

Hanoi (*River within/inside*)

Hà Nội is the capital of Vietnam and the country's second largest city situated in northern Vietnam on the western bank of the Red River, about 140 km inland from the South China Sea, and 1,760 km north of Ho Chi Minh City.

The region around present-day Hanoi was known first as **Long Biên** (Dragon Edge). In 866, it was turned into a citadel and named **Đại La** (Big Net) with the nickname **La Thành**.

In 1010 **King Lý Thái Tổ** (974 - 1028) - the first ruler of the Lý Dynasty (1009 - 1225) issued a royal decree (called Edict on the Transfer of the Capital) for moving the imperial capital from Hoa Lư to Đại La. While travelling from Hoa Lư to the imperial settlement, he claimed to have had a vision of “a yellow dragon ascending” which inspired him to change Đại La to **Thăng Long** (Ascending Dragon). In 1831 Minh Mạng (the second Emperor of the Nguyễn dynasty (1802 - 1945)) renamed the city **Hà Nội**.

Thăng Long remained the capital of Vietnam until 1802, when the last Vietnamese dynasty, the Nguyen (1802 - 1945), transferred the capital to Hue (~700km south of Hanoi). During 1902 - 1945 and 1946 - 1954, under French colonialists, Hanoi was chosen to be the capital of all Indochina.

During August 1945 and December 1946, Hanoi was proclaimed the capital of Vietnam. During 1954 - 1975 Hanoi became the capital of the North Vietnam. From July 2, 1976 Hanoi was the capital of entire Vietnam.

Other names of Hanoi (which are still in use): **Đông Đô** (Eastern Metropolis) during the Hồ dynasty (1400-1406), Đông Quan (Eastern Gate) during the Ming Chinese occupation (1407-1427), **Đông Kinh** (Eastern Capital or Tonkin) during the Lê dynasty (1428-1787), unofficial names: **Kẻ Chợ** (marketplace), **Tràng An** (long peace), **Hà Thành** (short for Thành phố Hà Nội (City of Hanoi)).



Hồ Hoàn Kiếm (*Hoan Kiem Lake*) – **Symbol of Hanoi**

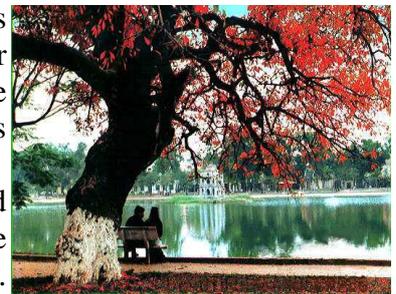
Lake of the Returned/Restored Sword or Hồ Gươm (*Sword Lake*) is one of the major scenic spots in Hanoi and serves as a focal point for its public life. The lake was once a part of the Red river. The lake used to be called *Lục Thủy* (Green Water Lake) since the water was green all the year round.

During the war against the Minh China, Lê Lợi had the magic sword named Heaven's Will. After 10 years of continuous struggling, he finally defeated the Chinese and reclaimed the nation's independence.

He became an Emperor named *Le Thai To* and founder of the Lê Dynasty. In early 1428, Emperor Le Thai To was boating on the lake when a Golden Turtle God (*Kim Qui*) surfaced and asked him to return Heaven's Will. The Golden Turtle God took back the sword and disappeared. King Le Thai To named the lake *Ho Hoan Kiem*.

Temple of the Jade Mountain (*Ngọc Sơn Temple*) on the Jade Island (đảo Ngọc): it honors the military leader Tran Hung Dao—the national hero who defeated the Mongols in the 13th century (the Yuan Dynasty ruling China established by Kublai Khan (the fifth Khan)), a scholar Van Xuong and the Confucian master and famous writer Nguyen Van Sieu. In the 11th century, when Emperor *Lý Thái Tổ* moved the capital from Hoa Lư to Thăng Long, he named the small already existed temple Ngọc Tượng. Lord Trịnh Giang (Lê Dynasty (1735-1739) has built Khánh Thụy shrine and two small stone hills (Đào Tai, Ngọc Bội). It was then destroyed by Le Chieu Thong and then rebuilt after that by a philanthropist named Tín Trai. Later it was renamed Ngọc Sơn.

In 1865 Nguyen Van Sieu expanded it including the Pen Tower (*Tháp Bút*), the ink-slab (*Đại Nghiên*), the Moon Contemplation Pavilion (*Đặc Nguyệt lâu* (*getting the moon light*)), the Pavilion



against Waves (*Đình Trấn Ba*), and the iconic wooden red-painted Huc Bridge (*Cầu Thê Húc - Rising Sun/morning sunlight Bridge*) connected the Jade Island to the lakeshore.



