

**THINGS TO DO  
AT THE NAM HAI**

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Guests are spoilt for choice given the numerous things to do and many places to visit around The Nam Hai. Just around the corner, we have Hoi An and My Son both of which are UNESCO's listed World Heritage sites.

Hoi An is well known for its rustic charm and its historical buildings but, what many are unaware of is that it is also one of the best places in Vietnam to relax and to imagine what life was like decades ago.

If one is into history and architecture, My Son is a place not to be missed. It has numerous historical and religious structures and architecture dating back to the Cham dynasty.

Besides the above 2 recommended places, The Nam Hai has compiled a list of interesting places and historical areas which you might visit during one's stay in this region. We have divided them into the following segments.

- 1) Historic Houses in Hoi An.
- 2) Assembly Halls in Hoi An.
- 3) Bridges and Villages Around Hoi An.
- 4) Religious Places and Things of interest in Hoi An.
- 5) Highly Recommended Places to visit.

## **HISTORIC HOUSES IN HOI AN**

The most famous historical houses in Hoi An would be those converted from the houses of old traders into museums. The various styles of architecture found reflect French, Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnam influences.

Very often the families living in these historical houses today are descendents of the homes' original owners. If you are lucky, one might be able to convince the families to give a tour of the private areas of their houses.

### **DIEP DONG NGUYEN HOUSE, HOI AN**

The Diep Dong House was originally built in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century for a Chinese merchant who is an ancestor of the present inhabitants of the house. The owner's private collection of antiques, which includes photographs, porcelain and furniture are prominently displayed around the house. This house is located on 80 Nguyen Thai Hoc Street, Hoi An.

### **TAN KY HOUSE, HOI AN**

This house is known for its Japanese and Chinese designs. It was built two centuries ago as the home for an affluent ethnic Vietnamese merchant. The Tan Ky House is located on 101 Nguyen Thai Hoc Street, Hoi An

### **HOUSE AT 77 TRAN PHU STREET, HOI AN**

This three century old house located on 77 Tran Phu Street is famous for its fine carvings around the house. The wooden walls of the rooms around the courtyard, the roof beams, the crab shell roof and even some parts of the floors are covered with these intricate carvings.

### **PHUNG HUNG OLD HOUSE, HOI AN**

This private house which was constructed in 1780 has two floors of combined architectural influences. The first floor's four-sided central roof is Japanese influenced and the balcony on the second floor is Chinese influenced with the round "turtle shell" roof supported with carved beams. You might be shown around by Ms. Anh, who claims to be an eighth-generation member of the family. This house is located on 04 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai, Hoi An

### **THE TRAN FAMILY WORSHIP HOUSE, HOI AN**

The Tran family ancestor house of worship was built by a civil service mandarin named Tran Tu Nhac in 1802. It is located inside a lush garden and bordered by Japanese and Chinese style walls. The house is divided into two main parts. One part of the house is solely a place for worship. The second part of the house is the actual accommodation area for the family.

The area for worship has smaller three sections, the two side sections are reserved for male and female members of the family (left side is for the men and the right side is for the women) and the centre section is for the grandparents. It is interesting to note that the centre area for the grandparents is only open during Tet and festivals. This house is located on 21 Le Loi Street.

## **ASSEMBLY HALLS**

The assembly halls in Hoi An were once used as meeting places for traders who came to Hoi An. These halls provided a place for traders to barter in their own language and also for worship. Today most of these assembly halls are used as places for worship. Most of these halls were founded in 1700s' and 1800s' and were used by all five Chinese ethnic groups in Hoi An; Fujian, Hainan, Chaozhou, Cantonese, Hakka.

### **ASSEMBLY HALL OF THE HAINAN CHINESE CONGREGATION**

The Hai Nan Chinese Congregation is located from (2 to 4) Tran Phu Street. It was built in 1883 as a memorial to the 108 merchants (From Hai Nan Island, in the Southern China sea) who were mistaken for pirates and killed in Quang Nam Province.

### **ASSEMBLY HALL OF THE CANTONESE CHINESE CONGREGATION**

The assembly hall of the Cantonese Chinese Congregation which was founded in 1786 is located at 176 Tran Phu Street. Its main altar is dedicated to Quang Cong.

