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**Culture and life of Vietnam**

In general, one cannot speak of a Vietnamese culture. The population of Vietnam is made up of a total of 54 ethnic minorities spread across the long stretch of land. Each of these ethnic minorities has its own customs and traditions. However, there are of course many similarities and parallels in these local cultures. The culture and life in Vietnam is very colorful, diverse and vibrant. Hardly any other country has more to offer hospitality and warmth and is also still so varied in landscape. Seen from above, the land should look like a "bamboo stick with two rice bowls", more fertile in the north and south, and barren and with mountain ranges in between. The two most famous cities are the former Saigon, now called Thanh pho Ho Chi Minh (Ho Chi Minh City), and the rather quiet town of Ha Noi. In both cities, as well as throughout the country, there is a culture and art that is strongly influenced by Chinese elements, but also influenced by the Central European culture. Incidentally, these European impacts come from the French colonial rule.

**Religion:**

The belief that Vietnam is a Buddhist country is so wrong. Although Buddhism is the country's largest religion, less than 15% of Vietnamese are Buddhists. Christianity followed you with just over 10%, but about 75% of the Vietnamese do not profess to be religious. In general, the family is the most important thing in the life of the Vietnamese. It is also the "religion" of the Vietnamese, life is dominated by an ancestor cult. In each house there is an altar with the pictures of the deceased relatives. They are especially thought of on the first and 15th day of the month in the lunar calendar. The lunar calendar is the second important component in the life of the Vietnamese.

**Birthday:**

Traditionally, birthday is not very important in Vietnam. The younger generation is celebrating it, but that has only come in recent decades by external influences to Vietnam. Especially in the older generations, many people do not know their birthday at all. And if they know him, then often only the date according to lunar calendar, since this is more important than that of the Gregorian calendar.

**Anniversary of the death:**

Often people in Vietnam say jokingly that you only become important when you're dead. Because unlike the birthday, everyone can remember the death of the ancestors. Since there is an ancestor cult here, the entire family always gathers on important death days to commemorate the deceased. Often these are big festivals.

**Behavior rules in Vietnamese**

The European customs and traditions are fundamentally different from the Asian ones. While shaking hands in Vietnam is already commonplace, tradition calls for bowing with folded hands. On the beach it is not usual to walk "topless", the women wear bathing suits or panty and T-shirt. It is considered to be very rude to point fingers to other people. If you enter a house, you should definitely take off your shoes.

**Traditional cuisine:**

For many occasions there are certain dishes. For example, Banh Chung, a dish of sticky rice, beans and pork, is part of the Vietnamese New Year celebration. The moon cake, however, is eaten for the full moon festival in August. In addition, there are dishes that you are not allowed to eat at certain times, but bring luck to others. For example, if you eat octopus on the last day of the month (according to the lunar calendar), a good month will be needed. In the first half of the month (according to the lunar calendar) you should avoid the dish, otherwise it will do the opposite. This rule applies to a few different foods. Many courts are also credited with a certain effect. Generally, the rule of thumb is that what you eat helps the body part. For example, chicken legs are good for the legs, liver is good for the liver, etc. Some courts also say that they are good for masculinity. If foreigners travel to Vietnam, in a completely different culture, they should try local food for cultural discovery. Because Vietnamese cuisine is also an important element that makes a great contribution to defining the culture of Vietnam.

**Vietnamese literature**

Depending on the time and form of government, Vietnamese literature was shaped differently. While in the early days of Vietnamese literature the influences of Chinese literature and Buddhism were strong, during the Indochina war it almost went under until the end of the Vietnam War. When the Vietnam War came to an end, the Communist government dictated literature as much as possible. Writings were often abused for the heroization of their own soldiers and for propaganda purposes. Only since the eighties has Vietnamese literature been brought to full bloom by writers such as Nguyen Huy Thiep, Le Luu and Ma Van Khang.

**Celebrating festivals in Vietnam**

Like many things in Vietnam, the festivals are Chinese. The Vietnamese welcome the New Year with the festival "Tet", which is also the most important festival of the country. Traditionally, it is important to celebrate the New Year with new clothes and a clean-cleaned home. Colorful and lively as well as interesting for people from all over the world. Vietnam's life and culture are always worth a visit.

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