

Chapter 2

FILMING IN HCMC





A BOOMING CINEMA CENTER

This is an important factor in understanding the context of film and series production in HCMC: the Vietnamese cinema market is booming, with box office revenues in 2024 largely generated by local feature films, whose production is rapidly expanding.

With annual revenue growth of 22% in 2024, Vietnam has achieved the feat of exceeding its pre-pandemic 2019 theater attendance levels. The popularity of local and Asian productions is confirmed, as they largely dominate the top 10 films with the highest attendance in 2024, while American cinema accounted for only 25% of the market.

The Vietnamese box office recorded spectacular annual growth of 22% in 2024, reaching 4.7 trillion dong (approximately \$2.5 billion), or 56.6 million admissions. For the first time, attendance exceeded its pre-pandemic level (4.4 trillion dong in 2019). This momentum is therefore driven by domestic production, which now dominates its own market with a 44% market share, breaking new records the film Mai attracted 6 million viewers.

Conversely, American cinema market share continues its decline, falling to a 25% market share. South Korean (12%), Japanese (9%), and Thai (7%) productions continue to gain ground at the expense of American cinema.

This momentum is based on continued growth in the number of cinemas and screens across the country, with several multiplex chains expanding to capture a population of over 100 million. The Korean chains GGV and Lotte together operate the majority of screens, but the local circuits Galaxy, BHD and Beta are growing rapidly. At the end of 2023, there were a total of 1,138 screens at



216 locations. The country is therefore still under-equipped by developed country standards, which suggests a bright future.

While Vietnamese family dramas attract large audiences during the Lunar New Year, a new trend has emerged in recent years: the rise of local horror films. Six films in this genre have surpassed 100 billion dong in revenue (approximately 1.2 million admissions). A notable fact in 2024: no Disney, Pixar, or Marvel productions appear in the top 10.

The production costs of Vietnamese commercial feature films remain low, at €1 to €2 million, and as a result, production companies that finance their films with private capital have solid prospects for profitability, which motivates investors, including the theater chains themselves.

This growth is in turn motivating filming and post-production equipment providers, who are keen to invest in new equipment. As almost all production companies and

service providers are based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's economic capital, the city offers the same opportunities as other production centers in Southeast Asia, such as Singapore and Bangkok, at lower rates.

This leadership is actually not new: Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, has always held a central place in the history of Vietnamese cinema. The **first film screening in Vietnam** took place in Saigon in **1896**, just one year after the Lumière Brothers debuted motion pictures in France. In the early 20th century, Saigon saw the emergence of its first movie theaters, notably **Ciné Majestic** and **Ciné Rex**, which became cultural landmarks and continue to operate today as heritage sites.

The city also witnessed the **production of the first Vietnamese feature films** in the 1920s-1930s and later became the heart of the South Vietnamese film industry during the 1950s-1975. Since reunification in 1975, Ho Chi Minh City remained the key hub for film production, distribution, and education.

PROCEDURES FOR FOREIGN PRODUCTION FILMING IN HO CHI MINH CITY

According to the 2022 Law on Cinema, foreign organizations or individuals who wish to film a movie or series in Ho Chi Minh City, or anywhere else in Vietnam, must obtain a **Filming Service Permit** from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST). In the case of a reportage or documentary, the permit must be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Important Requirement: Foreign organizations and individuals cannot independently produce films in Vietnam. They are required to use the film production services of a Vietnamese cinema establishment. A Vietnamese cinema establishment is defined as an organization or business legally authorized to produce films and provide services related to film production. This includes services such as hiring crew, technical equipment, logistics, locations, or specialized personnel for the production process in Vietnam.

In practice, Vietnamese production companies will be the ones shepherding the foreign production's application through the various administrations required to review the project. They know the process well and will ensure it goes smoothly. Most of them are based in HCMC.

The Cinema Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism will request a summary of the movie or series that foreign producers intend to shoot partly or entirely in Vietnam, along with a detailed screenplay of the scenes to be filmed in the country. The Cinema Department will then issue a **Script Approval**.

The production must then apply for filming permits by providing the MOC with further information about the physical production: what and where they intend to shoot, and which non-Vietnamese citizens will

participate in the production (tentative shooting itinerary, equipment and crew lists, and scanned passport photos of all foreign crew and cast).

The Cinema Department will assign a officer to the set to serve as a liaison with the local authorities during the production.

Please note that work visas are mandatory for incoming foreign crew members, and their visa applications will be tied to the filming permit for the production.

Processing time and fees vary depending on the country of origin. As a general guideline, you can expect anywhere between 10-15 business days for documentaries, reality programs, and one-off projects, and 30-45 business days for fiction projects such as television dramas or feature films.

Unscripted Content (Reality Shows, Documentaries)

For unscripted content, the production must submit a **treatment** (usually based on the synopsis) describing the program's content. If interviews are planned, the production must also submit Q&As (translated into Vietnamese) for review to ensure the content complies with Vietnam's Cinema Law.

Once the permit is issued, producers must directly contact the People's Committee of the specific ward or commune where they plan to film to request guidance and support.

Excerpt from the 2022 Cinema Law

According to Article 9 of the 2022 Cinema Law, the following content is prohibited in cinematographic activities:

- Violation of the Constitution, laws, or incitement to disregard them.
- Propaganda against the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, undermining national unity, or Vietnamese cultural values.
- Distortion of national history or infringement upon national sovereignty.
- Content inciting violence, terrorism, or depicting detailed scenes of cruelty or violence.
- Dissemination of obscene, immoral content, or material contrary to Vietnamese social values.

Application Process

- Submission:** Submit the application directly, by mail, or through the online public service portal of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (<https://dichvucong.bvhttdi.gov.vn>).
- Address:** Cinema Department, 147 Hoang Hoa Tham, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi.
- Processing Time:** The application will be processed within 20 days from the date of receipt of a complete and valid dossier.
- Receiving Results:** Results can be collected in person at the Cinema Department, by mail, or via the online public service portal.

HARD-WORKING CREW MEMBERS

Given the volume of feature films and series produced in HCMC, which concentrates a central part of the Vietnamese cinema community, the city enjoys a convenient crew depth: there are a lot of crew members for all positions, as local production companies are churning out more 30 mainstream movies per year, most of them for 1 to 1,5 millions Euros budgets.

A key advantage of producing films in Vietnam especially in HCMC is the low cost of production. Every euro spent in Vietnam appears to deliver five times more value on screen than in western Europe or America. This competitive pricing is driven by two major factors: long working hours and the central role of technical service providers (rental houses).

Vietnamese film crews routinely work 14 hours per day, six days a week. These shifts usually include three meal breaks, summing up to about one hour off per day. There is no formal labor contract or collective agreement regulating this workload. But after COVID-19, producers and rental houses informally agreed to standardize working days to 14 hours a recent improvement. Overtime pay scales do exist: 50% extra beyond 15 hours, another 50% beyond 18 hours, and 100% more after 20 hours.

Despite concerns over fatigue, some professionals defend the long days, claiming they allow access to both morning and evening natural lights, which is visually optimal. When shooting TVC or branded content, crew can work 15 hours per day for these short periods.

Another distinctive element of Vietnamese production is the legacy of the former model of State-run integrated studio model that existed before the recent boom of private production companies: movie producers of mainstream productions usually don't hire individual crew members directly. Instead, they contract rental houses for bundled services that include gear and complete crews. Only the cinematographer and sometimes the cameraman are usually hired directly as freelancers.

For example, a lighting and grip package includes 12 crew members (including the gaffer), equipment, trucks, and several drivers. These personnel are employees of the rental company. The reason for this setup isn't just tradition it also reflects the lack of local insurance for film gear. Rental houses prefer to keep equipment under the watch of their own trained teams to reduce risk.

