



Families of Vietnam

Teacher's Guide

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SCRIPTS

RURAL FAMILY

This is the Mekong river. I live here with my mother, father, brother Truong, and our dogs Kiki and Lulu. My name is Bi. I'm 4 years old.

It's 6 o'clock in the morning and I'm getting up for school. My Mom helps me get ready sometimes, especially with my clothes. At my school we all wear the same thing – it's called a uniform.

Mom is making noodles for my breakfast. Kiki hopes something good will fall on the floor. Mom blows on the noodles to cool them down. We have to hurry to be on time for school.

Dad takes me to school and picks me up. I'm in kindergarten, and my school is in My Tho City. It's about 15 minutes from our house. Dad says that Vietnamese people respect teachers and good students. He says it is important to study hard, and get good grades.

We take off our shoes when we go into our school. Vietnam is always warm so our feet don't get cold.

The first thing we do is exercise. The teacher uses her tambourine to tell us what to do.

We take turns helping the teacher lead. Today it's my turn. When we finish our exercises, the students that have the straightest line get to go into class first.

Today we're pretending that we're grown-ups at work. My friend pretends she's a nurse giving me a shot. Then I pretend I'm working in a restaurant. I take orders from the other kids who act like they're customers.

We also have art class, where we learn to draw and color. While I'm in school Mom, Dad, and Truong are working at home. Mom mixes grain and water to feed the pigs. She puts medicine on bites or scrapes that the pigs have.

Dad mixes grain to feed our chickens. This boy chicken is called a rooster. Then Dad goes to our orchard to pick some fruit. These are papayas. And these are banana trees! They have big leaves! Dad says banana trees only make one bunch each year. So after he cuts off the bananas, he cuts down the tree. He says a new tree will grow up from the roots, and make new bananas.

Bananas and papayas are really heavy. So Dad puts a stick across his shoulders to make them easier to carry. Dad brings the fruit back and loads it on our boat. That's because our family runs a store from our boat. We sell things to people on the big ships that pass by on the river.

That's my brother, Truong. He's 13. He's helping dad and my uncle to get the store ready

to go out on the river. He can help each morning, but in the afternoon he goes to school. We sell fuel for boat engines, and Truong is moving the fuel from the big barrels next to our house into the barrels on the boat.

Our neighbors are fishermen and they're getting ready to go out on the river, too.

Everything is loaded and ready to sell, so they start down the river. My uncle steers the boat out to a big ship that's going by. I think it's called a tanker.

See all the different things we sell? There's even an ice box for things that need to be kept cool.

The tanker's going fast. So my uncle has to be careful when he gets close to it. When he's going just as fast, Dad can tie the boats together. When the boat and the tanker are going the same speed, it doesn't look like they're moving at all!

The cook on this boat wants to buy a duck. Dad ties the duck's feet so it can't run away. He weighs it to see how much money to charge. A heavy bird costs more than a light one. The cook pays Dad with dong, which is what Vietnamese money is called. Then they untie the boats, and look for another boat to visit.

Many people live and work on the river. The water in the river comes from rain. Mom says rain is very important, because we grow rice here and rice needs a lot of water.

Every year we have a long rainy season called a monsoon.

Our neighbors are still out fishing. They fish with big nets that they throw into the water. The fish get caught when the nets are pulled into the boat. Mom says the fish they catch in this area are important for food in Vietnam, almost as important as rice.

Today Dad and Uncle sold things to five ships, and now it's time for them to go home.

When school's over, Dad brings me back home on the motorcycle. The road is just the right size for bikes and people walking. When I get home from school, I like to weigh myself. I want to see if I've gotten any heavier.

After we have lunch we all take a rest.

Later, Mom washes clothes by the river. She says the river is important because it gives us the water we use for almost everything.

When I wake up, I play with my friends on these fishing nets. They're really soft and feel good on my feet. It's very hot this time of day, so Truong and his friend like to swim to cool off.

Dad opens some coconuts so we can drink the water inside. He cuts a little off the bottom so it won't tip over. Then, he cuts open the other end and puts in a straw.

