

Vietnam

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and US CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Vietnam is a developing nation classified as lower middle income. Located in Southeast Asia along the South China Sea (east of Cambodia and Thailand), the climate is classified as humid equatorial (short dry season) in the north and humid equatorial (long dry season) in the south.

Vaccinations

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against COVID-19, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, Japanese encephalitis, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2019) Malaria risk due predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists in the entire country, excluding urban centres, the Red River delta, the Mekong delta, and the coastal plain areas of central Viet Nam. High-risk areas are the highland areas below 1500 m south of 18°N, notably in the four central highlands provinces of Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Gia Lai and Kon Tum; in Binh Phuoc Province; and in the western parts of the coastal provinces of Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Quang Nam and Quang Tri. Resistance to mefloquine reported.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) ^a

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Rural areas only. Rare cases in the Mekong and Red River Deltas. None in the cities of Da Nang, Haiphong, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh (Saigon), Nha Trang, and Qui Nhon.

- Drug resistance³: Chloroquine and mefloquine.
- Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 50%–90%, *P. vivax* 10%–50%, *P. knowlesi* rare.
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Southern part of the country in the provinces of Dac Lac, Gia Lai, Khanh Hoa, Kon Tum, Lam Dong, Ninh Thuan, Song Be, Tay Ninh: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or tafenoquine.⁴ Other areas with malaria except Mekong and Red River Deltas: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, or tafenoquine.⁴ Mekong and Red River Deltas: None (practice mosquito avoidance).

³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

Moderate risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Community sanitation and food safety measures may be inadequate. Some itineraries (e.g., remote destinations, austere accommodations) and activities (e.g., ecotourism, eating street or local-market food) further increase risk.

Travelers should observe food and beverage precautions, which reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chikungunya, dengue, murine typhus, scrub typhus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, anthrax disease, enteroviruses, helminths, hepatitis C, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, monkey bites, Nipah virus, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the US Department of State (DOS), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

Crime

Moderate risk of violent crime (armed robbery and sexual assault) exists in Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Sa Pa (especially on the train from Lao Cai), and on Cat Ba Island (near Ha Long Bay).

High risk of petty crime exists in large cities, especially in areas frequented by tourists (including hotels and markets), particularly during the Christmas and Tet seasons.

Theft of valuables by criminals in passing vehicles is common.

Scams involving private card games (where travelers are invited by "friendly" strangers and incur substantial financial loss) and exorbitant fees for services have been reported.

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations may infrequently occur and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance may be present and restrictions may exist in areas bordering Laos and in the Central Highlands. Piracy (involving commercial and private leisure vessels) may occur in coastal waters.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including ferries (especially in Ha Long Bay). Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Outdoor Safety

Basic safety standards for adventure activities may not be in place. Travelers should only use reputable adventure-sport operators for activities and equipment rentals.

Transportation Safety

Significant risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road traffic death rate is more than 24 per 100,000 population, the highest risk category. Carefully assess the safety of transportation options before any road travel.

Structural standards for vehicles may not meet international standards.

Airline Safety

The US Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The typhoon season is from June through December, especially in northern and central coastal areas. The monsoon season is from June through September in northern and southern areas and from October through December in central areas. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur, especially in Hanoi and surrounding areas and in areas along the Red and Mekong rivers.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Vietnam

- United States: [+84] 24-3850-5000; vn.usembassy.gov
- Canada: [+84] 4-3734-5000; www.vietnam.gc.ca
- United Kingdom: [+84] 24-3936-0500; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-hanoi
- Australia: [+84] 24-3774-0100; www.vietnam.embassy.gov.au

Vietnam's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.vietnamembassy-usa.org
- In Canada: www.vietnamembassy.ca
- In the U.K.: www.vietnamembassy.org.uk
- In Australia: www.vietnamembassy.org.au

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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