Pen Tower is after the first gate. The second gate boasts Taoist symbols (the tiger, the carp, the phoenix, and the Vietnamese dragon). On the third gate is an ink-slab on the very spot where the shadow of the Pen Tower falls.

Pen Tower (with 5 floors, 28m) built by stone on the ground of the old hill Độc Tôn (Ngọc Bội). On it are the words Tả Thanh Thiên (*writing on the blue sky*).

The Turtle Tower (Tháp Rùa) in the midst of the lake was erected on the grass-carpeted Turtle islet, the former fishing site under King Lê Thánh Tông. Under the Restored Lê Dynasty (17th - 18th centuries), the Trịnh Lords had Tả Vọng Temple built on the islet, which disappeared during the Nguyễn Dynasty. In 1886 it was rebuilt.

Just across the street from the western shore of Hoan Kiem is a memorial and temple dedicated to Lê Lợi-the central character in the legend (Lê Thái Tổ temple) constructed in 1896.



On June 2, 1967, a turtle died from injuries and appeared in the lake. The turtle's body was preserved and placed on display in the temple. That particular specimen weighed 200kg and measured 1.9m long.

In 2010, on the occasion of 1000yrs of Thang Long, a giant smooth-shell turtle was surfacing in the lake. In 2011 the city authorities captured the giant reptile for 3-month medical treatment. She reappeared many times during 2011-2015. The last time the turtle was spotted alive was on 21 December 2015. She was reported dead on 19 January 2016. She weighted 169kg with the turtle-shell length of 1.3m.

The total area of the lake nowadays is 120000m² and the circumference of 1820m, 200m wide, 600m long, and only 2m deep.

Hanoi's Old Quarter: The 36 Streets called “Hàng”

It locates between the Restored-Sword Lake, the Long Bien Bridge, the former city rampart, and the Citadel wall.

King Ly Thai To built his palace in 11th century. In the early 13th century, the collection of tiny workshop villages clustered around the palace walls evolved into craft cooperatives (or guilds). Skilled craftsmen migrated to the Old Quarter. Each craftgroup originating from the same village and performing similar services designated their own area named by their traditional handicrafts. The streets developed a homogeneous look with the long and narrow buildings called “tube houses” (with typical 3m wide and 60m long).

The Old Quarter has a rich religious heritage, when the craftsmen brought with them their religious practices. On each street there is at least one temple. Nowadays many of the old temples have been transformed into shops and living quarters, but some of the old buildings' religious roots can still be recognized by the architecture.

The old section of Hanoi is often called the “36 Old Streets”. The number 36 may came from the 15th century when there might have been 36 workshop areas. There are now more than 70 streets in the area.

Hàng Đào is the main axis running from north to south, cutting the Old Quarter in half. In the beginning of the 15th century, this street was the location of the silk dyer guild which specialized in a deep pink dye. (Hàng (merchandise or shop) Đào (refers to the pink color of of apricot blossoms)). This street now specializes in ready-made clothing. **Hàng Bạc** (silver) has jewelleryes of different types. Hàng Gai (Hemp) offers silk clothing, ready-made tailored embroidery. Lãn Ông (named famous physician in 18th century) smells emanating from herbal medicinal products. Mã Mây was a union of two old streets: Hàng Mây sold rattan products and Hàng Mã sold e.g. paper replicas of money, clothing...(to burn for the dead in front of the altar of ancestors). Bát Đàn

(Wooden Bowls), Bát Sứ (China Bowls), Chả Cá (Roasted Fish), Hàng Bò (Basket), Hàng Bông (Cotton), Hàng Buồm (Sails), Hàng Đường (Sugar and candies)...

The ancient house at 87 Ma May street

It was built at the late of the 20th century with typical architecture of ancient houses in Hanoi. The house consists of two main blocks linked together by a square yard in the middle on the ground floor, and a small balcony on the 1st floor. The yard is included to moderate the air, provide the house with sunlight and cool winds. The balcony above-an ideal place to put small plants, flower pots is a relaxation place for the owners. On the ground floor: the street-front room is used for selling goods and all behind space is for production activities, then kitchen and bathroom. On the next floor is living room to host the guests and worship the ancestor. The behind room linked to the living room by a balcony is bed room. All of the walls in this house were painted with typical yellow color, and all furniture, decoration items are reserved in good condition (though being restored in 1999).



French-colonial architecture in Hanoi

Hanoi was the capital of all Indochina from 1902 to 1953. Thus many French-type architecture building are remained.