Coconut water is cool and a little bit sweet. It tastes good on a hot afternoon.

Our neighbors are back from fishing. These small fish are called anchovies. Mom says they're used to make a fish sauce that everyone uses in their cooking. This ice will keep

them fresh. Tomorrow they'll take them into My Tho City to sell.

Now Mom's starting to make dinner. She's pulling the feathers off a chicken so she can cook it. Dad's cleaning the pot so we can have tea. Mom fries the chicken that she's cut up! Mmmmm. It sure smells good! We have rice with almost every meal. We even have a special cooker just for rice.

Truong and I are waiting for dinner. I play a game where I try to make these rings land on the two pins.

It's eight o'clock and time for bed. Mom says some mosquito bites can make us sick. So she always helps me tuck in the net to be sure no mosquitoes can get in. Good night.

URBAN FAMILY

This is Vietnam, the country where I live. It's south of China and next to Laos and Cambodia. This is Ho Chi Minh City, where I live. It's named after the famous leader that helped Vietnam become independent.

My name is Le Thi Thanh Hong, and I'm nine years old. It's 6 o'clock in the morning and I'm getting up for school. First, I like to comb my hair. And then I brush my teeth. I try not to let the water run when I'm brushing. First, I put away my sleeping shirt, then I fix my hair, and make my bed. School starts at 7 o'clock, so I have to keep moving to be

ready in time. I make my older brother's bed too. His name is Quoc.

We are cutting oranges to make juice. Everyone helps to get breakfast ready so nobody will be late getting to school or work. I live with my Mom, Dad, Quoc, and our housekeeper, Vin. Quoc is still upstairs studying for an important test at school, and we're trying to help him as much as we can. He studies hard, because only the best students are allowed to go on to college.

Most people have a breakfast of soup with meat, noodles, and vegetables. It's called pho. The soup is hot - so I need to blow on it to cool it down. We eat the noodles from our soup with chopsticks! You grab the meat and noodles between the chopsticks and lift them to your mouth to eat.

After breakfast my Dad drops me off at school on his way to work. I go to a public school with 2000 students in grades 1 to 5. My teacher is wearing a traditional Vietnamese dress.

At our school we study health, literature, math, science, Vietnamese, and Russian or English. I also study French. We stay in the same classroom all day and a different teacher comes in for each subject.

Halfway through the morning, it's time for recess. Sometimes we play "monkey in the middle." The person in the middle is the monkey, and tries to tag someone else. Then that person becomes the monkey.

We line up outside, and then we go back to class. Before we start studying again, we sing and clap along to a song, which is a lot of fun.

Now we're studying Vietnamese - and I'm learning to write what the teacher is saying up on the chalk board.

Then it's time to eat lunch. Schools in Vietnam are free, but we pay for our books and lunch. Today we're having rice with beef and pineapple, and soup with pork and green vegetables. We have rice with almost every meal. Rice is so important in our country that our school is named the Luong Dinh Cua School after a scientist who developed rice that has better quality and grows in a shorter time.

When we're finished, we put our dishes outside the classroom. And if we're thirsty, we can get a drink of water from a container at the front of the room. Just like home, we brush our teeth.

After lunch is over, we rest. School helpers push the desks to one side, and we get out mats to lie down on. We usually rest for two hours - from 11:30 to 1:30. You don't have to sleep - it's ok to read a book.

Most people in Vietnam start work at 7 in the morning, and work until 6 in the evening, so it's nice to rest in the middle of the day, especially when it's hot.

While I'm at school my parents are at work. Mom works for a company that does land surveys. When a person buys a piece of land they need to know exactly where it's located and how big it is. At my Mom's office they carefully survey or measure the land and put it onto an official map that shows where everybody's land is located. That way there's never any chance that someone might build their house on someone else's land.

Dad works for the city in a similar business. He's in the planning department, and he helps the city decide where to build new roads, buildings and parks.

I finish school at 5 and Mom drops me off at music school for my piano lesson. Other students are learning to play different instruments, like the piano, bassoon, drums, trumpet, oboe, and cello.

