



A Complete Travel Guide
for Visiting the City of

NHA TRANG



ABOUT NHA TRANG

Today's Nha Trang, situated on the southern central portion of the Asian Peninsula, just where the land begins to curve to the west, is cosmopolitan and tourist-friendly. Most locals live in the northern part of the city, which is called Cho Dam. Most of the tourist infrastructure is located around Biet Thu, which is in the southern part of the city.

Because the city was originally built as a resort getaway, the emphasis is on the luscious natural beauty of the area. With a population of only 500,000, Nha Trang is a quiet village compared to Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City, with their populations of seven and eight million respectively. The city stretches along the edges of the aquamarine Nha Trang Bay, with kilometers of golden sand beaches and a promenade along Tran Phu Street enticing visitors to wander and soak in the sun. But don't think that Nha Trang is sleepy and boring! The city still bustles, and when the sun goes down, the nightlife heats up.

Inside the city, you'll find plenty to see and do, from visiting the Po Nagar Cham Towers to luxuriating on the beaches, relaxing in the spas, hiking or biking in the mountains, or sampling the delicious seafood dishes that are the specialty of the city.

Nha Trang is a popular vacation destination for the Vietnamese, of course, but Russian tourists and expats also love the city. You'll find most signs to be in Vietnamese and Russian, and local guides and shopkeepers often speak Russian instead of English or French.

THE HISTORY OF NHA TRANG, VIETNAM

Once a set of sleepy fishing villages (Xuon Huan, Phuong Cau, Van Than, Phuong Sai, and Phuoc Hai), Nha Trang has grown into one of the most popular ecotourism sites in Vietnam, a beautiful residence for its 500,000 inhabitants.

Nha Trang was originally part of the Cham Empire, which spread over what is now central and southern Vietnam from approximately 100 A.D. to 1832. During the days of the Champa, the area was called Kauthara, though in more recent times it may also have been called Ya Trang (Reed River) to mark its location on the Cai River, before it was officially renamed Nha Trang in 1698.

It wasn't until 1924, when the Governor-General of French Indochina made the townlet the capital of the Khan Hoa Province, that Nha Trang really started seeing growth. The French, noting the incredible beauty of the protected bay against which the five original villages nestled, along with the long, golden sand beaches, and the heavily forested mountains—abundant with wildlife—that ring three sides of the city, recognized Nha Trang as the perfect spot on which to build a resort town.

All the elements that originally enticed French pleasure-seekers still delight a growing number of tourists from both Vietnam and abroad.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Nha Trang's tropical savannah climate means you'll get mostly lovely weather during the area's long dry season, from January to August. In the hottest months, from May to September, average high temperatures hover in the low 90 degrees F.

The wet season, though short (September or October through December), is very wet. Islands in the bay protect the city from the worst typhoon winds, but expect daily heavy rainfall during these four months. Though average temperatures rarely dip below a balmy 70 degrees F., it can get chilly at times. Humidity remains high year-round.



ATTRACTIONS NEAR NHA TRANG

I-RESORT NHA TRANG

Nha Trang is known for its mineral water and mud baths, available at various resorts throughout the area. I-Resort is one of the three most popular resorts for mineral mud baths, but it also has some amazing pools and a waterfall area, too. You'll find it clean and refreshing, with a hospitable staff. Choose a treatment package at the entry, and then plan on spending at least half a day here to get the full effect of all that the resort has to offer. Soak in a private mineral mud bath for 20 minutes to half-an-hour, rinse off, and then relax in the sun on the sandy beach or paddle in one of the multiple bathing pools. Don't forget to get a massage in the spa/massage center. Finally, enjoy a meal in the resort's restaurant before heading back to Nha Trang and the rest of your day. Shuttles are available to take you to and from your hotel (about 20,000 VND one way), with Nha Trang city center located about seven km (around four miles) from the resort.



VINPEARL LAND AMUSEMENT PARK

Located on the largest island in the Nha Trang Bay, Vinpearl Land Amusement Park is part of VinGroup's massive conglomeration of hotels, spas, and resorts scattered throughout Vietnam. The amusement park has something for everyone, including rides, a water park, 4D movies, an aquarium, video games, and a nightly water show. Admission fees are very reasonable at 650,000 VND (\$29), and food is sold inside the park (no outside food is allowed in).

