

No other city in Southeast Asia has intrigued me as much as Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest city also known as Saigon. During my recent trip to this southern Vietnamese metropolis, I was overwhelmed by the warmth of the people and the energetic buzz of their "chaotic" lives. So here is my quick guide on how to enjoy 48 hours in Ho Chi Minh City:

Day 1

Start your morning by visiting the Reunification Palace, the city's number one tourist attraction. Located on Nguyen Du in District 3, this 1970s building is historically important as it symbolises the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Spend about an hour or two here before heading to CIAO Cafe on Nguyen Hue for a strong cup of Vietnamese coffee and to grab a quick lunch.

After that, head out to the Central Post Office located on Cong Xa Paris. The building, which looks like a decorative train station, is the perfect place to send a postcard home – and is certainly no ordinary post office!

Right outside the post office is the Notre Dame Cathedral in its full glorious colonial French architecture. Snap a picture or two before going to Dong Khoi.

Dong Khoi is the main street in the city centre, and tucked away in a hidden corner is a cafe called L'Usine, which is a popular French-inspired establishment frequented by the young hipster crowd. You'll see friends catching up over coffee and plenty of local designer clothes for sale, too.

When night falls, hang around Dong Khoi to catch a water puppet show at the Opera House if cultural shows are your cup of tea. Else, head to the rooftop bar at Careville Hotel, which has 360-degree views of Saigon, and you'll see how the city is so very much designed like Paris.

Day 2

Make a beeline in the early morning to Ben Thanh Market, the best place in Ho Chi Minh City to get souvenirs – popular gifts which include lacquered wood paintings and beaded slippers. Remember to bargain for your ware, as you're never expected to pay the asking price. The market also has a food and drinks section, so eat a local lunch to your heart's content before heading out again.

Around the corner from Ben Thanh Market is the Sri Mariamman Temple along Truong Dinh. Who would've thought that Ho Chi Minh City was so culturally diverse! After that, go for a wash and dry at a hair salon along Le Thanh Ton. One of the best things to do in Vietnam is to get a haircut, as they provide a lengthy massage of the head, neck and arms.

Head back to the [hotel in Ho Chi Minh City](#) for a rest before taking the taxi out to have dinner at Cuc Gach on 10 Dang Tat in District 1. This popular restaurant serves home-made Vietnamese food from mum's recipe, and was recently made famous by Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie who ate here during their visit.

After dinner, end the night with some live music at Acoustic Bar on Ngo Thoi Nhiem in District 3. This was the highlight of my trip as the local live music scene is so good in Ho Chi Minh City, and I highly recommend that you do not miss this place when you're in town!

Source: getvietnamvisa.com