Cầu Long Biên (Dragon Edge bridge, originally called Paul Doumer bridge named after PD - the Governor-General of French Indochina and then French president): the 1682m-long bridge built between 1889 and 1902 under the direction of the same architect who designed the Eiffel Tower (Daydé & Pillé of Paris) and opened in 1903. Originally, Long Bien had 19 spans and it was the first steel bridge across Red river in Hanoi, and one of four greatest bridges in the world at the time it was built.



Long Bien bridge was bombed many times by American army air attacks (in 1967 and 1972). Many spans of the bridge were destroyed. The left spans still remaining today. It is the only bridge in Hanoi where all the riders have to go in the left hand side.

Long Bien bridge is the best place to look at the sunrise or the sunset and taking nice photos of alluvial patch.

St. Joseph's Cathedral located at Nha Chung street is the oldest church in Hanoi. The construction began in 1882 and it opened in December 1886. The cathedral and Nha Chung area were built on the land formerly belonging to Bao Thien pagoda, which was built under Ly dynasty.



The architecture with domes of the cathedral follows the Gothic style and design resembling Notre Dame de Paris. It is 64.5m in length, 20.5m in width with two bell towers of 31.5m-height. Though the appearance of the cathedral, from the doors, the colorful window glass, to the religious paintings for decoration follows Western style, the main interior part is decorated in Vietnamese way with two typical colors yellow and red. Outside, in front of the cathedral is the statue of Mother Maria. The first Christmas took place in the cathedral in 1887.

Hanoi Opera House located on the famous August Revolution Square was constructed during 1901-1911 and modeled on Palais Garnier – the older of Paris two opera houses. It embraces the European architectural style under the Renaissance period with the Italian-made marble floor, copper chandeliers and exquisite French murals on the ceiling, thus making the place one of Hanoi's singular architectural landmarks.



Sofitel Legend Metropole opened in 1901. Charlie Chaplin spent his honeymoon here, and Graham Greene took a break from writing *The Quiet American* to prop up the mahogany bar.

The Presidential Palace (inside the President Complex (Phủ Chủ tịch)) was built between 1900 and 1906 to house the French Governor-General of Indochina.

Chợ Đồng Xuân (*Dong Xuan (Springfield) Market*)

Originally built by the French administration in 1889, Đồng Xuân Market has been renovated several times with the latest in 1994 after a big fire. It is Hanoi's largest indoor market where the wholesale traders sell everything from clothes, household goods to foodstuffs. The large roof of corrugated galvanised iron supplied by the French contractor Poincard Veyret. The most recognizable feature of the market was the 5-arch entrance corresponding to Dong Xuan Market's five domes, each dome was measured 19m in height and 25m in width.



Văn Miếu - Quốc Tử Giám (*Temple of Literature - Imperial Academy*)

In 1070 the temple was built at the time of Emperor Lý Thánh Tông dedicated to Confucius (Nho giáo) - a Chinese teacher, editor, politician, and philosopher (Khổng Tử, 551- 479 BCE) of the Spring and Autumn period of China.

In 1076, Emperor Lý Nhân Tông established Quốc Tử Giám - Vietnam's first university within the temple to educate Vietnam's bureaucrats, nobles, royalty and other members of the elite. The university remained open from 1076 to 1779. In 1802, the Nguyễn dynasty's monarchs founded the Huế capital where they established a new imperial academy.

The temple layout is similar to that of the Confucius' birthplace (Qufu, Shandong). It covers an area of over 54000 square metres, including the Văn lake, Giám park and the interior courtyards which are surrounded by a brick wall. The Great Gate (and the four pillars in front of the Gate) opens onto three pathways which continues through the complex. The centre path (with a big bronze bell on the main gate) was reserved for the monarch, the path to the left is for the administrative Mandarins and the path to the right is for military Mandarins.



The interior of the site is divided into five courtyards.

The first courtyard extends from the Great Portico to the Dai Trung (Đại Trung Môn) and two smaller gates: the Dai Tai gate (Đại Tài Môn) and the Thanh Duc gate (Thành Đức Môn).

In the first and second courtyards there are topiaries (bushes that are cut into particular shapes) that represent the 12 zodiac animals.



The second courtyard contains the Khue Van pavilion (Khuê Văn Các), a unique architectural work built in 1805 and a symbol of present-day Hanoi. It is built on four white-washed stone stilts. At the top is a red-coloured with two circular windows and an elaborate roof. Inside, a bronze bell hangs from the ceiling. Beside the Khue Van pavilion are the Suc Van gate (Súc Văn Môn) and the Bi Van gate (Bi Văn Môn) dedicated to the beauty of literature.