A similar system is used for camera gear, which also comes with personnel, except for the camera operator and focus puller, who are freelance hires. Pricing is competitive: a week's lighting and grip package for a vietnamese mainstream movie can costs around 200-250 million VND (€6,700-€9,500), while camera packages range from 100-200 million VND (€3,800-€7,600), using professional-level gear like the ARRI Alexa or Sony Venice.

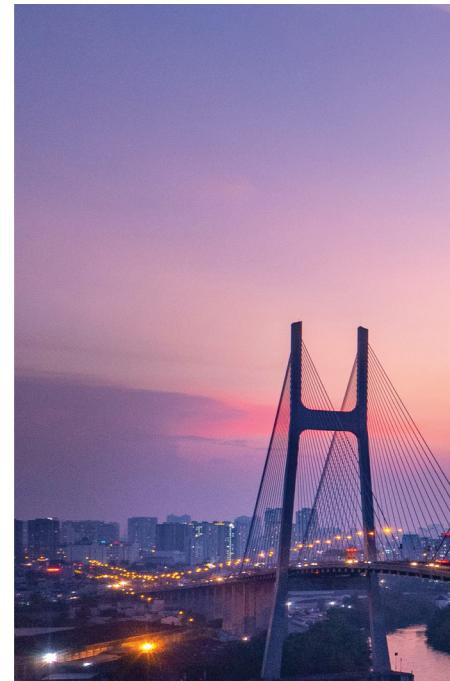
Head of Departments such as respected directors of photography, can earn 150 million VND per week (about €5,700), approaching western pay scales. This reflects the scarcity of highly skilled crew in the commercial sector as the Vietnamese cinema industry is expanding rapidly.

Some rental houses, like HK Films, have expanded into production and line production services, becoming leaders in the Vietnamese industry.



PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTION SERVICE COMPANIES

Ho Chi Minh City, being by far the primary center of audiovisual production in Vietnam, is home to most production and production service companies interested in collaborating with foreign productions. Here is a selection of production houses.

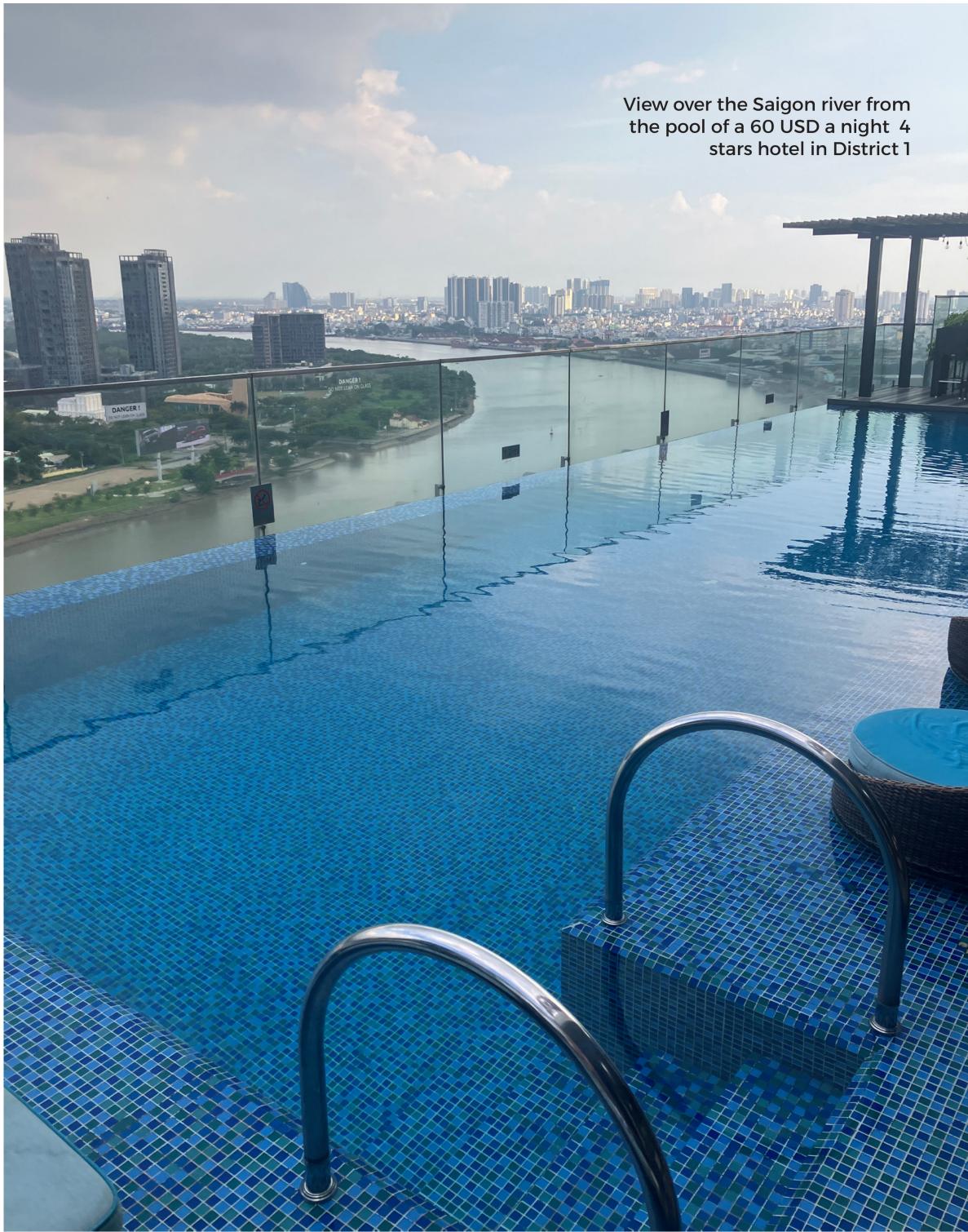


Company	Contact / Website	Main activity
89S Group	https://89sgroup.vn	A full-service production company covering feature film production, TVCs, and post-production through its subsidiary ST Digital.
Anh Tễu Studio	https://www.facebook.com/anhteustudio	An independent film production studio focusing on auteur-driven projects, with an emphasis on creative storytelling and emerging Vietnamese voices.
Beta Group	https://betagroup.vn	An integrated entertainment group involved in cinema operations (Beta Cinemas), content production, and media investments. Supports emerging Vietnamese filmmakers through in-house projects.
BHD Vietnam	https://bhd.vn	One of Vietnam's most established integrated studios, managing film production, distribution, and exhibition. Operates the BHD Star Cineplex cinema chain and is involved in major local and international co-productions.
Chánh Phương Films	https://www.facebook.com/Hangphimchanhphuong	Hangphimchanhphuong A well-known Vietnamese production house specializing in feature films. Producer of several national hits and co-productions, recognized for combining commercial appeal with strong storytelling.
CJ HK Entertainment	https://cjhkentertainment.com	Part of the Korean CJ Group, a leading studio for feature film production and co-productions between Korea and Vietnam. Known for high-quality cinematic productions and box-office successes.
Clubhouse	https://www.clubhousefilms.com	Specialized in branded content, TV commercials, and creative production services, with an experienced bilingual team serving both local and international markets.
Daylight Production	https://www.linkedin.com/company/daylight-productions-vietnam	A film and production-services company, experienced in both independent films and branded content. Provides on-set management and logistics for domestic and foreign productions.
Galaxy Studio	https://www.galaxycine.vn	A major integrated studio covering film production, distribution, and exhibition. One of Vietnam's key players behind mainstream films and large-scale commercial releases.
Genesi Creative	https://genesicreative.com	Feature-film production house & production services company (films, TV-commercials, branded content)
HK Film	https://hkfilm.com.vn	A leading production and production-services company in Vietnam. Offers a complete range from project development to production execution, with experience in international collaborations.



