

### Overview

The Mekong Delta is the convergence of life and industry, where the agriculture and fish farming are intensively practiced. Coming here, tourists will find multi-storey rice paddies stretching to the horizon.

Not for nothing has the delta of the Mekong River been termed the "rice bowl of the Universe". Six countries and well over fifty million people depend upon the Mekong for their very livelihood. And in no country is this dependence so profound as in Vietnam.

Flying into Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) gives as good an introduction as any to the wonders of the Mekong. From the air the landscape resembles an intricate anatomical chart, only in shades of green and brown rather than white and red. Every tributary of the Mekong River bifurcates, then trifurcates and multi-furcates into thousands of veins, arteries and capillaries. Then, linking this vast drainage network are hundreds of manmade canals, giving the countryside the appearance of an Eastern Venice...

#### **Activities**

Floating markets

Snake farms, My Tho

Long Xuyen

Cat Tien National Park

My Tho

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### Accommodation

#### ***In Ben Tre Province:***

##### **Hung Vuong Hotel**

166 Hung Vuong road, Ben Tre province, Vietnam

Tel: (84-75) 822408

##### **Ben Tre Hotel**

8/2 Tran Quoc Tuan road, Ben Tre province, Vietnam

Tel: (84-75) 825332

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***In Can Tho city:***

**Victoria Can Tho Hotel (4 stars)**

Address: Cai Khe Ward, Can Tho, Vietnam

Telephone: (84-71) 810111

Fax: (84-71) 829259

Victoria Can Tho Hotel is located in Can Tho City, the third major city in Vietnam, right in the heart of the Mekong

Delta, 170 km Southwest of Ho Chi Minh City.

A thriving and most pleasant expanding town, Can Tho is home to a busy floating market and big university, part

of which is the famous Rice Research Institute, but more importantly to the joy of all travelers, it is surrounded

by a myriad of canals, rice lands, groves and gardens.

The location and services offered have been carefully planned to allow guests to experience the opulence of the local culture, the beauty of the area and admire the diversity of the region and its people. Victoria Can Tho hotel is the Mekong Delta's first luxury hotel with an aim to provide guests....

**Golf Can Tho Hotel (4 stars)**

Address: 02 Hai Ba Trung Str - Can Tho City

Telephone: +84.4.2944911

Fax: +84.4.7281653

Located on the Ninh Kieu banks of Hau River, the Golf Can Tho Hotel is a splendid modern style residence, set in the magnificent Can Tho City. The hotel boasts 102 comfortable rooms and suites that are equipped with contemporary amenities, each with a balcony overlooking the river, swimming pool and the city. You can enjoy a drink at the lobby bar and dine at the in-house restaurant that serves Asian and Western cuisine, including buffets and a la carte specialties.

**Sai Gon Can Tho hotel (3 star)**

Address: 55 Phan Dinh Phung

Telephone: +84.4.2944911

Fax: +84.4.7281653

Being one of the finest Hotels in Vietnam, this hotel is aided with all essential amenities that would make your stay in Can Tho hassle-free. The Saigon Can Tho Hotel in Can Tho is an ideal accommodation option for the business travelers as well as the holidaymakers.

The convenient Location of Saigon Can Tho Hotel in Can Tho provides the tourists in Can Tho an easy access to the various places of interest in this charming city. The hotel is located in the heart of the city, in close proximity to the Ninh Kieu Port and the business and shopping

districts.

The exceptional Room Facilities at Saigon Can Tho Hotel in Can Tho ensure that you have a luxurious and comfortable stay in Can Tho. Accommodation at Saigon Can Tho Hotel in Can Tho comprises a number of spacious and plush rooms including Standard Rooms, Superior Rooms, and Deluxe Rooms. Each of these elegantly decorated rooms is a cocoon of comfort, tastefully appointed with all possible amenities.