In the third courtyard is the Thien Quang well (Thiên Quang Tỉnh) and two great halls containing *Stelae of Doctors*. In 1484, Emperor Lê Thánh Tông erected 116 Turtle Steles of carved blue stone turtles with elaborate motifs and names of those successful at the royal exams. 82 Stelae of Doctors remain. There were 82 royal exams between 1442 and 1779 (81 exams held by the Lê dynasty and one was held by the Mạc dynasty).



The turtle is a symbol of longevity and wisdom which was one of the nation's four holy creatures: The Turtle (Quy), the Dragon (Long), the Unicorn (Ly) and the Phoenix (Phượng).

The Fourth Courtyard: through the Dai Thanh gate (Đại Thành Môn) and two smaller gates: Kim Thanh gate (Kim Thanh Môn) and the Ngoc Chan gate (Ngọc Chân Môn). On each side of the ceremonial fourth courtyard stand two halls. Their original purpose was to house altars to the seventy-two most honoured disciples of Confucius and Chu Văn An (1292–1370)-a rector of the Imperial Academy. In the centre of the fourth courtyard is the House of Ceremonies (Đại Bái Đường). The next building is the Upper Sanctuary (Thượng Điện), where Confucius (Khổng Tử) and his four closest disciples Yanhui (Nhân Uyên), Zengzi (Tăng Sâm), Zisi (Tử Tư) and Mencius Mạnh Tử) are worshipped. The sanctuary also hosts altars to ten honoured philosophers. A small museum displays ink wells, pens, books and personal artefacts belonging to some of the students that studied at the temple.



The fifth courtyard: the imperial academy constructed in 1076, by the order of Emperor Ly Nhan Tong, for literate mandarins as students. In 1236 The academy was enlarged and named *Quốc Tử Viện* and later *Quốc Học Viện* and then *Thái Học Viện* included Minh Luân house, west and east classrooms, a storehouse for wooden printing blocks and two sets of three 25 room dormitories and then Khải Thánh shrine honoured the parents of Confucius. In 1946, the courtyard was destroyed by the French in 1946. In the year 2000, the fifth courtyard was reconstructed. Several buildings were constructed including the front, the rear, the left and right buildings, a bell house and a drum house. Ceremonies in memory of cultural scholars are organised from the front building as are scientific activities and cultural events. The rear building has two levels. The ground floor has a statue of Chu Văn An (a rector of the academy) and shows exhibits of the temple and the academy with a display on Confucian education in Vietnam. The upper floor is dedicated to the three great monarchs: Lý Thánh Tông (1023–1072)-the founder of the temple in 1070, Lý Nhân Tông (1066–1127)-the founder of the Imperial Academy in 1076, Lê Thánh Tông (1442–1497) who ordered the erection of the turtle stone stelae of doctor laureates in 1484.



Hoàng Thành Thăng Long (The Imperial Citadel of Thang Long)

is the cultural complex comprising the royal enclosure first built during the Lý Dynasty (1009-1225) and subsequently expanded by the Trần (1225-1400), Lê (1428-1788) and finally the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802-1945). The ruins roughly coincide with the Hanoi Citadel - the former residence of Vietnamese monarchs dating back to Đại Việt (Great Viet-the name of Vietnam for the periods of 1054 - 1400 and 1428 - 1804), when the city was known as Thăng Long.

Remains of the Imperial City were discovered on the site of the former Ba Đình Hall when the structure was torn down in 2008 to make way for a new parliament building. Various archaeological remains unearthed were brought to the National Museum to be exhibited. So far only a small fraction of Thăng Long has been excavated.



Đoan Môn, the main gate to the palatial complex of Later Lê Emperors.

Trần Quốc Pagoda and West lake

The Pagoda is the oldest Buddhist temple in Hanoi located on a small peninsula on the East side of West Lake.

It was first erected with the name “Khai Quốc” (Opening a country) on the bank of Red River during King Lý Nam Đế Dynasty (544-548), the founder of the Early Lý Dynasty (544–602)). In 15th century, during King Le Thai Tong reign, it was renamed to “An Quốc” (a peaceful country). During King Le Huy Tong dynasty (1681-1705) it was changed to the name “Trần Quốc”

(protecting the country). In 1915, due to a serious landslide ingrained into the pagoda's foundation, the whole construction was moved to Kim Ngu Island on the East of West Lake – the current location.