My lesson usually lasts for an hour. Sometimes my teacher plays with me so I can hear how it should sound.

After my music class Dad and Mom take us for a special treat - we go bowling! We measure our feet because we get special shoes that won't scratch the floors in the bowling alley. You have to put your fingers in the holes, so you can hold the ball and throw it. The ball is really heavy.

My brother Quoc is just a beginner, so sometimes he throws a gutter ball – one that misses all the pins. Dad and Mom have been bowling for a long time, and Dad has won

lots of competitions. Mom's good too...but this time she misses some of the pins.

When we get home I take a shower. Then I do my homework. Quoc and I study in the same room, and sometimes he helps me when I have a question, especially with French. I want to get my homework done tonight, because tomorrow night we're going to celebrate Tet, the most important holiday season in Vietnam. I'm so excited about tomorrow; I hope I don't have trouble falling asleep. There will be lots of fireworks tonight.

It's Saturday morning and the beginning of Tet, which is the start of our New Year! There's no school, but we still leave home early because there are lots of other things to do. First, Mom's going to buy a fruit called a durian. Lots of people love it, like Mom and Dad. But some people can't stand it because it has a very strong smell. They don't even like to walk near a store that sells them!

Then Mom buys some flowers. Even though our public school is closed, I still go to my Saturday class at art school. First I like to see what other people have drawn or painted. Right now I'm sketching with pencil. We can draw or paint anything we want, and our teachers will help us when we get stuck.

After I get home, my dad takes us on his motorbike so I can go swimming at the pool. Most people here ride motorbikes because they're an easy way to get around in the busy traffic, and they don't use much gas.

This is a free city pool, which means you don't have to pay anything when you want to swim here. The cool water feels great. While I'm swimming, my parents sit in the shade to talk and read.

I love to read, too, so on the way home we stop at a book store so I can pick out a new book.

The cashier wraps it up for me like it's a present!

The other thing I love to do is play the piano. I practice half an hour every day. We used to have two fish in our tank until one jumped out on the floor and died – I hope it wasn't because it didn't like my music.

It's finally time to go to the celebration downtown. There are many traditions we remember at Tet. Lots of people wear costumes and masks to scare away evil spirits. Dad says it's important to spread happiness, joy and good luck to start the year off right. So before Tet we clean and repair our homes and pay our debts. We try to act our best, too, because the Kitchen God leaves our home during Tet to report to the other Gods on how the family is behaving.

There are parades and lots of dancing, and people try to make as much noise as possible! Everyone has a lot of fun, and we visit with other members of our family, and remember our ancestors.

I like the dragon dance - it takes a lot of people to wear the costume and make it move like that. I think it's very pretty. Some people think the dragon comes alive when its eyes are painted in! All of these dances are to bring good luck. This animal looks a little like a lion!

I wish you could come and be here too because everybody has such a good time.

It's late and time to go home. I'm really tired when I get to bed. Good night!

Glossary

Bassoon- A wind instrument with a low pitch

Cashier - a person in a business who collects money payments from customers.

Cello- A large violin-like musical instrument

Costumes – a set of clothes that are used for special events; a set of clothes used as a disguise

Dragon – An imaginary animal that is large, winged, four-legged and brings good fortune in Asia

Kitchen God- A Chinese/Vietnamese domestic god of the kitchen. According to the folk beliefs, every year before the Chinese New Year, the Kitchen God reports to the Heavenly God on the goings-on of the family.

Nurse – A person educated to help sick people

Oboe- a slender woodwind instrument like a flute

Official – Something related to the government

Papaya – A tropical fruit originally from the Americas with a orange-yellowish color

Scientist – A person who is knowledgeable of the sciences

Tambourine – a small drum like musical instrument with bangles on the side

Questions and Answers

Why do people in Vietnam take their shoes off as they enter school?

It is a custom in many Asian countries for people to take off their shoes indoors.

What is the monsoon?

The monsoon is a season of rains in the southern part of Asia.

