

Hanoi Capital

Hanoi is the Capital of Vietnam.

From 1010 until 1802, it was the political centre of an independent Vietnam with a few brief interruptions. It was eclipsed by Huế during the Nguyen Dynasty as the capital of Vietnam, but served as the capital of French Indochina from 1887 to 1954. From 1954 to 1976, it was the capital of North Vietnam.



The city is located on the right bank of the Red River. Hanoi is located at 21°2' North, 105°51' East, 1760 km (1094 mi) north of Ho Chi Minh City.

On May 29 2008, it was decided that Ha Tay province, Vinh Phuc's Me Linh district and 3 communes of Luong Son district, Hoa Binh is merged into the metropolitan area of Hanoi from August 1 2008. Hanoi's total area will be increased three times to 334,470 hectares divided into 29 subdivisions. The new population is 6,232,940. October 2010 will officially mark 1000 years of the establishment of the city.

Central city	Hanoi
Districts	29
Founded, Capital of the Dai Viet Kingdom	1010
Capital of Vietnam	September 2, 1945
Area	
- City	3,344.7 km ² (1,291.4 sq mi)
- Urban	186.22 km ² (71.9 sq mi)
Population (2007)	
- City	6,232,940
- Density	1,864/km ² (4,827.7/sq mi)

Website: www.hanoi.gov.vn

History

Hanoi has been inhabited since at least 3000 BC. One of the first known permanent settlements is the Co Loa citadel founded around 200 BC.

Hanoi has had many names throughout history, all of them of Sino-Vietnamese origin. During the Chinese domination of Vietnam, it was known as Tống Bình and later Long Đố (literally "dragon's belly"). In 866, it was turned into a citadel and was named Đại La.

In 1010, Lý Thái Tổ, the first ruler of the Lý Dynasty, moved the capital of Đại Việt (the Great Viet, then the name of Vietnam) to the site of the Đại La Citadel. Claiming to have seen a dragon ascending the Red River, he renamed it Thăng Long (Ascending dragon) - a name still used poetically to this day. It remained the capital of Vietnam until 1397, when the capital was moved to Thanh Hóa, also known as Tây Đô (Western

Capital). Thăng Long then became Đông Đô (Eastern Capital).

In 1408, Vietnam was invaded by Chinese troops from the Ming Dynasty and Đông Đô was renamed Đông Quan (Eastern Gateway) by the Chinese. In 1428, Vietnam was liberated from Chinese rule by Lê Lợi, the founder of the Le Dynasty and Đông Quan was renamed Đông Kinh (Eastern Capital - the name known to Europeans as Tonkin. The same characters are used for Tokyo, Japan). During the Tây Sơn Dynasty, it was named Bắc Thành (Northern Citadel).

In 1802, when the Nguyễn Dynasty was established and then moved the capital down to present-day Huế, it was renamed Thăng Long ("ascending dragon"). In 1831 the Nguyen Dynasty renamed it Hà Nội (can be translated as Between Rivers or River Interior) . Hanoi was occupied by the French in 1873 and passed to them ten years later. It became the capital of French Indochina after 1887.

The city was occupied by the Japanese in 1940, and liberated in 1945, when it briefly became the seat of the Viet Minh government after Hồ Chí Minh proclaimed the independence of Việt Nam. But the French came back and reoccupied the city in 1946. After nine years of fighting between the French and Viet Minh forces, Hanoi became the capital of an independent North Vietnam in 1954.

During the Vietnam War Hanoi's transportation facilities were disrupted by the bombing of bridges and railways, which were, however, promptly repaired. Following the end of the war, Hanoi became the capital of Vietnam when North and South Vietnam were reunited on July 2, 1976.

On August 1, 2008, Hanoi absorbed the neighboring province of Ha Tay, Vinh Phuc's Me Linh district, and three communes from Luong Son, Hoa Binh, effectively tripling its size.

Weather forecasts for Hanoi

Hanoi experiences the typical climate of northern Vietnam, where summers are hot and humid, and winters are relatively cool and dry. The summer months from May to September receive the majority of rainfall in the year (1,682 mm rainfall/ year). The winter months from November to March are relatively dry, although spring then often brings light rains. The minimum winter temperature in Hanoi can dip as low as 6–7°C (43°F) not including the wind chill, while summer can get as hot as 38–40°C (100–104°F).