Company	Contact / Website	Main activity
Lý Hải Production	https://lyhaipro.com	An established feature film production company, known for successful Vietnamese film franchises combining action, comedy, and family-oriented content.
Noah House	https://www.studionoahfilm.com/	A creative production and production-services studio active in commercials, short films, and visual storytelling. Known for its artistic approach and high-quality visual aesthetics.
November Films (Victor Vũ)	https://www.facebook.com/p/November-Films-100063499329736/	A renowned feature film production company founded by director Victor Vũ, producing high-quality cinematic projects that have defined contemporary Vietnamese cinema.
Skyline Media	https://skyline.vn	Specializes in advertising, TV programs, and production services, with a strong portfolio in branded entertainment and corporate storytelling.
South East Asia Production Services	https://www.facebook.com/pspsvietnam	A production-services company experienced in supporting foreign film and commercial crews in Vietnam, offering local logistics, permits, and technical coordination.
Thu Trang Entertainment	https://thutrang.vn	A production company established by actress Thu Trang, specializing in comedy and entertainment films, combining commercial sensibility with audience-oriented storytelling.
Tran Thanh Town	https://www.facebook.com/phimdienanhtranhanh	A feature film production label founded by artist Trần Thành, producing high-grossing Vietnamese comedies and dramas with strong local appeal.
Viewfinder	https://viewfinder.vn	A film and commercial production house offering line production, creative direction, and execution services. Frequently works with international crews shooting in Vietnam.
VPictures	https://www.facebook.com/VPicturesVN	A mainstream feature film production company producing commercially successful titles and collaborating with major local distribution networks.
The CREATV Company	https://www.creatv.com	A versatile production services company active in feature films, TV series, documentaries, and branded content. Provides creative direction, technical support, and post coordination for international clients.

HOTELS AND LODGING



View over the Saigon river from the pool of a 60 USD a night 4 stars hotel in District 1

Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) is Vietnam's largest metropolis and offers a wide range of hotel competitive options catering to every budget, from simple hostels for indie films crew to five-star luxury towers suitable for high-profile talent.

The majority of visitors stay in **District 1**, which is the historic and commercial heart of the city. Landmarks like Ben Thanh Market, Nguyen Hue Walking Street, and the Opera House are within walking distance, making it ideal for first-time travelers. District 1 has everything from **budget hostels in Pham Ngu Lao (backpacker street)** to high-end chains such as the Park Hyatt Saigon or Le Méridien. Those seeking a more local, less touristy vibe often choose **District 3**, which lies just northwest of the center and is known for tree-lined boulevards, colonial architecture, and affordable mid-range hotels. Across the Saigon River, Thao Dien Ward (formerly **District 2**) offers a more tranquil, expat-oriented environment, with boutique hotels, serviced apartments, and wellness retreats.

For Crew members

Budget travelers can expect to pay between **US \$10-30 per night**, with some hostels as low as \$8. These usually include free Wi-Fi, air-conditioning, clean shared spaces, and sometimes complimentary breakfast. **Mid-range hotels**, averaging **US \$30-70 per night**, strike a balance between comfort and value. They often feature rooftop pools, gyms, airport shuttle services, and central locations close to nightlife and shopping. **Luxury hotels** typically range from **US \$70-250 per night**, depending on the season and brand. These establishments emphasize spacious rooms, spa and wellness centers, fine dining restaurants, and world-class hospitality.

Airbnb in HCMC offers a wide range of listings from budget private rooms around **US \$15-25 per night** to entire apartments typically priced **US \$30-70**, and luxe condos or penthouses ranging **US \$80-150**. Most of these properties are located in Saigon Ward, Ben Thanh Ward (formerly **District 1**) (convenient to travel to attractions), and wards formerly of **District 3** (quieter residential areas) and Thao Dien area formerly of **District 2** for modern amenities and expat communities.

Luxstay, often dubbed the “Vietnamese Airbnb,” was launched in **2016-17** as a homegrown short-term rental platform and now boasts thousands of listings across Vietnam. In Ho Chi Minh City, Luxstay offers apartments, villas, and boutique homestays. Luxstay listings are often cheaper than equivalent Airbnb or hotel rates

Choosing the right area

- **District 1:** Best for first-time visitors, shopping, nightlife, and sightseeing.
- **District 3:** A quieter, more authentic feel while still being central.
- **District 2 (Thao Dien):** Ideal for families, long stays, and boutique luxury.
- **District 5:** Perfect for Chinese travelers seeking cultural familiarity.
- **District 7:** A hub for Korean visitors with strong community presence. Japanese Quarter (District 1): Tailored for Japanese travelers

For top Above the Line talents

Among the most notable luxury hotels, the **Park Hyatt Saigon** offers vintage elegance, landscaped gardens, and a celebrated afternoon tea. **Hotel des Arts Saigon** is a boutique property known for its rooftop infinity pool and artistic décor. For those who want to experience the skyline, **Vinpearl Landmark 81** inside Vietnam's tallest building offers sweeping views and five-star service. Travelers seeking a lively atmosphere often prefer **Le Méridien Saigon**, with its modern bars and riverside setting. For a touch of history, the **Hotel Continental Saigon**, established in 1880, remains one of the city's most iconic addresses. Overlooking the Opera House, it exudes colonial charm with spacious rooms, marble floors, and a timeless courtyard café that once hosted journalists and writers during the Vietnam War era.

Chinese, Korean, and Japanese travelers

Given the strong flow of visitors from East Asia, many hotels in Ho Chi Minh City provide services tailored to these guests. In **District 5 (Chinatown/Cholon)**, hotels like **Windsor Plaza** and **Equatorial Hotel** are especially popular with Chinese travelers, offering Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking staff, Chinese restaurants, and proximity to temples and wholesale markets. Korean visitors often choose accommodations in **District 7 (Phu My Hung)**, a modern district with Korean-owned restaurants, supermarkets, and mid- to high-range hotels such as **Oakwood Residence Saigon** or **Capri by Fraser**, both featuring Korean-language services and familiar cuisine. Japanese travelers, meanwhile, favor the **Japanese Quarter near Le Thanh Ton Street** in District 1, where boutique hotels like **Silverland Sakyō** and **Norfolk Hotel** cater with Japanese-speaking staff, onsen-style baths, and breakfasts that include miso soup, rice, and grilled fish. These specialized hotels ensure that East Asian visitors feel at home while enjoying the vibrancy of Saigon.

VISITING FOREIGN PRODUCTIONS: A QUICK HISTORY

Vietnam's on-screen life in foreign films has mirrored its history – from French era to Cold War battleground, to a modern, globally connected nation. And most of these movies shot in HCMC.

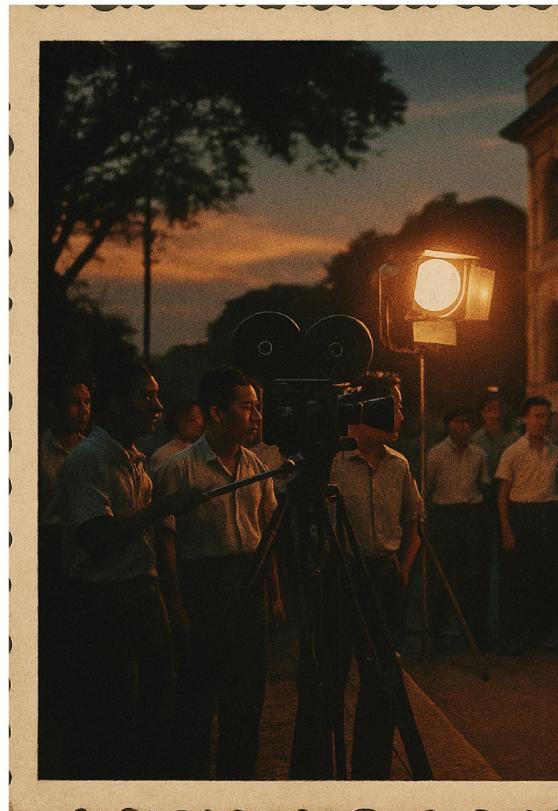
The first major foreign fiction came during the twilight of French Indochina: Joseph L. Mankiewicz's **The Quiet American** (1958). Filmed in Saigon HCMC name at the time, it adapted Graham Greene's novel against the backdrop of the First Indochina War, just as France's influence was fading. The 1960s brought the American-backed Republic of Vietnam into the cinematic frame. **A Yank in Viet-Nam** (1964) was a rare example of a Hollywood war film shot during active conflict, capturing Saigon's streets while U.S. troops were still arriving.

