

## **Top Things to Do in Hue – Vietnam. What to do in Hue for 3 days?**

Hue is the ancient capital of Vietnam. I visited Hue twice with many different emotions, but one thing never changes, the silence. Anyone who visited Hue probably have had similar experiences. There seems so few people on the streets, life is passing very slow, and even a little sad. So, why go to Hue?

Hue is the capital of Vietnam's last feudalistic dynasty, hence preserves numerous pagodas, temples, palaces and especially the magnificent citadel. And the people of this ancient capital are amazingly wonderful too. Don't forget the local food!

Definitely worth a visit! In this article, I'm happy to share with you my experiences, [Vietnam visa](#) tips and things to do in Hue – Vietnam.

## **How to get to Hue**

If you're in Hanoi or Saigon (Ho Chi Minh city), you can travel to Hue by bus or train. While bus is generally faster and more convenient with many high-quality companies offering sleeper services, train is also a good choice for those who prefer a more peaceful trip.

By train

\* From Hanoi

You can buy train tickets at:

- TSC agent (add: 114 Pho Duc Chinh street – Ba Dinh district – Hanoi)
- Mua Xuan agent (add: 41 Ma May street – Hoan Kiem district – Hanoi)
- Hanoi train station, located on Le Duan street.

\* From Saigon (Ho Chi Minh city)

Saigon station at 1 Nguyen Thong street, Ward 9, District 3, Ho Chi Minh city

Saigon station will deliver tickets to your hotel if requested. This service is exclusive to central city areas from 7 am to 21 pm every day.

By bus (recommended buses firms)

\* From Hanoi

1. Hoang Long, there are 2 offices in Hanoi:

- 1A Nam Dong, Dong Da district, Hanoi.
- 19 Thuoc Bac, Hang Bo, Hoan Kiem district, Hanoi.

2. Sinh Cafe

- 52 – Luong Ngoc Quyen street, Hoan Kiem district, Hanoi.

\* From Saigon

– Sinh Cafe offers both ordinary seat and sleeper (with beds) busses. Departure time: 07:30, 15:00 and 20:30

Add: 246 – 248 De Tham, District 1, Ho Chi Minh city.

24 -26 Pho Duc Chinh, District 1, Ho Chi Minh city.

## **Hotels in Hue**

Keep in mind that cheap motels and hotels in Hue gather on Le Loi street, near Truong Tien Hue bridge (cầu Trường Tiền Huế), prices from \$8 to \$20, many large rooms can accommodate up to 4 people.

– Bao Minh hotel at 66/8 – Le Loi street (66/8 means house number #66 on alley #8 of the street), near Trang Tien bridge. I stayed here twice. Price for a double room is \$13, the price now is probably about \$15, clean room. You can rent motor from the hotel (ask the receptions).

– Hotel at 57 – Tran Thuc Nhan. Contact Mr. Viet or Ms. Van

– Phuong Hoang hotels (I and II) on Le Loi street, price is ok, offers scooter rent service. Opposite to Phuong Hoang are some good choices too. There are other hotels in Hue with similar price, if don't go in travel season, you do not need booking in advance.

### **Where to visit in Hue**

As mentioned above, the Vietnam's king stationed his capital in this beautiful city of Hue and now leaves behind a legacy of architectural wonders. Most of top attractions in Hue are historic sites and massive architectures: Palaces, temples, citadels, mausoleums of kings and so on.

First and No.1, Hue citadel (Đại Nội Huế – note down its Vietnamese spelling like this in case you want to ask a local, just show them) is a must. This place in the past served as the residence of royal in Nguyen dynasties (from 1805 to 1945). It's so large that you will need more than a morning to take a look all around.

### **What to Do in Hue - Vietnam**

Hue citadel

Next is no other than the unique Thien Mu Pagoda (Chùa Thiên Mụ), a temple built all the way back in 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its Vong Canh hill (Đồi Vọng Cảnh) is a beautiful hill where the kings usually came to enjoy the nature of Hue.