What kind of money do they use in Vietnam?

The currency used in Vietnam is based on the dong.

Why do they study French in Vietnam?

The French colonized Vietnam from the mid nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century. They made many contributions to Vietnam, including its alphabet.

What is Tet?

Tet is the New Year in Vietnam and is similar to the Chinese New Year.

Why do they do the dragon dance in Vietnam?

The dragon has been part of the East Asian world for millennia. These beliefs developed and blended with Chinese traditions when Vietnam, starting from the first century of the common era, was a colony of China for a thousand years.

QUIZ

Who is Ho Chi Minh?

What are some of the neighbors of Vietnam?

What is Tet?

What continent is Vietnam in?

Is Vietnam a developing or a developed country?

QUIZ ANSWERS

Who is Ho Chi Minh?

He is considered the father of modern Vietnam. He led the forces that liberated Vietnam from French rule.

What are some of the neighbors of Vietnam?

China, Laos and Cambodia

What is Tet?

Tet is the New Year in Vietnam

What continent is Vietnam in?

Asia

Is Vietnam a developing or a developed country?

Vietnam is a developing country.

Introduction

Vietnam is famous for its long struggles for independence and the physical beauty of the country.

The Land and the Climate

Vietnam is slightly smaller than California or Germany. It lies on the eastern coast of Southeast Asia, where it stretches almost a thousand miles from north to south. The country is very mountainous in the north and the center. Two large deltas exist, one in the north formed by the Red River, and one in the south, formed by the Mekong River. It borders China, Laos and Cambodia. The country is entire within the tropics, the mean January temperature in northern Vietnam is 17 degrees Centigrade (62 Fahrenheit).

The Plant and Animal Life

Vietnam has a rich variety of plant and animal life. There are evergreen and broadleaf forests, including teak, pines, bamboo and mangroves. Because of concern over over-logging, the government has established nature reserves.

The animal life is also varied. Tigers, bears, crocodiles and elephants are some of the larger animals that can be found in diminishing numbers in the forests. Hundreds of species of birds, reptiles and smaller mammals exists including herons, crane, peacock, cobra, pythons, civets, and flying squirrels.

Vietnam- History

Many peoples have lived in the land that is now Vietnam. Man has lived there as long as 50,000 years ago. Vietnam lies astride a major migration route for humans. Different peoples from the Asian mainland have been moving southeastward for thousands of years. The ancestors of the Australian aborigines, the peoples of Indonesia, and the peoples of Melanesia and Polynesia may all have lived in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese arose as a distinct people some time 2000 years ago from the mixing of many ethnic groups of people. At about that time the ethnic Vietnamese were located in the Red River Delta of what is today northern Vietnam. In the first century before the Common Era, the region was conquered by the Han dynasty of China. For a thousand years, the Red River Delta region was a part of the Chinese Empire. The Chinese brought with them their technology, their written language, system of government, and philosophy. Many came as soldiers, administrators, scholars and refugees and they too intermixed with the Vietnamese.

For over a thousand years the people of the Red River Delta pushed south against the Indianized kingdom of Champa that is located in what is today central and South Vietnam.

Vietnam became independent again in 939 after expelling the Chinese. It successfully pushed back the Mongol invaders in the thirteenth century and threw out Ming Chinese forces that had invaded early in the fifteenth century, destroyed the kingdom of Champa in 1471. By 1757, Vietnam reached her present borders with the conquest of the southern areas around the Mekong Delta in wars against the Khmer kingdom.

In the mid-nineteenth century, France invaded and annexed Vietnam. French aim was to exploit the resources of the country and gain short-term profits. The French colonial period was never tranquil, and revolts were common.

Contact with the French also brought the ideas of Western liberal democracy and the rights of the people. The French brought Catholicism to Vietnam. A priest helped change the Vietnamese language from one based on the Chinese script to the Latin alphabet. After WWII, when Vietnam was French administered but under Japanese rule, open war broke out between national liberation forces and the French. The French were evicted in 1954 from the North and a separate state was established in the south.

