

# Vietnam

## Facts and Food

Vietnam is officially named the Social Republic of Vietnam. It borders China in the north, Laos in the northeast and center, and Cambodia in the southwest. Located in the north is the country's capital, Hanoi. Ho Chi Minh City (also known as Saigon) is the most populous of the urban cities, however, over 75% of the country's total population lives in rural areas.

Vietnam is home to 54 official ethnic groups. The largest group is the ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh), which makes up over 85% of the population. Other significant groups include the Cham, Chinese, Hmong, Khmer, Muong, and Tai.

Vietnamese is the official language; a Romanized script, adopted during the French colonial period, is used for the written form. Like Chinese, the Vietnamese language contains different tones and regional dialects.

Before becoming its own country, Vietnam was ruled by China for almost 1000 years. This explains the similar philosophies and traditions between the two countries. The modern Vietnamese nation was created from French colonialism beginning in the 1850s. After 1954, Vietnam was divided into North and South for almost 21 years. Reunification of the North and South occurred on April 30, 1975. It is a special holiday in Vietnam known as Victory Day or Liberation Day.

### Food

Many Vietnamese regard *pho* as a national dish. Pho (pronounced "fuh") is a noodle soup with a clear meat-based broth, usually served at street-side stalls or small shops. Learn more about pho here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqICcYhw5eE>

Rice is a staple of Vietnamese cuisine, but it is also exported. In fact, Vietnam is one of the world's largest exporters of coffee and rice! Short documentary about a rice export farmer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHXbo2ecfAU>

DIY Vietnamese Recipe – Banh Xeo (savory pancake) <https://www.marionskitchen.com/crispy-vietnamese-pancakes-banh-xeo/>

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