

Local transportation (particularly in Hanoi) is on a pedicab or push cycle which can usually be hired in the city for US \$2 to \$4 depending on the trip. They can also be hired by the day or the week with the price dependent on negotiating skills. The Vietnamese drive on the right-hand side of the road.

Population

Vietnam is estimated to have a population of over 72 million people as of March 1994 with an annual growth rate of approximately 2 percent, that is projected to reach 85.1 million by 2002.

Vietnam's population is predominantly rural, with only 14 million located in cities. The majority of the people are concentrated in the two main deltas of Vietnam, the Red River in the north and the Mekong River in the south.

Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) is the largest city in Vietnam with a population over 4 million, followed by Hanoi with a population of 3 million.

Geography and Climate

Vietnam is located in the south east corner of what has been traditionally called Indochina. It has a total area of 331,688 square kilometres and is bordered by China in the north, and Laos and Cambodia in the west. It stretches along the coast meeting the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea.

The distance from the northern tip of Vietnam to the southernmost tip is 1,650 km. The maximum width is 600 km in the north from Quang Ninh to Lai Chau, and the narrowest portion is 50 km in the central region in the Binh Tri Thien province.

The coast of Vietnam stretches over 3,200 km with bays jutting deep into the mainland creating natural seaports in the central part of the country and good natural beaches. Over 40 percent of the country is forested with 17 percent cultivated. Mountains, hills and highlands characterize 80 percent of the country.

Vietnam's capital city, Hanoi, is located in the northern region, 150 km from the northern border with China. Hanoi is hottest in June when the temperatures range between 26 to 33 degrees celsius. It is coldest in January with temperatures between 13 to 20 degrees celsius. Average rainfall during the wettest month, in August, is 343 mm, while during the driest month, January, the average is 18 mm.

Ho Chi Minh City is hottest in April when the temperatures range from 24 to 35 degrees celsius, and it is coldest in January when temperatures range between 21 to 32 degrees celsius. Average rainfall during the wettest month, September, is 335 mm, and during the driest month, February, the average is 3 mm.