Number Ten Blues / Goodbye Saigon (1975) was filmed by Japanese director Norio Osada across Saigon, Huế, the Hải Vân Pass, and coastal Long Hải in the war's final months. The story follows a Japanese businessman caught in the chaos of South Vietnam's collapse, torn between love, loyalty, and survival. Remarkably, the footage vanished after the Fall of Saigon and was considered lost for 37 years – until rediscovered in Tokyo, restored, and finally released in 2013, making it both a cinematic and historical time capsule.

After reunification in 1975, Vietnam's new socialist government embraced cultural partnerships with fellow socialist states. Soviet-Vietnamese war epic **Coordinates of Death** (1985) used Hanoi, Haiphong, and Ha Long Bay as setting and symbol of anti-imperialist struggle. East Germany's DEFA Studios co-produced **Dschungelzeit** (1988), embedding Cold War solidarity into its jungle-set narrative.

Later (1989), Hong Kong action master Tsui Hark came to HCMC (where he was born) for the third movie of cult saga **A Better Tomorrow, Love & Death in Saigon**.

The early 1990s marked a political and economic turning point. Vietnam's Đổi Mới reforms opened the country to market-oriented policies and foreign investment, including in film. French productions like **Indochine** (1992) and **The Lover** (1992) revisited colonial-era Vietnam, shooting in



Hollywood has been coming to shoot in HCMC since the Fifties.



HCMC, Hué's imperial citadel, the Mekong Delta, and Ha Long Bay.

Phillip Noyce's **The Quiet American** (2002), a second adaptation of Greene's novel, reflected both Vietnam's new openness and a post-9/11 global mood of political skepticism. Unlike its 1958 predecessor, this version was largely shot in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Hội An, using authentic street life to ground its Cold War intrigue. As Vietnam deepened diplomatic ties and tourism boomed, it became a versatile filming hub. Canadian-French drama **The Chinese Botanist's Daughters** (2006) used northern Vietnam to portray rural China; Indian films like **I Love Me** (2012) and **Anegan** (2015) folded Vietnamese locations into song-and-romance sequences. Hollywood blockbusters joined in: **Pan** (2015) and **Kong: Skull Island** (2017) showcased Ha Long Bay, Ninh Bình, and Quảng Bình's caves to global audiences.

In the streaming era, productions like Spanish comedy **Thi Mai, rumbo a Vietnam** (2018) and Netflix's **A Tourist's Guide to Love** (2023) leaned into lighthearted, travelogue-style narratives, underscoring Vietnam's image as both accessible and exotic.

Across these decades, Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, and the limestone karsts of Ninh Bình trail closely, each embodying different facets of Vietnam's complex political and cultural identity. But one location dominates foreign productions shot in Vietnam: Ho Chi Minh City. From colonial intrigue to wartime reportage and glossy romance, its ancient era boulevards, motorbike-choked avenues, and humid glow have remained irresistible.

A FOOD PARADISE!

Ho Chi Minh City is one of Southeast Asia's most exciting culinary hubs, offering a rich blend of traditional Vietnamese cuisine and international flavors. Food plays a central role in daily life, with thousands of vendors, eateries, and restaurants catering to every taste and budget.

Vietnamese food is known for its balance of sweet, salty, sour, and spicy flavors. Core ingredients include rice, fish sauce, lime, chili, and fresh herbs like mint and basil. Meats such as pork, chicken, and beef are common, while duck, shrimp, and other seafood are also widely used. Vegetables like morning glory, bean sprouts, and pickled carrots add freshness and crunch.

Classic dishes include phở (beef noodle soup), bánh mì (French-influenced crispy sandwich filled with meats and vegetables), bún thịt nướng (grilled pork with vermicelli), and gỏi cuốn (fresh spring rolls). These are often sold by street vendors and in small family-run stalls. A typical street food meal costs between 30,000 and 80,000 VND (about \$1.25 to \$2.50 USD), making it extremely affordable.

In addition to local specialties, Ho Chi Minh City offers a wide array of international cuisine from Korean BBQ, Japanese sushi, and Thai curries, to French bistros, Italian trattorias, and American-style diners. These restaurants, especially in districts like District 1, District 2 (Thao Dien), and District 7, cater to both locals and foreigners. Meals in higher-end or foreign-style restaurants typically range from 200,000 to 600,000 VND (around \$8 to \$25 USD), depending on the cuisine and setting.

On sets, Vietnamese crew members usually get during production, with an average catering cost ranging from 40,000 to 70,000 VND per meal (approx. 1.5 to 3 USD). For larger scale productions with higher catering standards, meals may reach 100,000-150,000 VND (4-6 USD). Western-style meals for foreign crew members, usually at restaurants, can cost around 200,000 - 600,000 VND (8-25 USD) depending on the venue.



VENDORS

Unless you need very rare requirements, all the equipments you need for your shoot in Ho Chi Minh City can be rented from local vendors. Here is a non-exhaustive selection to get you started. Note that some of them use Facebook pages as their main business website, which is common practice in Vietnam. It does not mean that they are not valuable companies

Company	Specialty / Notes	Website / Contact
HK Film Rental Services	Provides full-scale grip, lighting, and camera packages, including crew and transport (trucks). Known as one of the largest equipment vendors in HCMC with extensive inventory for international shoots.	https://hkfilm.com.vn
Bầu House	Focused on cameras and lenses, offering complete camera packages with professional crew support. Popular among commercials, feature films and short-form production teams.	https://www.facebook.com/BauHouseEquipment/
CineSpace	Specializes in grip and lighting equipment with transport (trucks). Known for reliable service in mid-size and large productions.	https://www.facebook.com/cinespace.equipment/
PSPS Vietnam (South East Asia Production Services)	Provides both production services and equipment rental. Offers full packages including crew support, making it suitable for international feature films and commercials.	https://pspsvietnam.com
TechFilm	Camera rental house with technical crew support. Also provides production services for commercial and film projects.	https://techfilm.vn/
Saigon Lovy Media	Offers a mix of equipment rental and broader media services, serving commercials and digital content production.	https://www.facebook.com/saigonlovymedia/
Rabbit Media	Vendor providing equipment rental services for commercials and short productions. Flexible packages adapted to different production sizes.	https://rabbitmedia.vn/
Eventus Production	Hybrid production company with in-house equipment rental. Frequently services commercial shoots, offering both production management and gear.	https://eventusproduction.com/

POST-PRODUCTION & VFX

Once shot, your production will need post. Whatever will be your need, VFX, editing or mixing, you'll find the proper service providers in HCMC.

