

## Greeting Spring While Dreaming About Summer

In Vietnam Spring quite literally arrives with a bang. During Tết dragons and lions dance and jump to a rhythmic drum beat as a way to celebrate the arrival of Spring.



In addition, Spring includes some important holidays, both religious and governmental in Vietnam. After Buddhism, Catholicism is the second largest religion in Vietnam. Every Spring Christians begin the season with their Easter celebrations. Some of the famous churches in Ho Chi Minh City, such as the Notre Dame Cathedral, Huyen Sy and Than Dinh Churches, overflow with both Vietnamese and expat churchgoers for Easter Mass. International residents often celebrate the holiday with the preparation of Easter baskets, egg hunts and Easter brunches as well.



The month of April has added significance in Vietnam because of two important public holidays. The first, on April 25th, is a celebration of the *Hung Kings Commemoration day*. The Hung Kings reigned over the Red River Valley during the Bronze Age and officially founded the sovereign country of Vietnam. This holiday is primarily a private affair. People typically use the day to worship their ancestors and spend time with family. However, the

celebration also includes a procession that takes place at Nghia Linh Mountain near Viet Tri City (North of Vietnam). This is the area where the first Hung King founded Vietnam. People honor the King by bringing offerings to the High Temple, which is at the summit of the mountain. Participants in the procession wear brightly colored costumes and carry colorful banners. Children and young people, in particular, enjoy the spectacle and learning about national history. Expats typically get this commemoration day off from work and school as well, so public parks, and play areas will be filled children enjoying a mid-week break.

April 30<sup>th</sup> is also a national holiday in Vietnam. On this day 45 years ago, the North and the South of Vietnam were reunified. The streets in the major cities will be quieter than usual during this holiday, because most of the businesses will be closed as people head back to their hometowns to celebrate Reunification Day, *Ngày Thống nhất*, with their families. Citizens often place a red flag on their door to



show their patriotism and as a mark of respect for those who didn't survive the war. As the color red is the official color of Vietnam's reunification, it will be used in decorations all over the country. In Ho Chi Minh City, early birds can catch the morning parades, which will brighten the

main thoroughfares. These parades are typically elaborate affairs in biggest cities, involving floats, live musicians and street performers.



The 1st of May falls on a Tuesday this year, which will extend the holiday weekend even more. Labor Day is observed in Vietnam as well as 80 other countries around the world. In Vietnam, the day is called *Ngày Quốc tế Lao động* and is an important moment to recognize workers' rights in Vietnam. Since there are few official holiday weekends in Vietnam, many Vietnamese head to the beaches or

other destinations for these vacation days. As a result, airline and hotel prices often skyrocket at the end of April/early May.

As May and June arrive so do many changes. The rainy season officially falls between May and November. The weather is hotter than usual and humidity is at its peak. Even the torrential rain that falls at least once per day during this season does little to ease the sweltering temperatures. Be prepared with a strong umbrella and waterproof sandals and make sure you drink lots of fluids. A lightly sweetened *nước chanh* (lemonade) is a good bet and is readily available in most cafes.

In June children finish up their school year and get ready for their summer holidays. The summer solstice on the 21st of June also marks the high season for relocations. Many people move during the months of June, July and August in order to get settled before school begins in September. Moving during the summer also has the advantage of making housing easier to find because as new people arrive there are also those who will finish their contracts and head on to their next posting. This shifting and changing can be felt all around the cities during the summertime - new faces at the local cafe and goodbye parties for old friends.

HCMC is the perfect place to make the most of this season of upheaval, settling and rebirth. Cool your head in any of the city's many swimming pools and follow it up with a stop at your favorite ice-cream shop. Ice cream, in Vietnamese *Kem*, has been a popular choice in Ho Chi Minh City since the first ice cream shop opened in 1958. Try Saigon's trendy new *sauteed ice-cream at Bella* (107 Tran Hung Dao, District 1); or if you have kids take the swimming pool idea a step further and head to Dam Sen Water Park. Binh Quoi village is also a great place to relax during the summer. It's just 8 km outside of District 1 but it feels like a charmingly natural village. Just make sure you take a look at the weather before you go.