Weather averages for Hanoi

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average high °C (°F)	19 (66)	19 (67)	22 (72)	27 (80)	31 (87)	32 (90)	32 (90)	32 (89)	31 (88)	28 (82)	24 (76)	22 (71)
Average low °C (°F)	14 (58)	16 (60)	18 (65)	22 (71)	25 (77)	27 (80)	27 (80)	27 (80)	26 (78)	23 (73)	19 (66)	16 (60)
Precipitation mm (inches)	20.1 (0.79)	30.5 (1.20)	40.6 (1.60)	80 (3.15)	195.6 (7.70)	240 (9.45)	320 (12.6)	340.4 (13.4)	254 (10.0)	100.3 (3.95)	40.6 (1.60)	20.3 (0.80)

Source: *weather.com* and *asiaforvisitors.com* 2008-02-26

Education

Hanoi, as the capital of French Indochina, was home to the first Western-style universities in Indochina, including: Indochina Medical College (1902) - now Hanoi Medical University, Indochina University (1904) - now Hanoi National University, and École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de L'Indochine (1925) - now Hanoi University of Fine Art.

After the Communist Party took control over Hanoi in 1954 with support from the Soviet Union, many new universities were built, among them, Hanoi University of Technology remains the largest technical university in Vietnam.

Hanoi is the largest centre of education in Vietnam. It is estimated that 62 % of the scientists in the whole country are living and working in Hanoi. Admissions to undergraduate study are through entrance examinations, which are conducted annually and open for everyone (who has successfully completed his/her secondary education) in the country. The majority of universities in Hanoi are public, although in recent years a number of private universities have started their operation. Thang Long university, founded in 1988, by some Vietnamese mathematics professors in Hanoi and France is the first private university in Vietnam.

Because many of Vietnam's major universities are located in Hanoi, students from other provinces (especially in the northern part of the country) wishing to enter university often travel to Hanoi for the annual entrance examination. Such events often take place in June and July, during which a large number of students and their families converge on the city for several weeks around this intense examination period. In recent years, these entrance exams have been centrally coordinated by the Ministry of Education, but passing marks are decided independently by each university.

Although there are state owned Kindergartens, there are also many private ventures that serve both local and international needs. Pre-tertiary (elementary and secondary) schools in Hanoi mainly serve their local districts and are generally state run although there are some independent schools. Education is equivalent to the K-12 system in the US, with elementary school between grades 1 and 5, middle school (or junior high) between grades 6 and 9, and high school from grades 10 to 12.



Temple of Literature – Main Entrance

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

The ancient name of Hanoi, Thang Long, means ascending dragon. In fact, cultural and historical remains of the city bear the mark of a rich past and many heroic legends. Exploring the city, the visitor will be able to get a better understanding of the country and its inhabitants.

The Old Quarter, near Hoan Kiem lake, has the original street layout and architecture of old Hanoi. At the beginning of the 20th century the city consisted of only about 36 streets, most of which are now part of the old quarter. Each street then had merchants and households specialized in a particular trade, such as silk traders, jewelers, etc. The street names nowadays still reflect these specializations, although few of them remain exclusively in their original commerce. The area is famous for its small artisans and merchants, including many silk shops. Local cuisine specialties as well as several clubs and bars can be found here also. A night market (near Dong Xuan market) in the heart of the district opens for business every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evening with a variety of clothing, souvenirs and food.

Some others prominent places are: The Temple of Literature - Van Mieu, site of the oldest university in Vietnam 1070; One Pillar Pagoda ; Flag Tower of Hanoi. In 2004, a massive part of the 900 year old citadel was discovered in central Hanoi, near the site of Ba Dinh square.

A city between the rivers, built from lowland, Hanoi has many scenic lakes and sometime is called "city of lakes". Among its lakes, the most famous are Hoan Kiem Lake, West Lake, Halais Lake, and Bay Mau Lake. West Lake is a popular place for people to spend time. It is the largest lake in Hanoi and there are many temples in the area. There are small boats for hire and a floating restaurant

Hoan Kiem Lake

Hoan Kiem Lake constitutes the core of Hanoi. Its name, Lake of the Restored Sword, was derived from a legend about Emperor Le Thai To in which a large turtle came towards him while he was boating on the lake. The turtle grabbed his sword that had secured victory against the Minh aggressors and restored it to its place. Emperor Le Thai To named the lake after this episode.