Company	Activity	Website
SPARTA VFX	Specialized in high-end VFX for commercials, films, and international projects. Services include compositing, CGI, animation, and post-production supervision.	https://spartavfx.com
AOI Studios	Boutique studio focusing on creative post-production, animation, and VFX. Known for design-driven content, 3D animation, and motion graphics.	https://aioi.io
blankNegatives	Offers film laboratory services and creative post-production for independent projects. Includes color grading, scanning, and artistic finishing.	https://www.facebook.com/blanknegatives.lab/
Cyclo Studio	Full post-production studio: editing, color grading, VFX, and creative finishing for films and commercials. Strong in storytelling visuals.	https://www.cyclo.vn
Flow Studio	Provides motion design, animation, and creative post-production. Focus on branding content and digital campaigns.	https://flowstu.com
Sparx Virtuos	Internationally recognized studio specializing in 3D animation, VFX, and game cinematics. Part of Virtuos Group, delivering global-standard post.	https://www.sparx.com
Colory Animation	Leading local animation and VFX house. Services include 2D/3D animation, CGI, motion graphics, and post-production for commercials and films.	https://colory.vn
WestWorld VFX Vietnam	Provides VFX and animation services, with a focus on commercials and digital content.	https://www.westworld.co.kr/
Alien VFX	Offers VFX production, compositing, and CGI for ads and films. Emerging studio with a young creative team.	https://alienmedia.vn/
Zodiac II Media	Focuses on VFX and post-production for music videos, ads, and digital campaigns.	https://www.facebook.com/zodiaciivfx/
SuperComp Studio	Specializes in compositing, CGI, and finishing for commercials and TV.	https://www.facebook.com/supercompstudio/
SPICE fx	Provides advanced VFX, CGI, and post-production for advertising and cinematic content.	https://www.spicevfx.com
Rare Reversee	Boutique studio focusing on creative VFX, short films, and experimental content.	https://www.rarereversee.com
LuciDigital	Post-production studio: editing, color grading, and creative services for commercials and corporate films.	https://www.lucidigital.com
Bonjour Saigon	Post-production and audio studio. Services include editing, mixing, dubbing, subtitling, and sound design. Works with international clients.	https://www.bonjoursaigon.fr
CG Record Studio	Specializes in CGI, 3D modeling, and visual design for commercials and digital projects.	https://cgrecordstudio.com
Step One Studio	Provides VFX, motion graphics, and post-production support for commercials and branded content.	http://linktr.ee/steponestudio
Aurae Studio	Audio post-production studio. Services: sound design, Foley, ADR, dubbing, mixing (Dolby Atmos certified), and music scoring. Works for films and OTT platforms.	https://auraestudios.com
ST Digital	Specializes in full post-production services, particularly color grading, editing, and finishing. Provides digital workflow solutions for feature films, TV commercials, and branded content.	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063748324025



PRODUCTION INSURANCES

Getting insurance coverage at each stage of production is an essential part of making films, series, and TV shows anywhere in the world. If you are shooting in Vietnam, you'll find similar options in Ho Chi Minh City through specialized brokers. These brokers work with reputable Vietnamese insurance companies, which is a legal requirement for all insurance contracts in the country.

Here are some of the risks that insurance brokers can cover for your productions:

Equipment & Props/ Sets

Coverage includes both rented and owned equipment, as well as props and sets. In many countries, rental companies insure their own equipment and simply include this cost in the rental fee. In Ho Chi Minh City, however, many rental houses offer package deals that include crew and equipment such as lighting and cameras which makes them more protective of their property. As a result, they usually do not offer clients the option to add insurance. Nevertheless, you can arrange separate coverage for your equipment if needed.

Cast Non-Appearance

Covers financial losses resulting from the accident or illness of key cast or crew members, including their spouse or immediate family. Coverage may be subject to medical examinations and/or age restrictions.

Optional Coverages

- Personal Accident
- Character Vehicles
- Production Office Contents
- Cash
- Baggage

Please note: Obtaining insurance for vehicles that are not yet registered as road-legal under local regulations can be difficult. For example, if you import a vintage car from another country, coverage may be limited or unavailable.

Support (Film & Media Coverage)

Protects against financial losses due to damage to or loss of footage during both production and post-production. Like everywhere, insurers may require duplication of dailies as part of the policy.

Producers' Indemnity

Covers financial losses caused by production delays due to non-delivery of equipment or cast/crew, natural disasters, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Public Liability

Provides coverage in the event of accidental bodily injury to any person or damage to property.

Third-Party Property Liability & Entrusted Property

Protects against damage to buildings, rented properties, film sets, or locations that you use for production and for which you may be held legally responsible. This includes damages such as fire, electrical incidents, or water damage during preparation, production, and dismantling.

Contacts:

Coverus (CT TNHH BML Services) offers all-risk production policies underwritten by Circle Asia and locally issued through Bao Minh.

Jeremy Hubert, Audrey Nguyễn.

+84 (0)76 420 3935

<http://www.coverus.today>

A DOOR FOR FILMING IN VIETNAM

As the vast majority of Vietnamese production companies, crew members and equipment rental companies are based in HCMC, the city can be a natural entry point for filming in Vietnam and accessing the beautiful locations of the country, to be discovered in the next pages.

Connectivity is a defining strength of the metropolis. Tan Son Nhat the nation's busiest airport handled roughly 39.8 million passengers in 2024, with peak holiday volumes now topping 120,000 travelers a day. It offers direct flight to 19 cities (see below) in Vietnam. The opening of its new terminal has expanded capacity toward 50 million, reinforcing the city's role as country's primary international gateway.



On the water, the Ho Chi Minh City port complex (notably Cat Lai and VICT) is Vietnam's leading container hub and among the world's top 20 by volume, moving close to nine million TEUs in 2021—vital for manufacturing and trade across the Mekong corridor.

Crucially, the city is also a rail pivot for the entire country. From Saigon station, the North–South Railway popularly the “Reunification Express” runs daily along 1,726 km of track to Hanoi, linking Ho Chi Minh City with coastal destinations such as Nha Trang, Da Nang, and Hue. Typical end-to-end journeys take just over 30 hours, with multiple services each day, making rail a lifeline for intermediate provinces.

Looking ahead, Vietnam has approved a US\$67 billion high-speed line between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City that aims to cut the journey by train to about five hours; preparatory steps are advancing following National Assembly approval in late 2024, with private-sector participation being considered. When delivered, the project will transform north–south mobility and further confirm the city's centrality.

Vietnamese Cities Accessible by Nonstop Flights from Ho Chi Minh City (SGN)

One hour or less	One to two hours	More than two hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Da Lat (Đà Lạt) — ~50 minRach Gia (Rạch Giá) — ~45–50 minCa Mau (Cà Mau) — ~55–60 minCon Dao (Côn Đảo) — ~55–60 minBuon Ma Thuot (Buôn Ma Thuột) — ~55–60 minNha Trang (Cam Ranh) — ~60 minPhu Quoc (Phú Quốc) — ~55–65 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pleiku (Pleiku) — ~1h10Quy Nhon (Phù Cát) — ~1h10–1h20Tuy Hoa (Tuy Hòa) — ~1h10–1h20Chu Lai (Chu Lai) — ~1h25–1h35Da Nang (Đà Nẵng) — ~1h20–1h30Dong Hoi (Đồng Hới) — ~1h35–1h50Hue (Huế) — ~1h25–1h35Vinh (Vinh) — ~1h45Ha Long (Vân Đồn) — ~1h55	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hai Phong (Hải Phòng) — ~2h00–2h10Thanh Hoa (Thọ Xuân) — ~2h00–2h10Hanoi (Hà Nội) — ~2h05–2h15

Vietnamese airlines offering internal flights

Vietnam Airlines — <https://www.vietnamairlines.com>

VietJet Air — <https://www.vietjetair.com>

Bamboo Airways — <https://www.bambooairways.com>

Vietravel Airlines — <https://www.vietravelairlines.com>

Chapter 3

VIETNAM AT A GLANCE

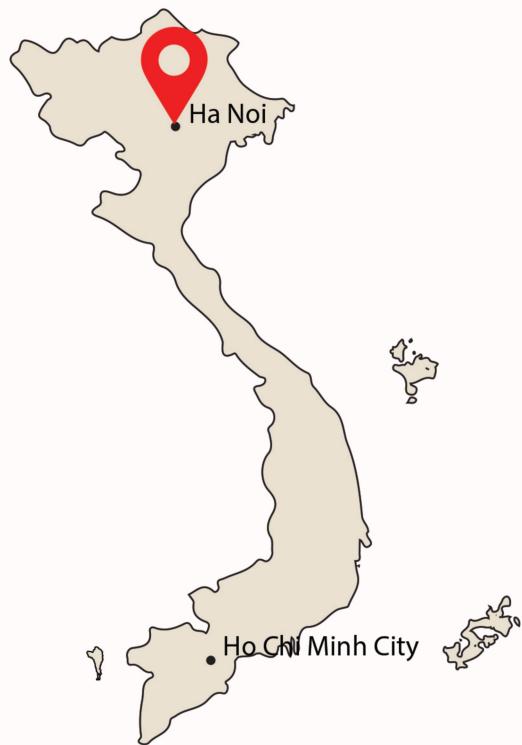


On the set in Hué of *Spirit Whisker: the Revenant*, directed by Lưu Thành Luân (Production: 89S Group).