The North set about to reunite the country, and war ensued. The conflict brought in the United States, which supported the South. This bloody conflict is known in America as the Vietnam War. Only in 1975, after the withdrawal of American military forces did the northern forces succeed in defeating the southern forces and unifying the country.

Today, Vietnam is proceeding cautiously to adopt capitalist ways while retaining a communist government. Many foreign companies have invested in the country and the country is growing rapidly and trading more and more with the world.

Vietnam



Geography

Vietnam

Location:	Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea, alongside China, Laos, and Cambodia
Geographic coordinates:	16 00 N, 106 00 E
Map references:	Southeast Asia
Area:	<i>total:</i> 329,560 sq km <i>land:</i> 325,360 sq km <i>water:</i> 4,200 sq km
Area - comparative:	slightly larger than New Mexico and slightly smaller than Germany
Land boundaries:	<i>total:</i> 4,639 km <i>border countries:</i> Cambodia 1,228 km, China 1,281 km, Laos 2,130 km
Coastline:	3,444 km (excludes islands)
Maritime claims:	<i>contiguous zone:</i> 24 NM <i>territorial sea:</i> 12 NM <i>continental shelf:</i> 200 NM or to the edge of the continental margin <i>exclusive economic zone:</i> 200 NM
Climate:	tropical in south; monsoonal in north with hot, rainy season (mid-May to mid-September) and warm, dry season (mid-October to mid-March)
Terrain:	low, flat delta in south and north; central highlands; hilly, mountainous in far north and northwest
Elevation extremes:	<i>lowest point:</i> South China Sea 0 m <i>highest point:</i> Fan Si Pan 3,144 m
Natural resources:	phosphates, coal, manganese, bauxite, chromate, offshore oil and gas deposits, forests, hydropower
Land use:	<i>arable land:</i> 2014% <i>permanent crops:</i> 6.93% <i>other:</i> 72.93% (2005 est.)
Irrigated land:	30,000 sq km (2005 est.)
Natural hazards:	occasional typhoons (May to January) with extensive flooding, especially in the Mekong River delta
Environment - current issues:	logging and slash-and-burn agricultural practices contribute to deforestation and soil degradation; water pollution and overfishing threaten marine life populations; groundwater contamination limits potable water supply; growing urban industrialization and population migration are rapidly degrading environment in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
Geography - note:	extending 1,650 km north to south, the country is only 50 km across at its narrowest point

People

Vietnam

Population: 88,516,000 (July 2009 est.)
 Age structure: 0-14 years: 25.6%
 15-64 years: 68.6%
 65 years and over: 5.8% (2008 est.)
 Median age: total: 26.9 years
 male: 25.8 years
 female: 28.0 years (2008)
 Population growth rate: 1.137% (2009 est.)
 Birth rate: 16.47 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)
 Death rate: 6.18 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)
 Net migration rate: -0.39 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: total population: 71.71 years
 male: 68.52 years
 female: 74.33 years (2009 est.)
 Total fertility rate: 1.98 children born/woman (2009 est.)

Nationality: noun: Vietnamese (singular and plural)
 adjective: Vietnamese
 Ethnic groups: Vietnamese 87%, Chinese, Hmong, Thai, Khmer, Cham, mountain groups
 Religions: Buddhist, Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, Christian (predominantly Roman Catholic, some Protestant), indigenous beliefs, Muslim
 Languages: Vietnamese (official), English (increasingly favored as a second language), some French, Chinese, and Khmer; mountain area languages (Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian)
 Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
 total population: 90%
 male: 94%
 female: 87% (2009 est.)

