

V YAGERS VOICE

Travel expression of culture and art

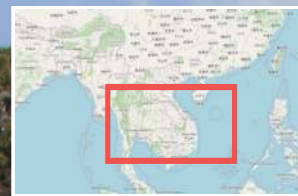
**Copenhagen from
the inside-out**

**Barbados, protecting
sea turtles and
fostering responsible
tourism**

**Mexican cuisine
More than just a
taste for chilli**

**Helping children
in need through
my orphanage,
DOCS Foundation
Nepal**

**23rd Issue
Free online edition**



Why we need
to visit
Vietnam this
Autumn

by Murli Menon



Photo Credit: Murli Menon

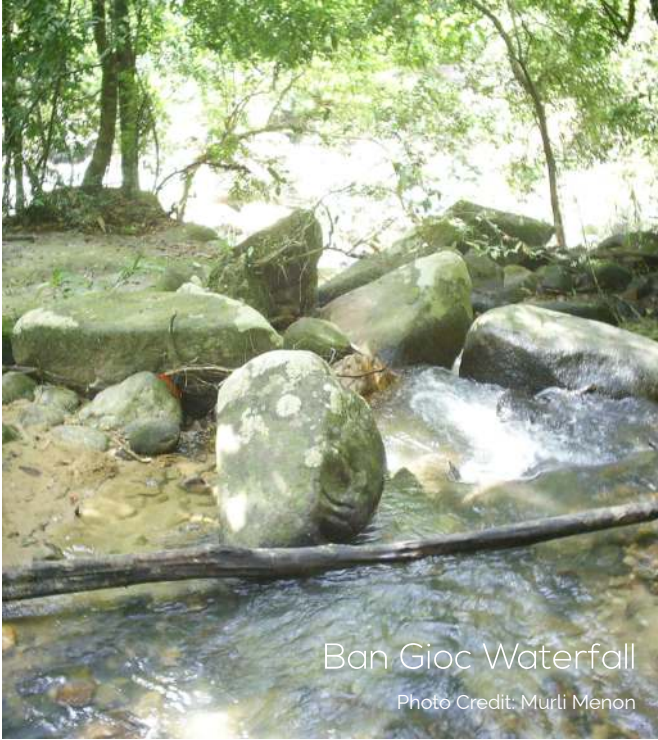
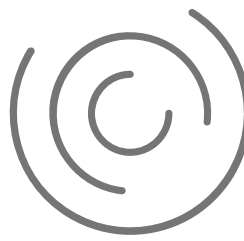
The anticipation of travel is an unprecedented phenomenon!

You choose a destination and an adventure that makes your heart leap and your pulse race. When you arrive, you have yet to determine whether it will be a casual flirtation, a torrid affair, a long-term relationship, or if there is simply no chemistry after all the planning and expectation. Vietnam conjures up a plethora of images. However, once in Ho Chi Minh City, I realised that visiting Vietnam from September to November is value for money.

I entered Vietnam from Phnom Penh in Cambodia by bus and explored Ho Chi Minh City. After enjoying the sights and smells of the city, I spent the afternoon visiting the botanical gardens, followed by a sunset cruise on the Mekong.



Photo Credit: Murli Menon



Ban Gioc Waterfall
Photo Credit: Murlı Menon

Some of the must-do activities during your visit to Vietnam



Submerged forests of Cai Mu
Photo Credit: Murlı Menon

The country has so much to offer, with apparent destinations such as Hanoi, Hoi an, Da Nang and Halong Bai. But my suggestions will be in and around the south.

Visit the Saigon Zoological and Botanical Garden in Ho Chi Minh City, the oldest cultural and historical park in Vietnam and has the country's most extensive collection of plants and animals. It was founded in 1865 on land near the Rach Lang River in the city's northeast. I also took a trip to the Cu Chi tunnels, three hours from Ho Chi Minh City, which is worth a visit.

Visit the submerged forests in Ca Mau. The southernmost region of Vietnam is shaped like a ship sailing out to sea. Over time, the Mekong River developed its own submerged ecology. Take a boat trip to the mangrove forests from Ca Mau City (Ca Mau Province). These beautiful mangrove forests will be visible to visitors.



Photo Credit: Murli Menon

Visit the Cai Rang Floating Market in Can Tho City, one of the three most prominent in the Mekong Delta. The main items sold are farm products and Cai Rang Town specialities.

It would help if you visited ethnic minority villages in the dense forests that form the border between Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. This will give you an understanding of the culture between the three countries.

In this remote and inaccessible corner of Vietnam, there are several volcanic lakes, magnificent waterfalls, and thick tropical rainforests. The best part of this trip is the homestay with local tribes, which provides a one-of-a-kind experience.



Photo Credit: Murli Menon



Sunset over Ba Be Lake

Photo Credit: Murli Menon

All cities in Vietnam have affordable accommodations. The unique feature of these budget hotels is that they are family-run, and the service is personal with a professional touch. Almost everyone in Vietnam is extremely courteous to foreign tourists. Most of these small hotels are on the beaches. Although the Vietnamese Dong is the official currency of Vietnam, US dollars are accepted everywhere, including government-run hotels.

The safety and security of tourists is a matter of national pride in Vietnam, and thefts or pilferages from hotel rooms are rare. One can vouch for the honesty of our hosts after a brief stay across the length and breadth of Vietnam.

I recall an incident from my time in Vietnam: leaving my Sambalpuri Kurtas (tunica handwoven from organic cotton by extremely talented weavers) with the launderette in Ho Chi Minh City and losing the receipt on the bus to Hanoi. I returned to the launderette four weeks after my journey. Not only were my Kurtas delivered back to me without having to prove it with a receipt, but the old Vietnamese shopkeeper, gave me a discount because he was highly impressed by the weaving skill of the Sambalpuri weavers.

Vietnam has it all!
Uninhabited islands,
hills, isolated
waterfalls, thick virgin
tropical rainforests,
paddy fields, and
limestone
formations.



Photo Credit: Murli Menon

Murli Menon
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