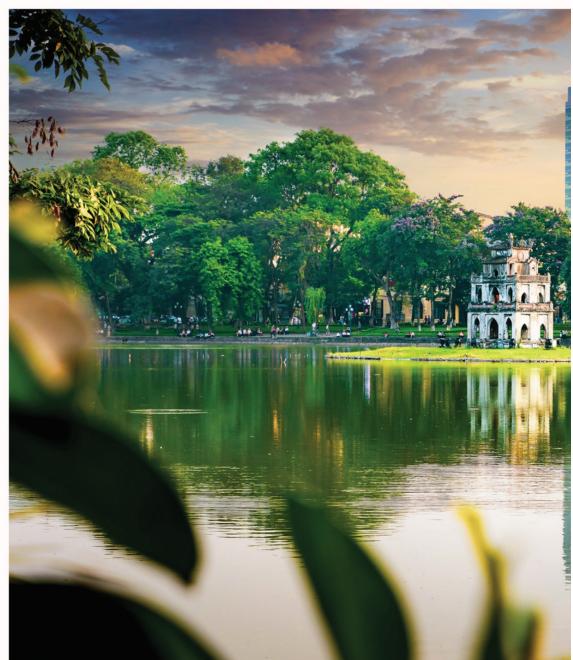
Vietnam, stretching across 331,000 square kilometers of Southeast Asia, is a country of striking geographic contrasts that offer a rich visual palette for filming. Home to around 100 million people, it borders the Eastern Sea and the Gulf of Thailand with more than 3,200 kilometers of coastline. Vietnam is bordered by China to the north, Laos and Cambodia to the west, the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest, and the Eastern Sea to the east.

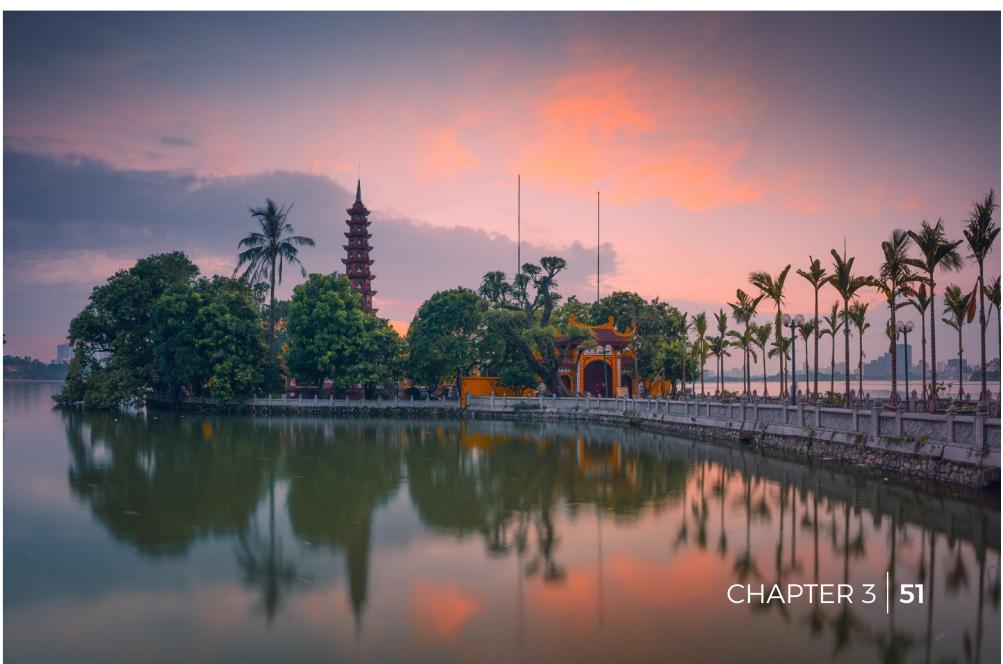
Vietnam's landscapes are defined by its great deltas: the lush, maze-like Mekong Delta in the south, with endless waterways, rice paddies, and floating markets, and the fertile Red River Delta in the north, framed by ancient villages and agricultural scenes. Towering above, the Annamite Range stretches along the western spine, offering jungle-covered peaks, misty valleys, and remote ethnic minority villages. The crown jewel is Fansipan, the "Roof of Indochina", rising to 3,147 meters. Climate varies dramatically: a tropical south with year-round greenery contrasts with a subtropical north, where cooler winters and seasonal mists give landscapes a different cinematic mood.

Governed as a the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, led by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Vietnam is also one of the South-East Asia's most dynamic societies. Hanoi is the country's capital and the second largest city, with around 8 million inhabitants.

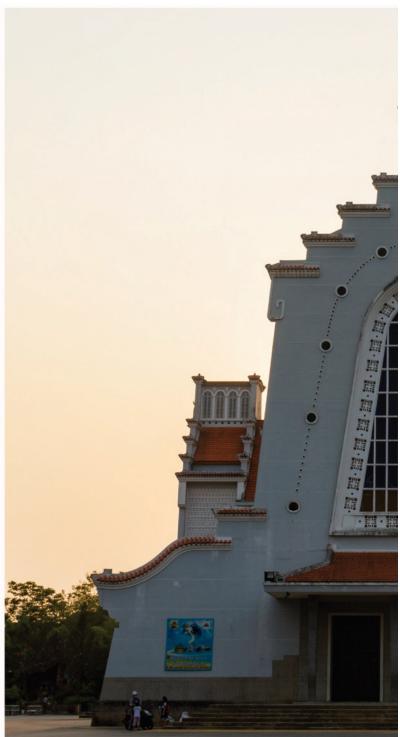
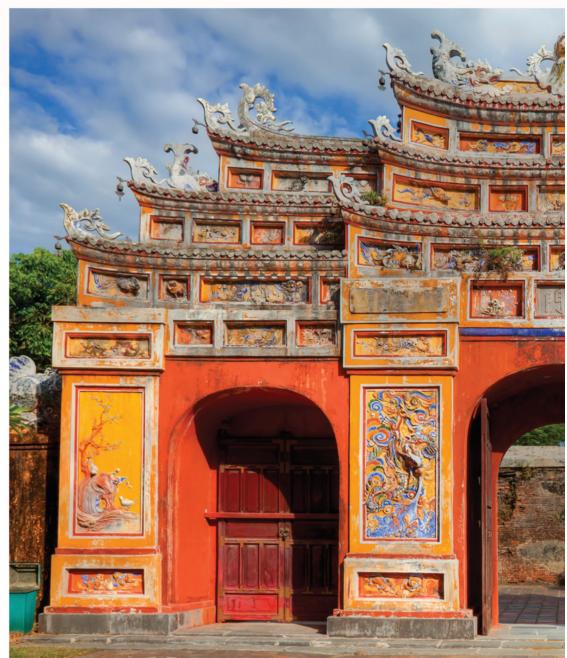


