

# The Best of Saigon: Past Vs Present



*Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon)–Ho Chi Minh City, also known as Saigon, is a frenetic Asian city of markets. Streets are clogged with scooters, street-side food stalls, foreign restaurants, office blocks, and shopping malls. It is Vietnam’s economic powerhouse, and the rate of progress over the last few years has been remarkable. It is an exciting and exotic city where the pace of life never dims, and it is now looking forward with great optimism after its tumultuous 20th century. Though you may still experience some of old Asia, Saigon is a new Asian boomtown whose inhabitants are poised to embrace the 21st-century advances.*

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Depart from your hotel at 8:00 and gain an overall understanding of Saigon through its landmark architecture, reflecting the changing face of Ho Chi Minh City since 1976. In the lively Chinatown district of Cholon, you will find Giac Lam, the city’s oldest pagoda. A haven of tranquility where Taoism and Confucianism merge with Buddhism, the

pagoda compound includes ornate tombs, a rare bodhi tree, and an elegant statue of the Goddess of Mercy.

Next, visit the century-old workshop hidden in a small alleyway, where locals make Buddha, God, and Saint statues for sale nationwide. Experience the largest wholesale market in Binh Tay and stop by a local cafe for a typical Caphe Sua Da, prepared the traditional way. Walk around with your local expert guide inside a 500-year-old Phung Hung market, learn the local ingredients and see all the lively stuff: fish, crab, eels...

For a more contemporary perspective, you will view Independence Palace, also known as the Reunification Palace. This modernistic white building was home to the president of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica of Saigon offers a glimpse into colonial life, as it was built by the French in the mid-1800s. The ornate Central Post Office is another French-built colonial gem. If not for the large portrait of Ho Chi Minh inside, you might think you were in Paris. Then visit the must-see War Remnants Museum and the secret weapons bunker in District 3. Stop by the venerable statue of Monk Thich Quang Duc for history lessons, and visit the secret weapon cellar of Mr. Lai before driving back to the hotel.

**Date of operations:** We operate this tour daily and on request. We highly recommend booking in advance, ideally 72 hours, to ensure we can provide the best service for you. This trip can be fully tailored to meet your preferred departure time, dates, group size, and travel interests.

**Price per person:** from US\$165/person; maximum group size: 6.

**What's included:**

- > Experienced, knowledgeable English-speaking tour guide escort
- > Private transfer on a comfortable air-conditioned vehicle
- > All admission fees
- > Snacks & coffee at local market
- > A nice lunch at the local Pho Hoa + 1 unit of drink: mineral water/soft drink/juice/local beer
- > Complimentary pick up at your hotel lobby in district 1, 3, or Nha Rong port gate in district 4.

**What's not included:**

- > Gratuities for your tour guide & driver
- > 3.5% extra for tour payment made via Credit card or Payment link

**Extra information that you need to know before you book this trip:**

- > Pick up and drop off will be at hotels in districts 1 & 3, or at the Saigon port gate in district 4
- > Guest, to let our travel advisor know if there's a food allergy or special food request upon placing your booking
- > For a group request of more than 30 guests, please contact our hotline at (+84) 901-388-555 for assistance.