

Antonia Gill, Vietnam, August 2021-present.

29, in a teaching couple, no children.

We currently live in Hanoi, Vietnam. Everyday life here is hectic but brilliant. The buzz of motorbikes mixed with the scent of street food make it an exciting and interesting place to live. English is not widely spoken, but Vietnamese people are very friendly, and it is easy enough to get by with a few phrases. You can get most creature comforts from the UK, although you will pay more for it. Hanoi has plenty of museums and temples and you can easily spend hours getting lost around the alleyways in the old quarter where you'll find plenty of coffee shops. Hanoi also has a growing craft beer scene. Most people (local and expats) tend to buy/hire a motorbike to get around. Once you've got used to the chaos, you'll realise that the moto's aren't going too fast as there's so much traffic, you become part of the crowd. Grabs taxis and Grab bikes are readily available too. Vietnam celebrates Tet (Lunar New Year) and this is a very important part of Vietnamese culture. Compared to other S.E Asian capital cities, Hanoi is not very built up. The old French architecture can be seen throughout the city and there's a real charm about the place.

The children at my school are predominantly Vietnamese or Korean. They are generally polite, enjoy being at school and want to do their best. They often go to extra classes after school and that, combined with late bedtimes can cause issues with tiredness. The parents are generally lovely and engaged in their child's learning. I would recommend working here as a teacher for a couple of years if you're willing to embrace the lifestyle.

Vietnam as a country has everything from the beautiful beaches in Phu Quoc and Con Dao to stunning landscapes in the north (best seen on a motorbike tour!)... throw in some rice paddies, jungle treks and buzzing city nightlife on Bia (beer) Street, there is something for everyone. Flights and trains make it easy to travel around, and the country is well connected to other S.E Asian countries as well as flights back to the UK. Sadly, Hanoi is prone to bad pollution though and it is much worse than we first thought it would be. Air purifiers are a must, and the poor air quality often means indoor play and smoggy days. Along with the pollution, rubbish is not well recycled and often piled at the side of the street so expect the occasional rat...

As Hanoi is quite far north, the city experiences different seasons and it was surprisingly cold in the winter (10 degrees Celsius) compared to usual 30!

It's very easy to live in Hanoi though, and your money goes a long way! it is easy to save and live here comfortably as the cost of living is much cheaper than the UK. We have been able to save one of our salaries this year without really trying. We currently have accommodation, flights and medical insurance included in our package meaning our salary is ours to spend. For example, a local meal of Bun Cha (chargrilled pork, rice noodles & herbs) will only set you back £2/3 whereas you could easily spend £8-12+ when eating at a western restaurant. Many families hire nannies and chefs as these are also inexpensive. Overall, I would recommend Hanoi to teach in as a place to save money, to embrace Vietnamese culture and eat some amazing food but be wary of the pollution for the long term.