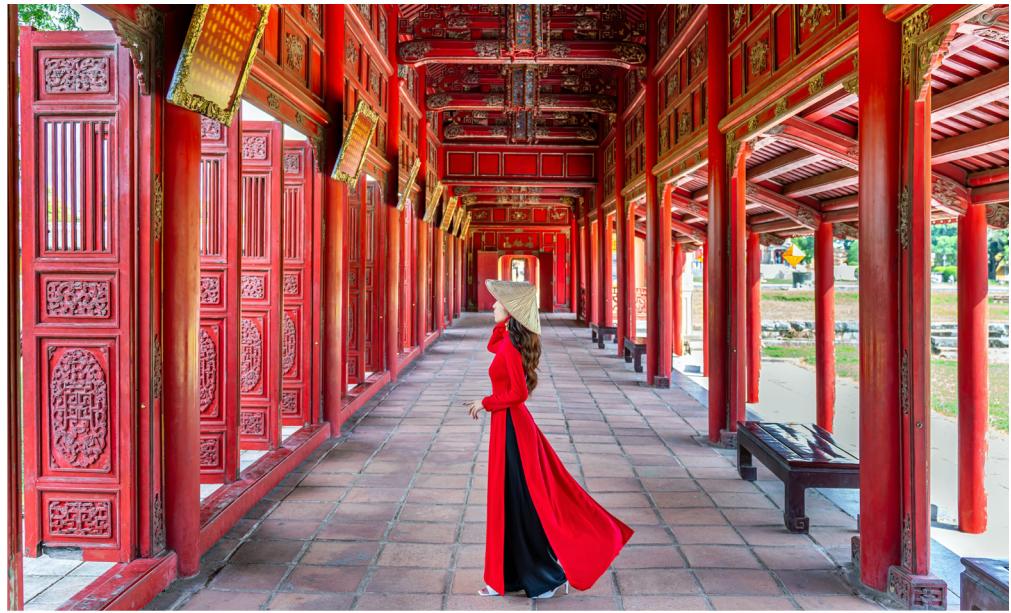
Ha Noi



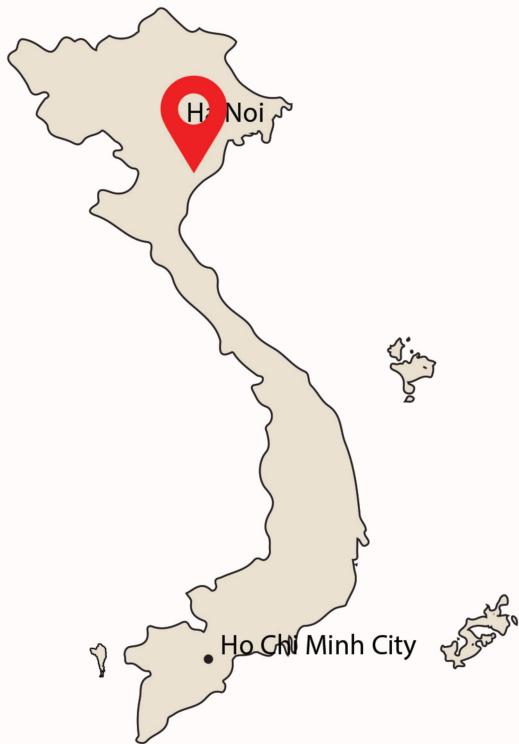


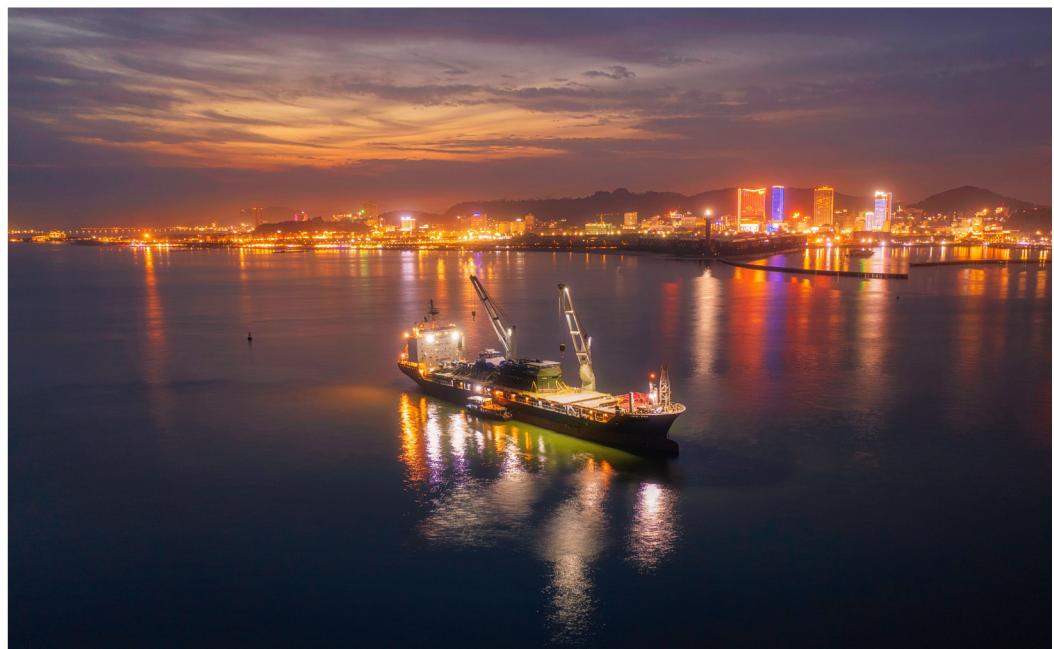
Hue





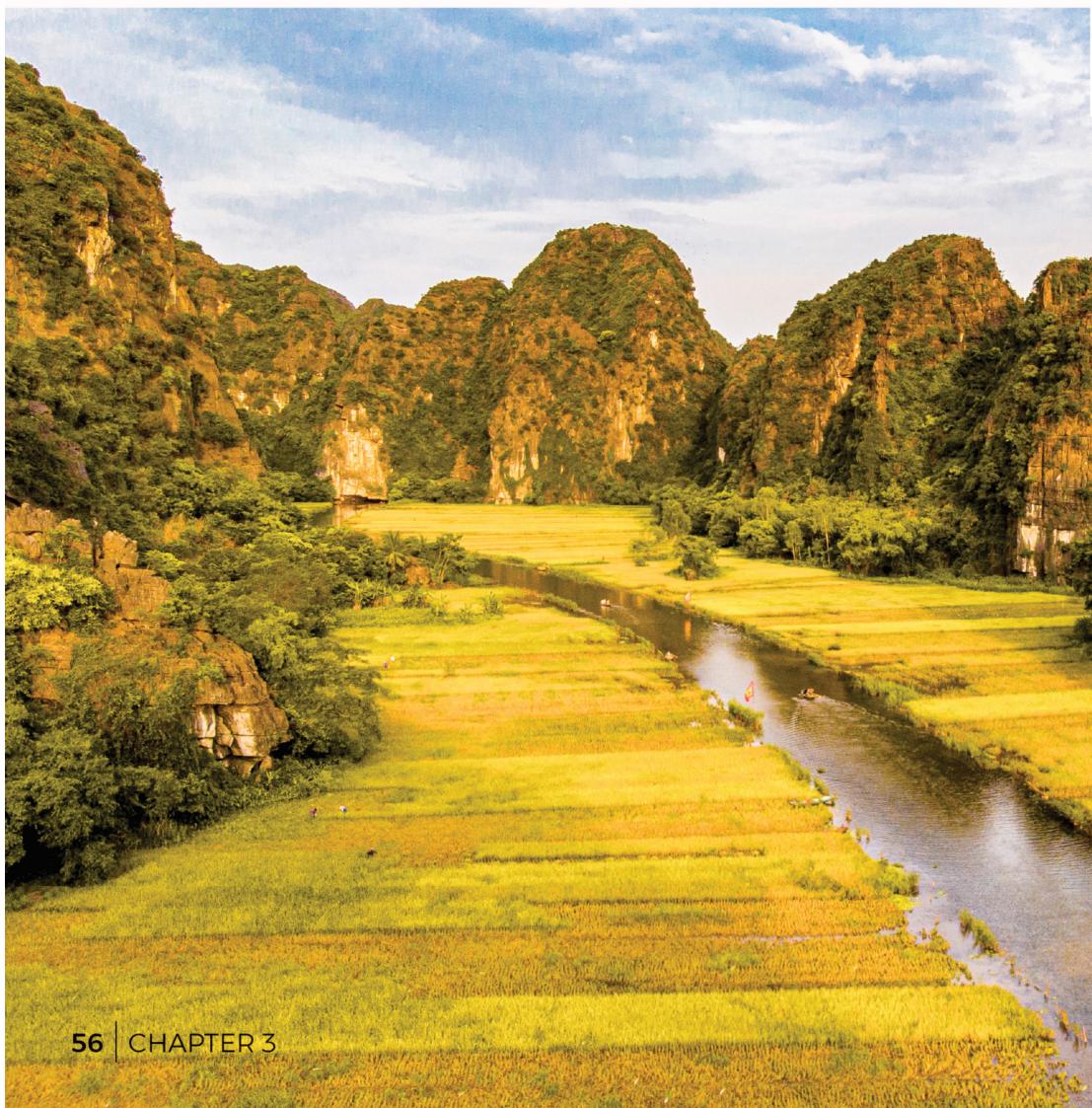
Ha Long Bay







Ninh Binh





Mekong Delta





Mui Ne





LANGUAGE TIPS

This page provides hands-on cultural and on set guidance tailored for international film crews working in Vietnam. Vietnamese language is a tonal one, not easy to master for native speakers from other countries not using tones, such as European countries, or Japan.

You will find here a few easy but important words to master in order to be polite. Then some more filming-oriented words you could hear on sets. It will be useful for Foreign crew members to recognize them, even if they are not expected to be saying them.

Polite / Basic Communication

Xin chào — Hello

Cảm ơn — Thank you

Xin lỗi — Sorry / Excuse me

Không sao — It's OK / No problem

Handy Vietnamese Phrases for Film Crews —
(context-based, without pronunciation)

A. On set Commands

Chuẩn bị! — Ready! Used before shooting: “Chuẩn bị, camera, sound...”

Quay! — Roll camera / Action! Used at the start of a take (often with “Action” in English).

Cắt! — Cut! End of a take.

Làm lại! — Do it again / Reset! When a second take or reset is needed.

Giữ yên! / Im lặng! — Hold still! / Quiet! To request silence on set.

Nhanh lên! — Hurry up! When pressed for time.

Cẩn thận! — Be careful! To warn of danger (traffic, electricity, stunts).

Ăn cơm! — Meal break! Local shorthand to call for lunch/meal break.

B. Technical / Logistical Requests

Cần thêm ánh sáng — We need more light.

Cần micro / mic — We need a mic.

Cần ổ cắm / điện — We need power sockets / electricity.

Có chỗ để xe tải thiết bị không? — Is there a place for grip trucks?

Xin phép quay ở đây được không? — May we film here?

Bao nhiêu tiền? — How much?

Giảm giá được không? — Can you give a discount?

Xin chữ ký ở đây — Please sign here (release / form).

Emergency / Urgent Situations

Gọi cấp cứu! — Call emergency!

Giúp tôi với! — Please help me!

Thiết bị bị hỏng — Equipment failure.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Vietnam MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY Immigration Department
E-visa website
<https://evisa.gov.vn/>

HCMC Tourism office website
<https://visithcmc.vn/en>

French Embassy in Vietnam
<https://vn.ambafrance.org/>

Consulat General de France à Ho Chi Minh Ville
<https://ho-chi-minh-ville.consulfrance.org/>

Saigoneer (main online news media)
<https://saigoneer.com/>

Ho Chi Minh City travel tips before and during your trip

<https://vinpearl.com/en/ho-chi-minh-city-travel-tips?>

Popular Ho Chi Minh City tours
<https://www.visitacity.com/en/ho-chi-minh-city>

Vietnam Timeles Charm
<https://vietnam.travel/>

The Complete Ho Chi Minh City Travel Guide for First-Timers

https://ahoyvietnam.com/ho-chi-minh-city-travel-guide/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Ho Chi Minh City Airport Guide
HCMC Tan Son Nhat International Airport
<https://www.hochiminhcityairport.com/>



HCM
Film City

MINISTÈRE
DE L'EUROPE
ET DES AFFAIRES
ÉTRANGÈRES
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
AU VIETNAM
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

**INSTITUT
FRANÇAIS**
Vietnam