It is designed according to Buddhist architecture with many layers of buildings. The precinct of Tran Quoc Pagoda is highlighted by a high stupa erected in 1998 composed of 11 floors with a height of 15m; on the top stands a nine-storey lotus (Cửu đỉnh liên hoa) by gemstone. This stupa is situated symmetrically with the 50-year-old Bodhi tree gifted by former Indian President on the occasion of his visit to Hanoi in 1959: “The lotus represent Buddha while the Bodhi is a symbol of supreme knowledge”.

West Lake (Hồ Tây) is the largest lake of Hanoi (with a shore length of 17 km). A small part of West Lake is divided by Thanh Nien road (*Youth boulevard* (1957-58) in old time called *Cổ Ngư dike*) to form Trúc Bạch Lake (white bamboo).

West Lake was created from a curved part of Red River. One legend suggests that West Lake was shaped after the battle between Lạc Long Quân and a nine-tailed fox spirit (the lake was once called “Fox Corpse Swamp” (Đầm Xác Cáo). Another folk story claimed the lake “Golden Buffalo Lake” (Hồ Trâu Vàng, Hồ Kim Ngưu) because it was formed from struggle of a buffalo. In the 11th century, the lake was named “Foggy Lake” (Hồ Dâm Đàm) due to its misty condition. In 1573 its name was changed to “West Lake”.

Lạc Long Quân (Dragon Lord of Lạc)-Hùng Hiền Vương-the second Hùng king of the Hồng Bàng Dynasty of ancient Vietnam (Văn Lang) in 2793 BC. (Quân was the son and sole successor of Kinh Dương Vương-the first Hung king who ruled over Xích Quỷ IN 2879 BC).

Close to the lake **Quán Thánh Temple** (formerly known as Trấn Vũ Temple (Trấn Vũ Quan), a Taoist temple dated to the 11th century, one of the Four Sacred Temples of ancient Hanoi), **Chu Van An High School**-one of the oldest high schools in Vietnam (called Pomelo School (trường Bưởi) before 1945 established by French authorities in 1908), **Hanoi Botanical Garden** (vườn Bách Thảo (“hundreds of plants”) established by the French in 1890).

One Pillar Pagoda (chùa Một Cột)

formally *Diên Hựu tự* or *Liên Hoa Đài* is a historic Buddhist temple in Hanoi, one of Vietnam's most iconic temples. The temple was built by Emperor Lý Thái Tông (who ruled from 1028 to 1054). Lý Thái Tông dream that he met the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, who handed him a baby son while seated on a lotus flower. Lý Thái Tông then married a peasant girl that he had met and she bore him a son. The emperor constructed the wooden temple in gratitude for this in 1049, by erecting a pillar (1.25m in diameter) in the middle of a lotus pond. The temple was renovated in 1105 by Emperor Lý Nhân Tông. The temple is built of wood on a single stone pillar 1.25 m in diameter, and it is designed to resemble a lotus blossom, which is a Buddhist symbol of purity, since a lotus blossoms in a muddy pond. In 1954, the French forces destroyed the pagoda. It was rebuilt afterwards.



Close to one-pillar Pagoda is Ho Chi Minh museum and mausoleum, Presidential Palace and **Ho Chi Minh residence**.

President Ho Chi Minh lived in a wooden tiled house on stilt (of the Ethnic minority group's style), surrounded by a gardens full of fruit trees and a peaceful fishpond. The house has two floors. The ground floor was the meeting place, consisting of 12 chairs around a large table. Upstairs, there is a bookshelf used as a wall between his study room and bed room. The lowest level of the shelf is laid a small typewriter for him to type himself. His bed room is very simple with



a single wooden bed, a small blanket, a rush mat, a fan made of palm leaves and a bottle of water. The beloved President lived here from 1958 until he passed away in 2 sept. 1969.

The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country, which is composed of 54 ethnic groups.

The museum was constructed on the land of 9,500 square meters on Nguyen Van Huyen Street, 8km from the city centre. The construction started at the end of 1987 and was completed in 1997.

There is a huge collections (also in open air garden) exhibiting the cultural and historic patrimony of the nation's different ethnic groups.

The Military History Museum

Vietnam's historical and heroic struggle against mighty invaders from France and the USA. The museum presents the Vietnamese military history from the first period of founding the country to the Ho Chi Minh era.

The Army Museum was constructed at the end of 1954. It changed into Military History Museum in 2002. The well-known ancient monuments on the grounds of the museum in Hanoi Flag Tower (Cột Cờ)-a national historic cultural monument. The construction of the Tower started in 1805 and was completed in 1812, with a height of nearly 31m and a circumference of 180m.