### **ASSEMBLY HALL OF THE CHAN ZHOU CHINESE CONGREGATION**

The assembly hall of the Chan Zhou Chinese Congregation located at 362 Nguyen Duy Hieu Street was built in 1776. One would be able to find woodcarving on the beams, walls and altar. One of the most noticeable carvings located in the front of the main altar would be that of two Chinese girls wearing their hair in a Japanese style.

### **ASSEMBLY HALL OF THE FUJIAN CHINESE CONGREGATION**

The assembly hall of the Fu Jian Chinese Congregation was founded as a place to hold community meetings. It was later transformed into a temple for the worship of Thien Hau, the deity who was said to be born in Fu Jian province. This assembly hall is located at 46 Tran Phu Street.

## **BRIDGES AND VILLAGES**

### **JAPANESE BRIDGE**

The Japanese bridge which is located at the western end of Tran Phu Street is one of Hoi An's most famous landmarks.

Japanese traders funded the building of the bridge back in the 16th century because it was believed that the bridge would stab the heart and kill a legendary monster that lived beneath the earth (This monster is said to cause earthquakes when it lashes its tail). The shrine in the middle of the bridge was built in honor of the slain monster.

On both ends of the bridge, there are carvings of a monkey and a dog. This is because it was thought that the construction of the bridge started in the year of the Dog and was completed in the year of the Monkey (According to the Chinese calendar).

### **KIM BONG CARPENTRY VILLAGE**

The village of Kim Bong which is famous for its carpentry lies on the North Cho Cui (Sai) river, about 1 kilometer away from the centre of Hoi An town.

Kim Bong traditional carpentry was famous in Hoi An because decades ago, its carpenters were the main craftsmen who built architectural works, fishing and cargo boats. They were highly regarded and respected during those times.

### **THANH HA POTTERY VILLAGE**

Thanh Ha pottery village is located 3 km west of Hoi An. Decades ago, there were several dozen pottery factories located in this area but due to industrialization and the modernization of the economy, their number have dropped to only a handful. Despite this, there are still some artisans who practice this art.

## **RELIGIOUS PLACES AND THINGS OF INTEREST**

### **QUAN CONG TEMPLE**

The Quan Cong temple is located on 24 Tran Phu Street. This Chinese temple was founded in 1653 and it is dedicated to Quan Cong. The temple contains gilt statues which are made of papier-mâché on wooden frames. These are placed in the central altar at the back of the sanctuary.

### **CHUC THANH PAGODA**

Chuc Thanh Pagoda is the oldest pagoda in Hoi An. It was founded in 1454 by Minh Hai, a Buddhist monk from China. Even today, there are still many antique ritual objects still in use. For example, the bells, a two centuries old stone gong and a carp-shaped wooden gong which is said to be even older. Today, several elderly monks live in this pagoda. There is no actual address for this pagoda. It is located on Cam Pho ward and its about 2 kilometers north from the centre of Hoi An.

### **PHUOC LAM PAGODA**

The Phuoc Lam Pagoda was founded in the mid-17th century. The head monk of the pagoda at the end of that century was An Thiem, a Vietnamese prodigy who had become a monk when he was 8 years old. This Pagoda is 2.5 kilometers north from the centre of Hoi An and is located in the Hamlet 2A, Cam Ha Commune.

### **JAPANESE TOMBS (NAIROBI'S AND MASAI'S TOMBS)**

The Nairobi's tomb is the tomb of a Japanese Christian merchant who originally came to Vietnam to escape persecution in his native land. He passed away in 1647. There is no actual address for this tomb. It is located near Nhi Trung Street.

There are 2 unique features about this tomb. The tomb's original covering is made from hard cement with powdered seashells, leaves of the Boi Loi tree and cane sugar (Making it exceptionally hard and resistant towards the elements). The tomb's Japanese characters (Which face northeast towards Japan) are still legible today.

There is another tombstone of a Japanese named Masai who died in 1629. It is a few hundred meters away from Nairobi's tomb and it is on the right hand side from the edge of the rice fields.