This Ho Chi Minh City Production Guide has been conceived by Ghosts City Films on behalf of the Department of Culture and Sports of Ho Chi Minh City in collaboration with the French Institute and the French Embassy in Vietnam, with the support of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs through the French Team Fund for Creative Industries.

Writers: Franck Priot, Nguyen Ngoc Sao Mai

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<https://hochiminhcityfilm.com/en/>



FILMMAKERS FEEDBACKS

They came to Ho Chi Minh City, and they liked it!

Jordan Vogt-Roberts

(American Director, Kong: Skull Island)

Part of Legendary Monsterverse serie of movies, **Kong:**

Skull Island was shot all over Vietnam in 2017. Set in 1973 at the end of the Vietnam war, the story starts in HCMC and follows a group of soldiers and scientists who venture to a mysterious, uncharted island and encounter the gigantic ape Kong, the last of his kind. As they struggle to survive against deadly creatures, they realize Kong is not a monster but the island's protector.

 "I plan to move here, live in Ho Chi Minh City. I want to have a house, go back and forth between Saigon and Los Angeles (USA), I want to explore many things here, work in the entertainment industry, do advertising. I love the local art scene and am inspired to contribute with everyone."

Vietnam Voice International, March 11th, 2017

Rachael Leigh Cook

(Actress and producer of A Tourist's Guide to Love)

Produced by Netflix, **A Tourist's Guide to Love (2023)** is a romantic comedy about Amanda, a travel executive who takes a work trip to Vietnam after a breakup and meets Sinh, a charming local tour guide. As they explore the country together, Amanda rediscovers herself and learns to embrace adventure, love, and the unexpected turns of life.

 "Ho Chi Minh City is bustling. It is hard-working, fast-paced, and kind of crazy. There are incredible rooftops there. There's glamour. Anything that you could want to find, you can find in Ho Chi Minh City."

Condé Nast Traveller, April 21st, 2023

Phillip Noyce

(Australian Director, The Quiet American)

The Quiet American (2002), directed by Phillip Noyce, is a political thriller set in 1950s Vietnam during the early stages of the Vietnam War. It follows a love triangle between a jaded British journalist, Thomas Fowler, a young idealistic American, Alden Pyle, and a Vietnamese woman named Phuong. As their personal rivalry unfolds, the film exposes the moral ambiguity and devastating consequences of foreign involvement in Vietnam.

 "Of course there's been bureaucracy in this city like in any country we've had to go through. But I don't think a Vietnamese crew going to London, Sydney, America would be as well received, as we have been in Saigon. If I was a Vietnamese film director coming over to Sydney and said I'd like to blow up 200lb car bombs and close down the centre of Sydney for seven days I think I'd be on the next plane to Ho Chi Minh City!"

Reuter, March 28th, 2001

Kore-Eda Hirokazu

(Japan, Palme d'Or winner)

Hirokazu Kore-eda is a Japanese filmmaker known for his deeply humanistic storytelling, exploring themes of family, memory, and moral ambiguity with gentle realism. His acclaimed works, such as **Shoplifters** and **Nobody Knows**, have earned him numerous awards, including the Palme d'Or and Jury Prize in Cannes, and several Japan Academy Prizes for Best Director and Best Film.

 "The spirit of a film city is the availability to offer logistics support to filmmakers, who are then free to apply their creativity in film content."

Saigon News, May 7th, 2024