Thien Mu temple in Hue Vietnam

AND, some major mausoleums that you should visit are Khai Dinh, Minh Mang and Tu Duc. These are highly appreciated architectures. You may arrange to visit some other smaller, less grand ones if interested and have plenty of time. Otherwise, go ahead and skip them.

Khai Dinh mausoleum

To visit all of the above sites, you will need 2-3 days. However, if you want a little getaway from these ancient establishments and back to a little bit of adventure, you can either mix the plan or shift to explore distant places: Tam Giang lagoon (Phá Tam Giang), Bach Ma mountain (núi Bạch Mã).

And if, even more wonderfully, you have more time, about 5 days, you are highly recommended to combine traveling to Hoi An and Da Nang for some beach tan, not very far down south.

### **Moving in Hue**

- To travel easily around Hue, you should rent a scooter, price from \$6 to \$10, self-re-fuel. You can easily ask for rent shops information from your hotel reception.
- Additionally, you can go by taxi and motor taxi, but it's more expensive and not as interesting.
- If in Hue citadel, don't forget to try on a cyclo to feel the peace of Hue.

### **Specialties and restaurants in Hue**

1. Bún bò Huế (Hue beef noodle) is a dish originating in Hue. Check out O Be restaurant at 11B – Ly Thuong Kiet. But generally, this one is very popular, like Cơm tấm in Sai gon, risk yourself a little with small street or market food stalls that are crowded, they are very likely to surprise you.

2. Cơm Hến (Rice mixed with baby clam) and bún hến (baby clam noodle) are famous specialties of Hue. You can find good food at Ms. Teo restaurant on Pham Hong Thai street, restaurant at 2 – Truong Dinh street or Con Hen (Cồn Hến) street. This street is loaded with many rice and noodle baby clam restaurants.  
Note: these foods are very spicy so ask them to leave out the chili or you can yourself add bit by bit to your taste.
3. Bánh canh is a popular type of noodle in Central Vietnam. Check out Mu Doi restaurant on Dao Duy Anh street for many different delicious flavors.
4. Vegetarian food. Hue has many vegetarian restaurants where foods are also very delicious and diverse.  
Bo De at 11 – Le Loi street, Lien Hoa at 03 – Le Qui Don street (I like a lot this restaurant), Tinh Tam at 12 – Chu Van An street, restaurant on Han Thuyen street (I don't remember the exact address).
5. Bún thịt nướng (rice noodle with grilled pork) and bánh tráng thịt heo (pork roll in rice paper) at Huyen Anh restaurant, 207 – Kim Long.
6. Bánh Khoái, savoury crispy pancake similar to Bánh Xèo with various topping like chopped pork, shrimp served with sour-sweet fish sauce dipping. I call it “Vietnamese pizza”. Go to Lac Thien restaurant at 6 – Dinh Tien Hoang, Lac Thanh 10 – Dinh Tien Hoang, restaurant at 11 – Pho Duc Chinh
7. Bánh bèo: something like a steamed little rice chewy thin cake with many different ways of topping and, like almost anything other Vietnamese snack and street food, served with gorgeous sweet-sour fish sauce. Take a look at Mrs. Do on Nguyen Binh Khiem (at no.2 or 9) or An Dinh palace (in Hue citadel), Mrs. Cu
8. Bún mắm (noodle with different sauces). Warning! Strong flavor but very typical and local! I'd say why not have a go at it at Me Theo restaurant, 64 – Ba Trieu street.
9. Chè: It's like a little bit of everything. This snack is everywhere in Vietnam but Chè in Hue is special. It's very different, and colorful too. Try out at 26 Hung Vuong street and Phan Chu Trinh street. Dive in it, sweet tongues! You won't get thing strange and interesting thing in your country!

If having least 5 days, you should combine traveling and enjoying food in Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An, they're very close together. 2 days for Hue, 2 days in Da Nang and 1 day for Hoi An. You will have overview of Central of Vietnam.

If you are learning about Hue then you might know, Hue is the ancient capital of Vietnam for many centuries and Vietnamese people often call this land as “Cố Đô” – a name that speaks out a mix of ancient and romantic affection. Also, because Hue is the old capital, this land has hundreds of historic sites (Hue citadels, Palaces, Great Tombs of Kings and Queens, Temples...), dozens of famous landscapes as well as unique culture of people.