### **BA LE WELL**

There are numerous ancient wells in Hoi An but the most famous would be the Ba Le well. The well is said to date 400 years ago from the Cham dynasty. The Ba Le well is square in shape and its water is traditionally used for the preparation of Cao Lau (Specialty of Hoi An). The Ba Le well located on 45 Phan Chau Trinh Street

### **CAO LAU**

Throughout the town, dozens of cafes serve Cao Lau. It is the local specialty of Hoi An and its actually rice noodles mixed with pork and vegetables. Traditionally the water used to prepare Cao Lau has to be drawn from the Ba Le well. Today many of the stalls just use mineral water

## **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED PLACES TO VISIT**

### **MARBLE MOUNTAINS**

The marble mountains (Which are one of the most distinctive landmarks in central Vietnam) are located 8 kilometers Northwest of The Nam Hai.

These mountains are named by the King of the Nguyen dynasty after the following elements; Water, wood, soil, metal and fire. Each of these mountains has cave entrances and numerous tunnels. One would be able to find numerous shops around marble mountains for stone and marble sculpturing.

*It takes approximately half a day to visit the Marble Mountains*

### **CHAM MUSEUM**

The Cham Museum was built in 1936 by the French. This is the only museum dedicated to preserving the unique Cham sculptural heritage in South-East Asia.

There are about 300 artworks from the 7th to the 15th century exhibited here. Most of them are original works carved in sandstone; some items are made of terracotta. Other exhibits would include altars, statues and decorations from Cham towers and palaces.

*It takes approximately half a day to visit the Cham Museum.*

### **MY SON**

A World Heritage Site since the year 2000, My Son is Vietnam's most important site of the Cham Dynasty. It is a fascinating site comprising of ancient temples, towers and structures dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.

During the centuries when Simhapura (Tra Kieu) served as the political capital of Champa, My Son was place where the most important Cham intellectual and religious activities took place. It also served as a burial place for Cham monarchs. It is certainly a place not be missed

*It takes approximately half a day to visit My Son.*

## **CHAM ISLANDS**

The Cham Islands are 15 km from the beach of The Nam Hai. It is formed by 7 islands named according to their shapes or characteristics. They are the Lao (Pear), Dai (Long), La (leaf), Kho (Dry), Tai (Ear), Mo (Tomb), and Nom (East wind) islands.

The Cham Island (The Lao) which is the main island is known for its excellent climate being cool and breezy all the year round. This island is known by nature enthusiasts for its trees, greenery, birds and sea corals.

*It takes one whole day to visit the Cham Islands.*

## **HAI VAN PASS**

The Hai Van Pass is located along the North - South National highway. The pass is 20 kilometers long and 496 meters high.

Once up on the summit, one will be able to enjoy superb views of the sea, the mountains, and the clouds. It is also one of the places that offer the best views of Danang City.

*It takes approximately 2 hours to reach the Hai Van pass from The Nam Hai*

## **HUE**

Hue is an ancient city famous for its magnificent buildings and structures including the citadel, the squares, the pagodas and the royal tombs of the Nguyen Dynasty. It is also known for its spiritual life, and all the wonderful landscape that make Hue both a historic and beautiful town

Set against a lush backdrop of greenery on the banks of the Perfume River, UNESCO has called Hue "an adorable architectural poem and a harmonious combination of nature and human inspiration" A highly recommended place for all

*It takes a whole day to visit Hue.*

### **WATER COCONUT PALM PARADISE TOUR**

Located on the Estuary between the charming Cua Dai Sea and Hoi An River, 5 km away from the Hoi An old town, the water coconut palm canal paradise is a tranquil place for one to unwind and to restore one's balance. Popular activities would include "purple baby crab fishing" and basket boat lessons.

*It takes approximately 3 hours to complete the tour*

### **MEET THE FARMERS / VILLAGERS TOUR**

Tra Que vegetable village is a charming little village on the edge of Hoi An, the village is named after the sweet scented vegetables that spice up the everyday meals of the Pho Hoi people.

Here, visitors can walk around visiting the local farming families going about in their daily tasks in Tra Que vegetable village.

*It takes approximately 3 hours to complete the tour*

### **A DAY AS A FISHERMAN TOUR**

"To be a tourist fisherman" is a unique tour that one can take to experience the daily life of a typical fisherman.

During the tour, one would learn how to lift the big fishing net out of the water, how to use the little round boat "THÚNG CHAI" to get fish out to the net and how to spread the unique net into a professional circle to catch fish.

*It takes approximately 4 hours to complete the tour.*