Old quarter

The Old Quarter is located north of Hoan Kiem Lake. In the past, each St. used to be dedicated to one commercial activity. That is why a lot of street names begin with the word Hang, meaning merchandise, followed by a word indicating a product of profession. For example Hang Dao (Peach St.) or Hang Duong (Sugar St.).

Close to Dong Xuan Market is Hang Ma (Paper St.) where tradition-al votive products made of coloured paper are sold. Every year, on the occasion of the Mid-Autumn Festival (15th day of the 8th lunar month), Hang Ma St. turns into a toy market.

Another very typical street is Hang, Thiec (tin products), where the deafening sound of hammers striking tin plates can be heard all day long.

During the Le Dynasty (15th century), many Chinese were allowed to reside in Thang

Long. They chose to settle on Hang Ngang St. At this period, there were gates at the two ends of the street, hence the name Ngang, meaning horizontal barrier.

Dong Xuan market

Among markets in the capital such as Mo, Hom, Cua Nam or Ngoc Ha, Dong Xuan is the biggest. It was founded in 1889 in the Dong Xuan Quarter. At first, it was an open air market, but it was later rebuilt with five iron arches and a roof made of zinc-coated iron sheets.

Located near the railway station, at the beginning of Long Bien Bridge, by the Red River, Dong Xuan Market is a convenient place for goods from everywhere to converge. At this market, you can find almost any everyday goods. Dong Xuan Market is also the biggest wholesale market in the North. Today, although it has been expanded and renovated to include three large, modern and spacious floors, it has still kept its original facade architecture.

Dong Xuan Market played a historical part since it was used as a glorious defence system for the soldiers protecting Hanoi from the French 1946.

It is open from 6 am to 6pm every day.

Hanoi Cathedral

Hanoi Cathedral, also known as Saint Joseph's Cathedral, was inaugurated on Christmas Day, 1886, after two years of construction. It was built on the site of the former Bao Thien Tower, which was famous in the ancient capital of Thang Long under the Ly Dynasty (11th and 12th centuries). Its design is inspired by the architecture of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Hanoi Cathedral is open daily for mass from 5 to 7 am and 5 to 7pm. The entrance gate is at 40 Nha Chung St.

Hanoi Opera House

The construction of the Hanoi Opera House started in 1901 and was completed in 1911. It was designed by architects Brager and Harloy and was the first opera house in Hanoi. With a seating capacity of 900, the Hanoi Opera House is a building of great cultural, but also historical significance. In fact, it is where the people saw the apparition of the red flag with a star on 17 August 1945 (at the balcony of the second floor of the opera). Besides, the building is located at the junction of Trang Tien and Hang Khay St. On this square, the people of Hanoi turned a meeting into a demonstration to support the Revolution.

In 1997, with the aid of the French Government, the theatre was repaired in accordance with its original design. Provided with the best technical equipment, it is home to various high-quality performances.

Hanoi Flag Tower

Hanoi Flag Tower was built in 1812, under Gia Long. Composed of three platforms and a tower, it is one of the rare architectural works in Hanoi that was not destroyed by the French rule between 1894 and 1897.

In fact, it was used by French troops as an observation tower and communication station between command headquarters and adjacent military posts.

The words Nhenh Hue, meaning "to welcome dawn's sunlight", are inscribed on the eastern door. The western door bears the words Hoi Quang, meaning "to reflect light", and the southern door, Huong Minh, meaning "directed to the sunlight".

The tower receives sunlight through 36 flower-shaped windows and 6 fan-shaped ones.

Ba Dinh Square

Ba Dinh Square is a huge plaza composed of 240 squares. On the west side of the esplanade is President Ho Chi Minh's commemoration area where the Ho Chi Minh Museum and President Ho Chi Minh's stilt house are located. It is here that on 2nd September, 1945 President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence giving birth to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

President Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum

After two years of construction, President Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum was officially inaugurated on 28 August 1975. This project was the result of a close collaboration between engineers from Vietnam and the former Soviet Union in order to keep the remains of President Ho Chi Minh, a great patriot who was later conferred the title of "World Cultural Activist" in 1990 on the occasion of his centenary birthday.