Get to the park via the world's longest cable car, which takes you from the mainland and across the water to the island. You'll love the views during the ride as well as the lush beauty of the park landscaping. Alternatively, a ferry is also available for transport to and from Nha Trang.



VINPEARL CABLE CAR

The cable car system that carries visitors to the five-star Vinpearl Land Amusement Park has become one of the iconic symbols of Nha Trang tourism. The cable car is the longest in Vietnam at 3320 meters (2 miles). Suspended on Eiffel Tower-like pylons, guests ride between 40 and 60 meters above the surface of the bay in comfortable carriages that can hold up to eight people. 48 carriages can carry up to 1500 people per hour.

The ride takes a total of 12 minutes and affords stunning views of Nha Trang and the surrounding natural beauty of the bay, the beaches, and the mountains. Catch a ride any day of the week between 5am and 10pm, including during very windy weather (the cable car is built to withstand gales up to level seven). Any changes to the ride's schedule will be posted at the departure stations on Nha Trang and the island.



PO NAGAR CHAM TOWERS (THAP BA)

Of the seven stone and brick towers originally built before the ninth century, A.D., only four remain. Po Nagar Cham Towers are located on Cu Lao Mountain in the heart of Nha Trang, with easy access and very low entrance fees. The towers are beautiful remnants of the Cham kingdom, with the distinctive architecture and style so familiar to the millennium of Cham rule.

Each of the towers is dedicated to various deities revered in Buddhist worship, with Po Nagar being especially honored as the goddess who taught the people new techniques in agriculture and weaving. The annual Thap Ba Festival in spring (dates are scheduled via the lunar calendar, so they change every year) draws a crowd of Cham descendants who come to honor the goddess and the other gods represented by the towers.



NHA THO NUI (NHA TRANG CATHEDRAL)

A beautiful example of French Gothic architecture, Nha Tho Nui was built by the French in the early 20th century. It stands on a small hill and once overlooked a small cemetery, which was later moved to make room for a train station. The remains from the cemetery found new homes within the cavities of the cathedral's walls. The cathedral is an easy walk from the beach (about one km), making this, the largest church in Nha Trang, a popular place to visit.

Typically Vietnamese-style adornments include neon lights behind the crucifix, a neon halo behind the head of the statue of the Virgin Mary, pink neon in the tabernacle, and blue neon emphasizing the structure of the arches.

You can access the cathedral from a staircase rising from the square (Ave Maria plaza) or from Ave Maria Nguyen Trai, a small road nearby. The railroad station is located near the back of the structure. The cathedral is open to the public Monday through Friday, from 5am to 4pm, and on Sundays from 4am to 8pm.

POPULAR TOURS

New to town and not sure what to see or do? Guided tours are one of the best ways to get information about a city in a safe, structured way. You'll get to visit popular sites, and your guide will often show you some of the best places that are tucked away, out of sight of the regular tourists but loved by the locals.

NHA TRANG RIVER TOUR

The Cai River bisects Nha Trang before heading inland on its winding path. Pham Tours boat their guests along the gently flowing river to see local attractions and enjoy the relaxed, easy feeling of floating on the water.

Pham Tours books only private tours, so you won't be inconvenienced by sudden influxes of random tourists getting on or off at various stops along the river. Tour guides are knowledgeable about the river and the city and are happy to answer questions and share their experiences.

Click [here](#) for tour times and to book your private tour.

TRUE FRIENDS EASY RIDER

Feel the wind in your hair and enjoy the freedom of the open road! A motorbike tour with True Friends Easy Rider is one of the best ways to hit the road as well as get off the beaten path. Select from one- or two-day trips through the Vietnam countryside surrounding Nha Trang. A motorbike tour keeps you close to the land and its people while allowing you to travel more miles than a bicycle tour, and it's more personal than a tour by bus or car. See the sights, meet the people, and taste the food this beautiful country has to offer! Hotel pickup is included. Check out the True Friends Easy Rider website [here](#) for current tour dates, to sign up for a tour, and to get pricing information.

BEACH TOUR

A four-day R&R tour designed to get you to the best beaches for sunbathing, swimming, and snorkeling? Yes, please! Nha Trang's beautiful beaches are famous throughout Vietnam, and a beach tour like this will let you explore all the fun, activity, and food to be had in and near Nha Trang.

