

# Let's go!

Places to inspire you to travel this summer



#Vietnam

#ThingsToDo

#WhatsOn

## 24 hours in Hanoi

In Hanoi's Truc Bach neighborhood, out-of-towners head to cocktail bars while foodies devour less-well-known specialties in mom-and-pop eateries. The student lovebirds? They ensconce themselves in swan-shaped pedal boats to savor a fleeting moment of privacy. Locals have also been trooping to Ngu Xa islet, where its two main streets were recently declared a pedestrian-only zone on weekends. Hanoi-based travel writer Joshua Zukas takes us through this vibrant district just by the Old Quarter.



## Day 1



11AM

### LAKESIDE BRUNCH AT MA XO

Truc Bach Lake is the neighborhood's namesake and nucleus, so start with brunch overlooking the water at Ma Xo, where the menu bridges east and west. Choose from avo on toast, bacon rotis and a unique take on local specialty *pho cuon* (fresh spring rolls) that uses roast duck in place of beef. You can compare this version with the original later on.

[@ma.xo.cafe](#)



**Truc Bach Lake is the neighborhood's namesake and nucleus, so start with brunch overlooking the water at Ma Xo**

1PM

### EXPLORE NGU XA ISLET'S OFFBEAT SIGHTS

Walk off the food coma and take in some of the overlooked sights on Ngu Xa Islet, which 500 years ago housed Hanoi's bronze-casting ateliers. Start at Hanoi Studio Gallery, a contemporary art space spread over multiple floors. Some of the pieces are done by well-known local painters and sculptors; others spotlight artists that are fresh on the scene. A few steps around the corner is Ngu Xa Pagoda, a lively and atmospheric place of worship that serves the neighborhood's Buddhist community. From there, hunt out the nameless waterside alley that connects Tran Vu Street with Ngu Xa Street on the east side of the islet and the colorful houses that run alongside it.



3PM

### REFUEL AT FU HOO CAFÉ

Make a caffeine pitstop at Fu Hoo, a quaint café that supports Hanoi's visual creative scene. There's a secret waterside seating area, tasty plant-based bao buns and a coffee menu with espresso-based drinks, *nau da* (Vietnamese coffee with ice and condensed milk) and affogato.

[@fu\\_hoo\\_cafe](#)







**6PM**

## GOBBLE UP SPRING ROLLS AT PHO CUON CHINH THANG

Remember the modified *pho cuon* from lunch? Now you can dine on the traditional version. Local joints serving the dish sit shoulder to shoulder on Ngu Xa Street, but in the family-owned Pho Cuon Chinh Thang on parallel Mac Dinh Chi Street, the spring rolls are made to order so the beef always comes out piping hot. Wash them down with a tall glass of *tra da* (iced green tea).

**4PM**

## TAKE TO THE WATER – IN A GIANT SWAN

Rent a swan boat at the small floating jetty near Highlands Coffee on Tran Vu Street. The swan-shaped pedal boats enjoy free reign of the lake, so you can peddle right up to Thuy Trung Tien Temple, a picturesque place of worship on another tiny islet. On a clear day, you will have views of the setting sun behind **Thanh Nien Street**, a tree-lined causeway that partitions Truc Bach Lake from West Lake.



## BUILDING WORLDS

Ha Ninh Pham has spent years developing his own world and uses his art to convince the audience that it's real. Immerse yourself in a different kind of metaverse and experience the 32-year-old Hanoi artist's works – comprising drawings, sculptures and interactive installations – at Manzi Exhibition Space in June.

[haninhpham](#)



# Let's go!



**7PM**

## STROLL OVER TO LANG THANG

Lang Thang is a dive bar with a convivial vibe and casual seating that spills onto the pavement (when the police allow it). Drinks are cheap and cheerful, and occasionally local DJs are invited to spin the decks. Lang Thang gets packed as the evening evolves, but come early and you're all but guaranteed a seat.

[@langthang8b](#)

**9PM**

## TAKE A SEAT AT STANDING BAR

With a broad selection of on-tap artisanal beers from Vietnam and beyond, Standing Bar is undoubtedly Hanoi's best watering hole to sample craft beers. There are regular events with a focus on vinyl DJ nights, stand-up comedy with local and international acts and an eclectic menu of cooked bar snacks. You can also take your beer out to the park across the road for a quiet lakeside sip.