Below a few other events that will take place in Vietnam over the next few months. Enjoy the fun!

## Events April - August

### **Hue Festival 2018**

This weeklong festival will feature theatre, music, and acrobatics in celebration of Hue—the former imperial capital of Vietnam.

**Apr 27 – May 2, 2018**

### **Thay Pagoda Festival**

30 minutes southwest by car from Hanoi you will find the Thay Pagoda—this is where Tu Dao Hanh, a Buddhist monk, innovator and inventor resided. This festival celebrates his life through a procession and various water puppet performances (Tu Dao Hanh's creation.)

**April 20-22, 2018**

### **Hung King Festival**

As explained above, this festival is a celebration of the founders of Vietnam.

**April 25, 2018**

### **Reunification Day**

Fly a Vietnamese Flag and head to a main boulevard in HCMC or Hanoi to witness the parades in honor of Vietnam's independence.

**April 30, 2018**

### **International Labor Day**

Head to the beach or have a picnic on this government sanctioned day-off to celebrate the rights of workers around the world.

**May 1, 2018**

### **Buddha's Birthday**

Temples will be decorated with ornate flowers decorations and offerings in honor of Buddha. Hoi An is the place to go for this festival if you would like to see a procession of monks winding their way through the streets of Hoi An Ancient Town. A colorful parade will follow and vegetarians will rejoice with the choice of veggie-friendly dishes being sold at street stalls all around the city.

**May 29, 2018**

### **Danang International Fireworks Festival**

The theme for this year's International Firework Festival is the "Legends of the Bridges." Eight teams from countries all around the world will participate in this fun competition to see who can present the best firework display. Prepare for the sky to light up above the Danang, as boat races and artistic flower displays bedeck the rivers below.

**April 30 - June 30, 2018**

### **Wandering Souls Day Early September (Vu Lan Festival)**

On this day families will head to Buddhist temples and the graves of their loved ones to pray and give offerings to the departed. In Hue, the Buddhist shrines and pagodas will be full of locals and monks observing this sombre celebration.

**August 25, 2018**

## The Emotional Life of a Move

It has been said that moving is one of the most stressful events in life, yet, many of us move numerous times in our lives, either willingly or out of necessity. Each relocation comes with a different set of challenges because there is a change in impetus each time. Some people move every few years because their work requires it, others choose a nomadic life because it suits their life philosophy.

Regardless of the reason, a relocation can be a rollercoaster of emotional highs and lows. The stress of relocating due to a job loss versus a job gain are very different and as a result the move should be handled with that in mind. What is it like to move down the street in the city you grew up in versus heading to another country, culture and language? How can this affect the adaptation period?

Relocation services like Saigon Van offers, are in place to help you with this adaptation. From packing the boxes to finding a new school, the closest dentist and hiring a housekeeper, the logistics can be taken care of by the professionals. But what about the details that a relocation service can't help with? Here are a few ways to deal with the inevitable emotional stress on you and your family before you even start packing.

### Get Excited

Start researching early. Pick up a guidebook, take a few language classes, find some restaurants that pique your interest in your new country. The more you can up your excitement, the easier it will be to leave your old routines behind.

If you have children who are anxious about the change the best thing to do is to give them something to look forward to. Let them help you do the research. You can research the best schools while they look at pictures of the top playgrounds in your new city. Try to leave the worries you and your spouse might have about the change for private conversations and focus on the positive in front of the kids, but also give them the space to talk about their emotions.



### Build a Community

Whether you're moving as a family or solo this is the prime moment to start building a community! Joining Facebook groups for expats, book clubs and sports teams before you even leave home can shorten the adjustment period in your new location and ease the inevitable homesickness. An added benefit of signing up for activities is that it will help you find a new routine in your new life.