**Phuong Dong hotel (3 stars)**

Address: 30/4 St - Can Tho City

Telephone: +84.4.2944911

Fax: +84.4.7281653

Boasting of superb range of facilities and services, this hotel has gained an international repute as one of the few 3 star Hotels in Vietnam to provide international standard facilities and services. Set in the heart of the city in the main business and financial districts the Location of Phuong Dong Hotel in Can Tho makes it one of the most easily accessible hotels in the city as well. You can visit the best attractions of the city easily from here which add an extra charm to your stay here.

***In Chau Doc:*****Victoria Chau Doc Hotel (4 star)**

Address: 32 Le Loi St - Chau Doc Town

Telephone: +84.4.2944911

Fax: +84.4.7281653

Victoria Chau Doc Hotel is located in Chau Doc Town, An Giang Province in the Mekong Delta, 285km southwest of Ho Chi Minh City, near the Cambodian border. Once part of Cambodia, this region is of outstanding and cultural richness. Chau Doc is home to the Cham and Kmer cultures, floating farmhouses and the Islamic Chancel Cham minority settlement.

Victoria Chau Doc Hotel, built in a colonial style, with low-rise French architecture, opened in December 1999 as

the second hotel of the Victoria Chain in the Mekong Delta. Right on the banks of the Bassac River at the Three River Crossing, Victoria Chau Doc Hotel is entirely part of the bustling life of the river. From this unique location, Victoria Chau Doc Hotel allows guests to discover life deep inside the Mekong Delta

**Ben Da Nui Sam Resort (3 star)**

Address: Chau Doc - Can Tho

Telephone: +84.4 294 4911

Fax: +84.4.728 1653

The Ben Da Nui Sam Resort, Chau Doc is sited in a peaceful area, a short drive to Sam Mountain and less than 10 minutes drive to Chau Doc Town. The Land Lady Temple is 100 metres from the resort while many famous historic sites, including Ba Chua Xu Temple, Tay An Pagoda and Tao Ngo Garden are close by. Rooms at the Ben Da Nui Sam Resort are simply designed with basic amenities.

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### Restaurants & Bars

#### *In Can Tho:*

#### **Trung Luong restaurant**

Price: less than US\$10

Directions: right on the round point of the gate of My Tho city and the road to Can Tho.

There specialty is "Sticking rice bowling ball" with chicken. Half of the fun is to see how its done.

#### **38 Restaurant**

Address: 38 Hoa Binh St., Can Tho

#### **Me Kong Restaurant**

Address: 38 Hai Ba Trung St., Can Tho

#### **Ninh Kieu Restaurant**

Address: 2 Hai Ba Trung St., Can Tho

Tel: 821171

#### **Song Que Restaurant**

Address: 118/9/53B Tran Phu St., Can Tho

Tel: 811136

### Thien Hoa Restaurant

Address: 26 Hai Ba Trung St., Can Tho

*In Chau Doc:*

### Bay Bong Restaurant

Type: Vietnamese

Address: Doc Thu Thu St.

Opening hours: 08:00 to 22:00

Serves tasty food and the staff are friendly.

Try the 'Canh chua ca loc' (Hot & Sour Fish Soup) or 'Ca kho to' (Clay Pot Braised Fish).

### Truong Van Restaurant

Type: Vietnamese

Address: Quang Trung St.

Opening hours: 07:00 to 22:00

### Vinh Long Restaurants

The best place to eat is at the covered **Food stalls** in the central market, just off 1 Thang 5 St, a couple blocks south of the river.

**Phuong Thuy**, across from Cuu Long 'B' Hotel, has a great spot on the river, but its boxy, cubicle design doesn't take advantage of the river views. Groups sometimes pour in, but food's pretty good.

If you just want a drink, **Hoa nang cafe**, net door, is an open-air, shaded place with much more atmosphere (but no food).

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## Things to do in Mekong Delta

### 1. Mekong Delta's Attractions

#### Floating market

It is also in this delta that are seen every morning, hundreds of sampans converging toward the famous floating market of Phung Hip at the crossroad of seven channels in the direction of Can Tho to Soc Tran, or toward lesser known markets such as Cain Rang and Phung Dine. Also seen are merchants with conic hats trailing their mountains of fruits, legions of ducks, chickens and pigs to the market on their small boats, or other rudimentary means of transportation (bicycles, rickshaws). It is thanks to the orchards of the delta that one finds a great number of fruits: sapodillas, ramboutans, caramboles, corosoles etc... at the markets of Saigon. It can be said that the delta feeds Saigon and a greater part of Vietnam. In the northeast of the peninsula lies the Plain of Reed which was a Viet Cong refuge yesterday and which becomes the Asian Camargue today.