Government

Vietnam

Country name: conventional long form: Socialist Republic of Vietnam
 conventional short form: Vietnam
 local short form: Viet Nam
 abbreviation: SRV
 local long form: Cong Hoa Xa Hoi Chu Nghia Viet Nam
 Government type: Communist state
 Capital: Hanoi
 Administrative: 58 provinces (tinh, singular and plural), and 3 municipalities* (thu

- divisions: do, singular and plural); An Giang, Bac Giang, Bac Kan, Bac Lieu, Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Ben Tre, Binh Dinh, Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Binh Thuan, Ca Mau, Can Tho, Cao Bang, Dac Lak, Da Nang, Dong Nai, Dong Thap, Gia Lai, Ha Giang, Hai Duong, Hai Phong*, Ha Nam, Ha Noi*, Ha Tay, Ha Tinh, Hoa Binh, Ho Chi Minh*, Hung Yen, Khanh Hoa, Kien Giang, Kon Tum, Lai Chau, Lam Dong, Lang Son, Lao Cai, Long An, Nam Dinh, Nghe An, Ninh Binh, Ninh Thuan, Phu Tho, Phu Yen, Quang Binh, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Quang Ninh, Quang Tri, Soc Trang, Son La, Tay Ninh, Thai Binh, Thai Nguyen, Thanh Hoa, Thua Thien-Hue, Tien Giang, Tra Vinh, Tuyen Quang, Vinh Long, Vinh Phuc, Yen Bai
- Independence: 2 September 1945 (from France)
- National holiday: Independence Day, 2 September (1945)
- Constitution: 15 April 1992
- Legal system: based on communist legal theory and French civil law system
- Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal
- Executive branch: *chief of state*: President
elections: president elected by the National Assembly from among its members for a five-year term; prime minister appointed by the president from among the members of the National Assembly; deputy prime ministers appointed by the prime minister
head of government: Prime Minister
cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president on the proposal of the prime minister and ratification of the National Assembly
- Legislative branch: unicameral National Assembly or Quoc-Hoi (498 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)
- Judicial branch: Supreme People's Court (chief justice is elected for a five-year term by the National Assembly on the recommendation of the president)
- Political parties and leaders: only party - Communist Party of Vietnam or CPV [Nong Duc MANH, general secretary]
- Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission*: Ambassador
consulate(s) general: San Francisco
FAX: [1] (202) 861-0917
telephone: [1] (202) 861-0737
chancery: 1233 20th Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036
- Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission*: Ambassador
embassy: 7 Lang Ha Road, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi
mailing address: PSC 461, Box 400, FPO AP 96521-0002
telephone: [84] (4) 772-1500
FAX: [84] (4) 772-1510
consulate(s) general: Ho Chi Minh City
- Flag description: red with a large yellow five-pointed star in the center

Economy - Vietnam is a densely-populated developing country that in the last 30 years has had to recover from the ravages of war, the loss of financial support from the old Soviet Bloc, and the rigidities of a centrally-planned economy. Economic stagnation marked the period after reunification from 1975 to 1985. In 1986, the Sixth Party Congress approved a broad economic reform package that introduced market reforms and set the groundwork for Vietnam's improved investment climate. Substantial progress was achieved from 1986 to 1997 in moving forward from an extremely low level of development and significantly reducing poverty. The 1997 Asian financial crisis highlighted the problems in the Vietnamese economy and temporarily allowed opponents of reform to slow progress toward a market-oriented economy. GDP growth averaged 6.8% per year from 1997 to 2008 even against the background of the Asian financial crisis and a global recession. Since 2001, Vietnamese authorities have reaffirmed their commitment to economic liberalization and international integration. They have moved to implement the structural reforms needed to modernize the economy and to produce more competitive, export-driven industries. Vietnam's membership in the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and entry into force of the US-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement in December 2001 have led to even more rapid changes in Vietnam's trade and economic regime. Vietnam's exports to the US increased 900% from 2001 to 2007. Vietnam joined the WTO in January 2007, following over a decade long negotiation process. WTO membership has provided Vietnam an anchor to the global market and reinforced the domestic economic reform process. Among other benefits, accession allows Vietnam to take advantage of the phase-out of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, which eliminated quotas on textiles and clothing for WTO partners on 1 January 2005. Agriculture's share of economic output has continued to shrink, from about 25% in 2000 to less than 21% in 2009. Deep poverty, defined as a percent of the population living under \$1 per day, has declined significantly and is now smaller than that of China, India, and the Philippines. Vietnam is working to create jobs to meet the challenge of a labor force that is growing by more than one-and-a-half million people every year. In an effort to stem high inflation which took off in 2007, early in 2008 Vietnamese authorities began to raise benchmark interest rates and reserve requirements. Hanoi is targeting an economic growth rate of 7.5-8% during the next four years. The world financial crisis reduced exports by 10% and slowed growth to 4.4% from 6.2% in 2008

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$256 billion (2009 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 4.4% (2009 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$2,900 (2009 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture: 21%*
industry: 39%
services: 39% (2007 est.)