### Make a Plan

While preparing for a move we tend to focus on the future, the boxes that need to be packed, the addresses that need to be changed, but sometimes it is also helpful to look backwards. Making a plan for a trip home can ease the stress of arriving in a new country. When everything seems a little bit too hard, you can count down the days to your

trip, even if it is six months away. If traveling home is not in the cards, you can also start planning a vacation in your new country - from a relaxing weekend on a beach to a backpacking trek into the rainforest - there are bound to be new things to experience.

### **Have Realistic Expectations**

You might love the way your new country looks in full color photographs, but it may look and feel different in reality. Be prepared to experience a bit of culture shock and mixed feelings about the move. Research tells us that it takes a minimum of six months to really settle into a new country and find a routine. Don't assume you'll have it all figured out after one week. Allowing yourself time to acknowledge those inevitable feelings of hesitation or sadness or even regret will help you get through them faster. Talk about how you feel and about how your children feel, then energize yourself with something you enjoy doing to clear your head. Step away from unpacking and organizing and head to the nearest park or local neighborhood restaurant and come back to the task with a fresh attitude.

### **Take the Time to Say Goodbye**

Last but not least, make sure you allow yourself enough time to say goodbye to friends and family and also to your routines. Throw yourself a party or find another way to mark the occasion with a little bit of joy. When you move abroad you're sure to have your fair share of goodbyes in the future as new friends come and go, but remember: for every goodbye there is an opportunity for another hello. Your close friends and family will be there when you get back and in the meantime you'll be opening up your world to a whole new community of potential loved ones.



As Albert Einstein put it, “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

So, enjoy the ride and be mindful of the positives. Your experience in your new location can only add to the richness and depth of your memories.

## Essential Checklist For Your International Move

### 8 - 12 weeks before estimated move date

- Decide what you are moving - make a list of all the essential and nonessential items.
- Have a garage sale or donate unwanted items to charity.
- Arrange appointments with your chosen movers for a pre-move survey.
- Provide your movers comprehensive details about your move; discuss options available and give clear instructions what you want included / excluded from the quotation.
- Start to gather your personal records (passports, birth certificates, medical, dental, school reports and banking references) and make duplicates.
- Make your travel arrangements.
- Start to make schooling arrangements for your children.
- Obtain and complete forms for your tax and pension arrangements.
- Apply for any necessary visas or work permits check to make sure the paperwork will be completed before your move date.
- Check the expiration date of your passport and current visa / resident card.
- Start researching as much as you can about the area or country you are planning on moving to. Get excited!
- Start looking into housing in your new country. Contact a relocation or real estate agency to get a feeling of what is available.
- Check to see if your electrical appliances will function at your destination. If not buy several outlet converters or prepare a discretionary budget to replace the appliances in your new country.

### 4 - 7 weeks before estimated move date

- Confirm your moving date and schedule with your chosen mover.
- Sign the quotation, confirm your insurance requirement and establish a formal list of your belongings.
- Prepare and mail "change of address" cards.
- Inform credit card companies, insurance companies, mail order accounts, magazine subscriptions, and rental companies of your new address.
- Cancel utilities (electricity, water, cable TV, internet), as well as newspaper, pest control and pool service contracts.
- Consider the transportation of your pets. If professional assistance is required speak to your mover and vet. Ensure that the relevant health certificates, immunizations and permits are completed.
- Obtain details of new school dress codes and book material, if a uniform is required place an order with the school so that the items are available upon arrival along with any reading or writing material.
- Start joining activities in your new location. Browse the web and Facebook for any groups that suit your interests: book clubs, expat meet-ups, basketball teams or Boy/Girl Scouts if you have children.
- Take in clothing that needs to be cleaned or repaired.

### 1 - 3 weeks before estimated move date

- Collect items any items that are still at the cleaners, lent to friends or being repaired.
- Return library books, and borrowed or rented items.
- Go shopping and stock up on anything that you'll miss from home.
- Ensure you have sufficient prescription medication to cover you for the move until you find a good pharmacy.
- Flammable substances are a risk for your other possessions and cannot be accepted as such in the move. Please dispose of them safely.
- Find new homes for your plants.
- Make arrangements to have appliances disconnected. Saigon Van can also have our dedicated Handyman service take care of this for you.