[@standingbarhanoi](#)



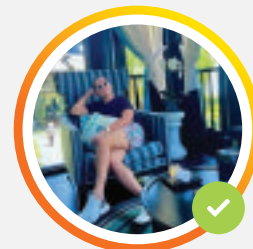
## Where to stay

A charming accommodation beyond Hanoi's Old Quarter



### THE FLOWER BOUTIQUE HOTEL & TRAVEL

Refreshed and renamed in December 2022, The Flower Boutique Hotel & Travel occupies one of Hanoi's famous "tube houses" – buildings that sit on narrow plots designed to give the maximum number of families access to the street. Wall-to-wall windows ensure that front-facing rooms are bathed in natural light, and a compact balcony offers an outside space from which to watch Nguyen Truong To Street below. 055 Nguyen Truong To, Ba Dinh



[oneandonlyritch](#)

**#TheJuanThingToDo  
...IN DANANG & HOI AN**

“

I am the director of butler services at Intercontinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort and here are my tips for a day in central Vietnam:

Start with a buffet breakfast at Intercontinental Danang's Citron restaurant. Grab a seat at one of the floating tables with a breathtaking view of the beach.

[intercontinentaldanang](#)

Get your heart pumping at Bana Hills, where you can take a picture of the Golden Bridge for the 'gram.

[sunworldbanahills](#)

Still in Danang, grab lunch at Luk Lak Vietnamese Restaurant for a very authentic local meal.

[luklakdanang](#)

Head to Yaly Couture in Hoi An and get a bespoke dress or shirt made.

[yallycouturehoian](#)

End the night with a meal at Morning Glory Signature restaurant while taking in a view of the Hoai River.

[morningglorysignature](#)

”





## Day 2

11AM

### SLURP UP VIETNAM'S NATIONAL DISH AT PHO THE BEO

Pho The Beo became wildly popular with brunching youngsters after owner Nguyen Thanh The went viral for his uncanny ability to deliver steaming bowls of *pho bo* (beef noodle soup) on a Segway – occasionally with an entire order balanced on his head. Even if you're not impressed by the theatrics of the delivery, you'll enjoy his innovative take on Vietnam's national dish, which includes generous chunks of beef, a chili-infused broth and a salted egg-meatball side dish.

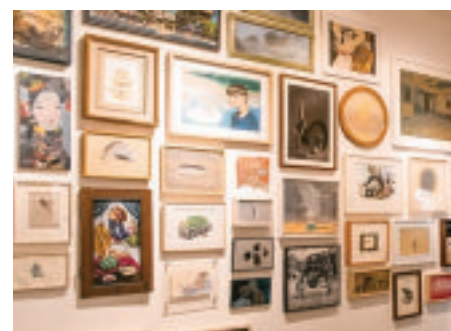


2PM

### PERUSE CONTEMPORARY ART AT MANZI

Technically, Manzi sits just outside of the Truc Bach neighborhood, but as one of Vietnam's most well-regarded contemporary art hubs, it deserves a spot on this itinerary. There are two locations: Manzi Art Space and Café on Phan Huy Ich serves drinks and has a small gallery upstairs; around the corner on Hang Bun is the new Manzi Exhibition Space, which hosts temporary exhibitions.

@manzihn



12PM

### GET BOOKISH AT BOOKWORM

Bookworm, an English-language bookshop, is a Hanoi institution, and its owner, Hoang Van Truong, has become something of a

legend. He moved to this new, street-facing location during the pandemic and launched a modest café at the same time, so you can sip your morning coffee in a quiet corner of the bookshop surrounded by a carefully curated selection of quality literature.

@bookwormhanoi



**Let's go!**



**3PM**

### TAKE A BREAK AT LA VIET CAFÉ

Opposite Manzi Exhibition Space is La Viet, a Vietnamese coffee house that began in Dalat in the Central Highlands. The Western-style coffees are smooth and aromatic, and the Vietnamese coffee has a sweet, caramel after-taste. Tuck into their scrumptious selection of French croissants and Danish pastries.

@lavietcoffee



**5PM**

### ENJOY THE VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT BAR

After exploring Truc Bach from below, peer over it from above. The Summit Bar, which perches atop the Pan Pacific hotel, has one of the best views in Hanoi, especially when the setting sun is painting the sky different hues of orange and purple. The view outperforms the cocktails, so play it safe with beer, wine and soft drinks. Booking advised.



**7PM**

### THE FINAL PHO

Head back to Ngu Xa Islet and tuck into another Vietnamese specialty dish – *pho chien phong* – while the dinner rush is in full swing. Pho chien phong is difficult to translate, but think stir-fried beef and green veggies over deep-fried noodle parcels. This dish is good anywhere on Ngu Xa Street, but if you eat at 31 Ngu Xa on the corner, you can combine the pho chien phong with other delectable Vietnamese dishes from a huge menu.

**9PM**

### LAKESIDE NIGHTCAP

DOT is a new hole-in-the-wall cocktail bar that has a deliciously creative menu, making it the perfect place for a night cap. It's a quirky, one-man business where the owner personally makes your cocktail, so arrive with some patience if you're in a big group. ⑤

@dot\_thewestlake



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