Population below poverty line: 15% (2009 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 7.3% (2009 est.)

Labor force: 46.4 million (2007 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture 55%, industry 19%, services 26% (2007 est.)

Unemployment rate: 6.5% (2009 est.)

Agriculture: paddy rice, coffee, rubber, cotton, tea, pepper, soybeans, cashews, sugar cane, peanuts, bananas; poultry; fish, seafood

Industries: food processing, garments, shoes, machine-building, mining, cement, chemical fertilizer, glass, tires, oil, coal, steel, paper

Industrial Growth rate: 4.7% (2009 est.)

Exports: \$56.07 billion f.o.b. (2009 est.)

Exports - partners: US 18.9%, Japan 13.6%, China 7.2%, Australia 6.7%, Germany 4.2% (2009)

Imports: \$67.25 billion f.o.b. (2009 est.)

Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, petroleum products, fertilizer, steel products, raw cotton, grain, cement, motorcycles

Imports - partners: China 19.4%, Singapore 11.6%, South Korea 8.8%, Thailand 6.1%, Japan, Malaysia (2009)

Currency: dong (VND)
Currency code: VND
Exchange rates: dong per US dollar – 17,740 (2009), 16,119 (2007), 15,325.8 (2002), 14,167.7 (2000), 13,268 (1998)
Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Vietnam

Telephones - main lines in use: 29 million (2009)
Telephones - Cellular mobile- 70 million (2009)

Transportation Vietnam

Airports: 44 (2009)
Airports - with paved runways: *total*: 37 (2009)
Railways: *total*: 2,600 km (2009)
Roadways: *total*: 222,179 km
paved: 42,167 km
unpaved: 180,012 km (2009)
Waterways: 17,702 km (5,000 km navigable by vessels up to 1.8 m draft) (2009)
Ports and terminals: Da Nang, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City

Recipes

Vietnamese Salad Rolls

Ingredients

Rice paper sheet wrappers
rice noodles
bean sprouts
fresh cilantro and/or mint
green onions, julienned
carrots, julienned
celery, julienned

cooked meat, julienned (Chinese style roast pork, chicken, shrimp, pork loin, or combination)

Purchased Peanut Sauce

Take a dinner plate and put hot tap water on it. Take a wrapper and wet it, making sure that every part gets wet. Transfer to another clean plate and place filling items on top. Wrap it like a burrito, closed at both ends: flip one end over the filling. Fold in the perpendicular ends to close in the filling. Roll in direction of first fold until you reach the end of the wrapper. The gluten in the wrapper will self-seal it. Set aside and repeat until your filling ingredients are gone, or you've reached the limit of what can be eaten at that meal. These do not keep well - don't try to refrigerate or freeze them - it's a disaster.

Salad Rolls make a great meal with a pot of Hot and Sour soup as an accompaniment, or a big bowl of Pho (Noodle Soup) and some peanut sauce.

Salad Roll Wrappers must be purchased in Asian markets or specialty stores. They are packaged about 100 to the package, but don't worry - they last a long time if protected from moisture.

Making Paper Lanterns

During the Mid-autumn Festival, also as the Lantern Festival, children make fancy paper lanterns from colored paper and bendable bamboo strips. These lanterns are often in the shape of fish, butterflies or stars. The children eat moon cakes and parade outside with their lighted lanterns.

Material

Plain white paper cut to 8" x 8"

colored construction paper

String

Bamboo stick, or wooden dowel
felt pens, tape and paper punch