- Only photographs with a negative should be shipped. Otherwise, make copies or find suitable storage for these family heirlooms.
- Take pictures of your valuable belongings so that, in case of damage and / or loss, you have extra proof of its condition before the move.
- Take pictures of furniture that will be disassembled by the mover. It may help the mover at destination to assemble the furniture in a proper way.
- Check if you still have the original packing and / or security materials for your electronic and computer equipment.
- Check if you still have the security pins or bar for your washing machine or ask a local supplier to help you with this.
- Organize final readings for electricity, water and telephone.

### **The week before your move**

- Clean outdoor equipment, drain any fuel from your lawn mower and other machinery and ensure that water is drained from hoses.
- Arrange for your valuable documents, jewels and money to be moved separately. Usually it is best to keep these items with you, since they are not covered under normal transportation insurance.
- Wash and dry all bed linen, towels and clothing.
- Go through your medicine cabinet and properly dispose of unwanted drugs.
- Make arrangements for children to play at a friend's home or attend a daycare center, so that they are not underfoot on the day of the move.

### **One day before the move**

- Defrost refrigerator and freezer. Ensure they are completely dry prior to moving to avoid mildew.
- Put an "emergency kit" together with items that should be packed last. This could be first aid and/or toiletry items, coffee and coffee machine, some toys for the children etc.
- Keep your personal documents in a safe place so that the movers cannot accidentally pack them.
- Back up your computer on a hard drive.

### **On the day of your move**

- Be present during the entire move. When the removal crew arrives escort them around the house, in order to confirm what has to be left behind and to give them any other special instructions.
- Make sure to keep all important documents, such as tickets, passports, credit cards and travel insurance papers apart so that they are not accidentally packed.
- Make a final check with the supervisor after everything has been packed and loaded for transportation.
- Open all cupboard doors. Look in the dishwasher and washer for clothes, and check behind doors to avoid items being left behind.
- Sign a packing inventory list, check carefully to ensure that you are happy with the content. You will be asked to check and sign again at delivery.
- Make sure your insurance declaration form is completely filled out and signed.
- Before leaving the property, ensure that all windows are secure and water, gas and electricity supplies are switched off.
- Leave the keys to your residence and any documents relating to the property or equipment with a designated person.

**Say goodbye to your old home and get ready to say hello to your new one!**

## What's New? – Vietnam and International

### 1. 40+ procedures have been added to Vietnamese Department of Customs website

The reduction of contact between businesses, individuals and customs officers is the goal of the new online procedures in Vietnam. Applicants can now track the status of their records by smartphone, as well as receive notifications and speed up the efficiency of their file. [Read more.](#)

### 2. Penalties for Accounting Errors and Fraud Officially Defined

Vietnam has stringent requirements for the way that a company's accounting vouchers, charts, and financial statements must be laid out. If these formats are not followed, strict penalties may be incurred. [Read more.](#)

### 3. Updates on R-Visas in China

An R-Visa is a multi-entry visa that is available for 180 days and can be used in the interim while waiting for a work/resident permit. Professionals in possession of an A-Class Visa (a visa for highly skilled foreign workers) will be able to speed up the process of getting their work permits with the new R-Visa system.



### 4. Changes to Foreign Work Permits in Bangkok, Thailand

Foreign workers will no longer need to go through the process of changing their work locations on their work permit if their employment location/locations lies within the Bangkok city limits. For employees who work in several locations around Bangkok this change in law will mean that they will no longer be subject to fines for not updating every location on the permit.

### 5. The Requirement for a Good Conduct Certificate Suspended in the UAE

Previously the United Arab Emirates required that all applicants for work visas provide a Good Conduct Certificate. However, this certificate significantly slowed down the visa process and has been temporarily revoked by the UAE cabinet. No date has been released for the end to this suspension.



### 6. Online Forms drafted for Myanmar's New Companies Law

A new online registration system for electronic companies will be launched in August, the same date that the revised Companies Law will commence. The prescribed forms will make the required collecting of company information more efficient.

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