Clothing/ Artifacts

- Pants and shirts are common for men and women to wear, but the traditional *ao dai* (tunic) is still worn often by women.
- The *non la* is a cone-shaped hat made of woven palm leaves or straw and is worn for protection from sun and rain.
- Sandals are always worn so that feet can dry quickly, whereas shoes would trap in moisture during rainy seasons, possibly causing infections.

Be aware

- Bicycles and motorbikes are the most common means of getting places, be careful when crossing streets.
- Avoid winking at people, it is considered rude and inappropriate.
- Vietnam has a high context culture, meanings are found in the people and not in what is said.

The world can be and is taken from different contexts

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CULTURE

*Verbal communication with locals will be more restricted due to the language barriers, therefore a heavy importance is placed on nonverbal communication. This guide will get you acquainted with the cultural nonverbal and behavioral norms of Vietnam.*
**Greeting Behaviors and Regulators**

- Bowing is the most respectful greeting, shaking hands is usually only done between men.
- The Vietnamese language is monosyllabic and tonal, meaning all words are made of one sound and can mean 5-6 different things depending on the tone used.

**Vietnamese Greetings**

- **Hello** (Chào) - Cháo (jow)
- **Please** (Lâm) - Lâm on (lâm uhhn)
- **Thank you** (Cám) - Cám on (gam uhhn)
- **You’re welcome** (Không sao dâu) - Không sao dâu (kohng sao doh)
- **Yes** (Da) - Da (ya’a), Vâng (vuhng)
- **No** (Không) - Không (kohng)
- **I’m sorry** (Xin lỗi) - Xin lỗi (seen lôee)
- **Goodbye** (Chào) - Cháo (jow)
- **I don’t understand** (Tôi không hiểu) - Tôi không hiểu (thoy kohng hee-oh)
- **Where is the…?** (O’ đâu…) - O’ đâu…?
- **How much (money) is this?** (Bao nhiêu tiền?) - Bao nhiêu tiền? (bahw nyee-oh theeuhn)

**Vietnamese Politeness**

- **Thank you** (Cám ơn) - Cám on (gam uhhn)
- **You’re welcome** (Không sao dâu) - Không sao dâu (kohng sao doh)
- **Yes** (Da) - Da (ya’a), Vâng (vuhng)
- **No** (Không) - Không (kohng)
- **I’m sorry** (Xin lỗi) - Xin lỗi (seen lôee)
- **Goodbye** (Chào) - Cháo (jow)

**Cultural Beliefs and Values**

- **The majority of Vietnamese would say they are not religious but rather practice a way of life.**
- **Tam Giao - “Triple Religion”, a blend of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.**
- **Confucianism is based on the idea that human beings can improve through self-cultivation of virtue and moral perfection.**
- **Taoism is a way of life focused on nature that emphasizes moderation, compassion, and humility.**
- **Buddhism is based on the concept of karma, that an end to suffering is possible by achieving nirvana, and complete one’s cycle of rebirth.**
- **Cao Đài is a modern faith that originated in the south, monotheistic & based on the teachings of Muhammad, Jesus, Buddha, and other great teachers.**
- **Around 10% practice Christianity.**

**Eye Behavior, Appropriate Display of Emotion & Physical Contact**

- Avoid eye contact to people you are senior to in age or status and with the opposite sex as a sign of respect.
- Physical contact is avoided, especially between opposite sexes; loud body movements are also avoided.

**Norms of Social Behavior**

- Communal eating is common, eat from your own rice bowl and never leave your chopsticks standing vertically - resembles incense burned for dead.
- Always remove shoes before entering a temple or someone’s home for respect.
- It is common to see monks; they are devote Buddhist how look after pagodas which are the center of spiritual life in each community.
- A large amount of people live in boats along the Mekong River, which is also a large marketplace.
- Family is the core of Vietnamese life, as most time is spend with family members and extended family members daily.

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**Symbol Represents**

- **Pink thread symbolizes happiness in marriage.**
- **The yinyang is from Taoist belief of a universal force in all things.**
- **Buddhist symbol for well being and balance.**
- **Vietnamese symbol of longevity.**