The mausoleum is divided into three floors. The first floor is a terraced stand exclusively used for grand meetings organised at Sa Dinh Square. The second floor is the centre of the mausoleum, where the remains of the President Ho Chi Minh are kept in a chamber, accessible through a series of passages and flights of marble stairs. The upper floor is the roof. The facade of the upper floor bears the inscription "President Ho Chi Minh" in dark violet, precious stone.

The Mausoleum is open to the public on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. In summer, it is open from 7.30 to 10.30 am; in winter, from 8.00 to 11.00 am. The hours are extended by 30 minutes on Sundays and holidays. The Mausoleum is usually closed from September 5 to December 10 for maintenance. Photography is not allowed inside the Mausoleum. For reservation, contact the Board for Organising Homage Paying to President Ho Chi Minh at 17 Ngoc Ha St., Tel: 845 5128, 845 5168.

West lake

West Lake and Truc Bach Lake are an attractive part of the city. The two lakes are separated by Thanh Nien St., which is almost one kilometre long. It is bordered by rows of willow and bang lang trees and is a favourite of young lovers.

West Lake, also called Ho Tay, is the biggest lake in Hanoi. Covering an area of 500ha in Tay Ho District.

West Lake was once a resort for mandarins and kings. Many palaces, including Thuy Hoa Palace, Ham Nguyen Sanctuary, Tu Hoa Palace, Kim Lien Pagoda, and Ngoc Dam Palace were built on the banks of the lake. The 14km path around the lake leads to Nghi Tam flower village, Nhat Tan peach garden, Kim Lien Pagoda and Tay Ho Temple, built in honour of Princess Lieu. Today, many hotels of all sizes can be found around the lake.

West Lake is a very popular recreational place for the Hanoians who come to enjoy typical dishes such as Ho Tay shrimp cakes, Ho Tay snail noodles and Ho Tay fish.

True Bach lake

Truc Bach Lake is separated from West Lake by Thanh Nien road. In the 18th century, Lord Trinh Giang built a resort palace near the lake, called Truc Lam Institute. Later on, this institute became a place for banishing guilty ladies-in-waiting, who then had to weave silk cloth to support themselves. Their silk was very beautiful and famous all over the capital. The village was named Truc silk village, which is why the lake was called Truc Bach Lake.

Along the lake, there are also many ancient monuments: Quan Thanh Temple is in the south-west, Chau Long Pagoda's in the east and Cau Nhi Temple is on a small island in the northern corner of the lake.

Lenin park

Covering an area of more than 50ha, this park is one of the most spacious green areas in the city. In the park, there is a 7ha lake with Hoa Binh Island at the centre, which is a meeting place for storks and a recreational park where chess competitions and poem recitations are held. There is a playground for children with swings, trains, plane, etc.

The park is open daily from early in the morning to late at night.

Indira Gandhi park

The former name of the park was Chi Linh it was again renamed in 1984, to honour India's first female prime minister, Indira Gandhi, in the year of her assassination. Indra Gandhi was a longtime supporter of Vietnam. Today it is a pleasant place to read or enjoy a picnic. There is a Chinese-style gazebo in the centre of the park, where traditional music and theatre is occasionally performed.

The park is on the west side of Hoan Kiem Lake, just north of the GPO.

Cua O Quan Chuong (old East Gate)

Near the bank of the Red River (Song Hong), on Hang Chieu St. in the Old Quarter, stands the impressive 1749 Cua O Quan Chuong, "Passage of the Regiment Commander". It is the sole remaining from a legion of approaches into the original Hanoi Citadel. The brick structure underwent repairs in the early 19th century, though the original watchtower still sits atop the relic. The formal name of the gate, Dong Ha Man, is engraved over the entry-way in Chinese.

Thu Le zoo

Situated west of the city and occupying an area of about 20ha, Thu Le Zoo is built in the shape of a flying dragon. It is divided into many sections, including reptiles, birds, wild animals, etc. Approximately 40 different species of animals inscribed in the Red Book of Vietnam and given by foreign countries can also be seen at the zoo. Thu Le Zoo is already a member of the SEAZA (South East Asia Zoo Association) and has relations with more than 30 zoos throughout the world. There are two gates to the zoo, one is on Kim Ma St., and the other is on Buoi Road. It is open everyday from 7.00 am to 5.00pm.