This list was compiled in the hopes that you would find it useful in preparing yourself for departure or in continuing the learning experience after you return home.

Guide Books

A guide book will go a long way in answering many of your general questions about what things to do and where to eat during your free time. It will also typically provide a few words and phrases, sometimes a tip on pronunciation, and other useful things such as tipping guidelines, how best to obtain money, and maps.

Keep in mind that your St. Olaf hosts will not know the cities like the back of their hand! They are present to help influence the group experience, not to be an expert on tourism in each location. Thus, we recommend bringing a guidebook to help you make decisions about your free time.

What you probably don't need from a guide book is a comprehensive list of hotels (since that is handled for you on this program) and lots of details on how to traverse the country by train and the like.

My favorite guide books, then, are the ones that focus on what is special about a place and provide opening hours, admission fees, and lots of pictures. They can all be found at a large book store, at the online equivalents (amazon.com, bn.com, etc.), or even direct from the publisher at their web site. My three favorites are:

Eyewitness Travel Guides by DK (Dorling Kindersley) – often with full country guides as well as pocket guides for individual cities

Fodor's – they claim their Gold Guides are for “all travelers, particularly those who seek a good mix of the cultural and practical”

Insight Guides by Discovery Channel – one of the coolest channels on TV upholds its reputation with these guide books

~ Heidi Quiram, Study Travel Director

General

The Happy Traveler: Unpacking the Secrets of Better Vacations, by Jaime Kurtz

A psychology professor applies research on happiness and decision-making to enhance the experience of travel.

Travel as a Political Act, by Rick Steves

I've been sharing this same idea with travelers for years, captured here in the summary on amazon.com: “By sharing his experiences from Europe, Central America, Asia, and the Middle East, Rick shows how we can learn more about own country by viewing it from afar.”

Two articles, each about a 3–4 minute read:

“What is Cultural Appreciation (And How It’s Different From Cultural Appropriation)?”

<https://preemptivelove.org/blog/what-is-cultural-appreciation/>

“The Difference Between Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Appreciation”

<https://passionpassport.com/cultural-appropriation-appreciation/>

Vietnam – Nonfiction

There are a plethora of books on the war. Harder to find are nonfiction books on the country and its people. Thus, many of these were first published 15 to 20 or more years ago.

Duong Van Mai Elliott, *The Sacred Willow: Four Generations in the Life of a Vietnamese Family*. 1999.

Neil Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam*. 1995.

Dana Sachs, *The House of Dream Street: A Memoir of an American Woman in Vietnam*. 2000.

William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*. 2000.

Ward Just (introduction by), *Reporting Vietnam: American Journalism 1959-1975*. Library of America, 2000.

David Lamb, *Vietnam, Now: A Reporter Returns*. 2002.

Jonathan Schell, *The Real War: The Classic Reporting on the Vietnam War*. 1988.

William S. Logan, *Hanoi: Biography of a City*. 2000.

Christian Appy, ed., *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides*. 2003.

Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*. 1995.

Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. 1991.

Vietnam – Fiction

Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam*. 1993. A novel about the social and psychological costs of war by a North Vietnamese veteran.

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*. 1955. Set at the time of the beginnings of American involvement in Vietnam in the last years of French colonialism.

Dương Thu Hương, *Novel Without a Name*. 1995. Expelled from the Vietnamese Communist Party for her writings in 1989, Duong Thu Huong fought against the Americans during the Vietnam War. She draws on her experiences in this novel (which has not been published in Vietnam).

Dương Thu Hương, *Memories of a Pure Spring*, 2000. A novel about postwar Vietnam.