The first day is spent settling in to the hotel before exploring the city. Days 2 and 3 are for visiting some beaches, enjoying water sports, and touring a fishing village. Day 4 is for farewell and departure.

Whether you're new to Nha Trang or visiting a second or third time, this type of tour is sure to offer you something you haven't seen before. Visit [here](#) for tour dates, pricing, and tour options.





TRADITIONAL NHA TRANG FOOD

Food is such an integral part of a culture, and Nha Trang's food is no different. Because Nha Trang is on the ocean, seafood makes up a large portion of the most popular dishes for locals. We've assembled a list of five iconic Nha Trang dishes, but don't think that this list is by any means an exhaustive one. We encourage you to sample as many dishes as you can.

NHA TRANG SEAFOODS

While this isn't technically a dish, selecting a variety of fresh seafood to be cooked by a street vendor or in a restaurant is a delicious way to dive into Nha Trang cuisine. It's a common practice for locals and tourists alike, and you'll spend some time considering which fish, mollusks, and crustaceans you want to try before spooning in the delicious finished product. Excited for the experience? Head to restaurants along Thap Ba Road and Pham Von Dong, north of the Tran Phu bridge. Though these restaurants are about a ten-minute drive from Nha Trang center, they are supplied with fresh catches from fishing boats all day long, which means you'll get the absolute freshest variety of seafood available.



BUN CHA CA (FISH CAKE NOODLE SOUP)

Many areas of Vietnam feature their own versions of bun cha ca, but Nha Trang's version includes saltwater fish instead of freshwater fish, which gives it a unique and especially flavorful taste and aroma. Meaty white fish filets and fish paste meatballs float in a tantalizing broth flavored with pineapple and tomatoes. Vermicelli noodles and fresh, minced vegetables and herbs complete the dish. It's a mixture of sweet, salty, sour, and bitter when you add Nha Trang's famous fish sauce.



BANH CAN

Rice flour pancakes loaded with egg, meat, and seafood, and accompanied by pork meatballs and shredded green mango is the ultimate in comfort food for Nha Trang residents. This street food is popular and available all around Nha Trang, but you can also try it at 51 To Hien Thanh, which is open from 2pm to 9:30pm. Eat the dish by mixing everything into the sauce in order to let the flavors blend. Sprinkle with green onions and dig in!

PARTIALLY DRIED CUTTLEFISH

Dried squid is considered a delicacy all over Vietnam, but in Nha Trang, the cuttlefish are huge. Buy it from street vendors near the beach or ask for it in a restaurant. Because it's so popular here, you owe it to yourself to get a taste. Partially dried cuttlefish also makes a very good gift for those back home.



NEM NUONG

Generally eaten as part of a celebration feast—or perfect for a group of friends—nem nuong is grilled pork, deep fried rice paper, and a selection of vegetables rolled into a wrap and dipped into a sweet-spicy fish sauce, a Nha Trang specialty. The ingredients will arrive at your table on separate platters, and your job is to select your fillings and make your wrap according to your tastes. It's finger food and fun at the same time.





CONCLUSION

Nha Trang is the perfect destination for those seeking sun, beaches, natural beauty, and a relaxed beach city atmosphere. Popular with Vietnamese vacationers and tourists from all over Asia, Nha Trang is also a favorite watering hole for Russians, with a large contingent visiting and living here year-round.

From its origins as five quiet fishing villages to its official town status under the French, Nha Trang has maintained the resort feeling of its location, nestled onto the long golden beaches of Nha Trang Bay and sheltered by the mountains behind it. Whether you come for the natural wonders or to relax on the beach and indulge in the superb seafood-based cuisine, you won't regret a stop in Nha Trang.

Distance from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) to Nha Trang:

- By airplane from Cam Ranh International Airport (55 minutes)
- By train: about eight hours on [Vietnam Railway](#)
- By car (433 km, or 269 miles)
- By bus (HCMC to Da Lat) 10 to 12 hours

Distance from Da Nang/Hoi An to Nha Trang:

- By airplane: about one hour and 15 minutes
- By train: about nine hours on [Vietnam Railway](#)
- By car: 526 km (327 miles), or a little more than 10 hours

Distance from Hanoi to Nha Trang:

- By airplane: about 1.5 hours
- By train: about 26 hours