Among those myriads of choices, I've carefully pick out these top things to do in Hue – the ancient capital of Vietnam:

### **Top Things to Do in Hue – Vietnam**

1. Visiting Hue Citadel (Đại Nội Huế). Hue Citadel was the residence of Royal family under Nguyen dynasty, a major dynasty in Vietnam History during the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is also the big citadel that protected the capital from the enemies. Hue citadel is a great building with complex architecture and

many palaces, castles, temples and many artificial lakes, hills, mountains. To visit the entire citadel, you may have to spend one morning but it's absolutely worth it. It's just so true that "If you haven't visited Hue Citadel, you haven't been to Hue."

2. Visiting Thien Mu Pagoda (chùa Thiên Mụ) – The temple was built in the 17th century by Nguyen Hoang Lord – who can be considered as the founder of Nguyen dynasty. Thien Mu is not just a temple, it is also the symbol of Hue city which you can see it everywhere in Hue. The temple has a high tower (built in 17<sup>th</sup> century) with unique architecture and many others surrounding structures (built throughout many centuries from 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>). Nowadays, many structures have been damaged in the war and along the time, but Thien Mu pagoda was lucky to remain complete and still preserves the beauty of unique architectures as well as nature.
3. Visiting Great Tombs of kings. Most of King Nguyen's tombs are very grand like real palaces and built directly by the kings who were buried in it. They built the huge tombs for themselves right after assuming the kingship in order to "keep living and ruling the country after death". Some of the tombs were built by the succeeding kings for their father or grandfather. Many tombs were destroyed by enemies of Nguyen dynasty but the greatest ones still exist until today. Khai Dinh, Minh Mang and Tu Duc are the 3 greatest tombs in Hue that you should visit.
4. Cyclo-ing in Hue city is the most interesting things to do in Hue (in my opinion). You can choose this vehicle to move in Hue citadel or around Hue city, it's pretty cheap. AND FUN! Somebody once asked me if there is any difference between cyclo in Hue (old capital) and Hanoi (current capital)? Definitely Yes! The experience is so different and much more enjoyable in Hue! Unlike Hanoi, Hue is a peaceful city with little traffic and thus less pollution. Cyclo-ing in Hue is to feel the peace of old capital, not the bustle of current capital.
5. Eating Cơm hến (Rice mixed with baby clam). This is a famous specialty of Hue cuisine. The dish includes rice (traditional dish of Vietnamese), vegetables, baby clam (the most important), baked rice paper (bánh tráng), chili and many others herbs and ingredient. It's very tasty but quite spicy. So be careful! You can try Cơm hến at Ms. Teo restaurant on Pham Hong Thai street, the restaurant at 2 – Truong Dinh street or Con Hen (CỒN HẾN) street – the street has many rice and noodle baby clam restaurants. Besides Rice Oyster, there are many others relate to oyster like oyster noodle (bún hến, mỳ hến). These are not specialty of Hue cuisine but also tasty. If having time, you should also try them.
6. Enjoying Bún bò Huế (Hue Beef Noodle of Hue). This is the famous brand name across 3 regions of Vietnam. You can see restaurants selling Hue beef noodle everywhere in Vietnam (I often eat Hue beef noodle in Hanoi) but only in Hue, where this dish take origin, you can enjoy this specialty with true flavor.
7. Shopping. Of course, this is the thing to do in every trip. But what would you buy? Hue is famous for traditional goods and crafts. You can choose an Áo Dài (áo dài) – the traditional dress of Vietnam women – or Nón lá (conical bamboo leaves hat). I saw many foreign visitors wearing Áo Dài and Non Lá and they look very beautiful. Lanterns or puppets are also good choices. Many interesting things in Hue markets are waiting for you!

**Conclusion**

I've visited Hue 2 times before and I will come back for sure, maybe in next Spring, probably to find out more and more local places and update this article. If you have any question about things to do in Hue, just leave it in the comment and I will try to reply as soon as possible.