### **Palm trees**

The region of the Mekong Delta is the third rice producer in the world. The orchards of the region also produce the majority of the fruits sold in Vietnam.

The tropical fruits season is rather short. In Vietnam, fruits are not picked until they are ripe. Farmers pick the fruits and sell them to wholesale dealers in the floating markets. Most of the fruits are cultivated during the South's rainy season, from June to September.

In the Mekong Delta are cultivated most of the flowers bought throughout Vietnam during the New Chinese Year's celebrations.

If you ever come to the Mekong Delta, bring a good camera. The photographic possibilities here are immense. The fields around the canal, the local people, the floating markets, the houses around the river, you will find hundreds of opportunities to take unforgettable pictures.

### **Can Tho city**

This city is the industrial center of the region. It is 120 miles south of Saigon (170 km). The city has a nice center with a big port, where big boats dock. Next to the port, there are some nice restaurants and good hotels. There is also a great floating restaurant, with live music. Can Tho is a great place to spend a relaxed evening.

Port Ninh Kieu, in Can Tho, is the center of local activity. A ferry crosses the river from this port to the local island of Xom Chai. This island is a nice visit, especially during the sun set.

### **Phoenix Island**

One of the tourist sites in the Mekong Delta is the Temple of the Coconut Monk, on Phoenix Island. On this temple lived a French monk who preached a fusion of Buddhism and Christianity. He was locally famous because he only ate coconuts for more than three years.

### **Snake farms, My Tho**

The region of My Tho is famous for its snake farms. The Dong Nam Snake Farm was originally funded by Colonel Tran Van Duoc in 1977 with research purposes. The farm has several of the local venomous snakes on display.

Snakes are very popular among Vietnamese, as a meal. The area of the Mekong Delta is one of the best places to taste this local specialty. You will find snakes cooked in different manners in restaurants in Can Tho and My Tho. The snake meat has the flavor of meat, but the texture of fish.

Snakes are also used in Vietnam to produce medicinal liquors. In some cases poisonous snakes are used. Bottles with snake liquor are sold throughout Vietnam as a souvenir.

#### **Sam Mountain**

Sam Mountain is the town of Chau Doc. 85,000 people live in this city by the Cambodian border. The Sam Mountain is another of the local tourist attractions. Several temples and pagodas can be visited on this mountain. Sam Mountain is the highest point on the Mekong Delta.

### **Long Xuyen**

Long Xuyen is the center of the commerce in the area of the Mekong Delta. 100,000 people live in this city, the capital of the An Giang province. Not far from this relaxed town are the ruins of the The Oc Eo civilization. Long Xuyen is also famous for its Christian population.

### **Cat Tien National Park**

Cat Tien National Park gathers the diversity of fauna and flora typical for ecosystem of wet tropical forest in the provinces in South East of Vietnam. The park is estimated as the reserve of natural resources in Vietnam with lots of rare, specious and endemic genes of fauna and flora, as plentiful site for scientists, domestic and foreign tourists.

There are many other strange trees in the forest: a red-wood tree having a diameter of 3.7m, a fig having a fasciculate root that runs along the stream and can shade about 20 people, a banyan tree having a hollow trunk which is large enough for 3 people. So far, in Cat Tien Park, 1,610 kinds of flora have been classified which belong to 75 species, 162 families and 724 branches, many of them listed in the Red Data Book of Vietnam.

Covering an area of 74,319ha, the Cat Tien National Park has preserved its original natural soil with a diverse ecological system and many rare and valuable species of animals listed in the Red Book of Endangered Animals.

To date, 76 mammals, 320 birds, 74 reptiles, 35 amphibians, 99 fish and 435 butterfly species have been confirmed to occur at the National Park; and there are unconfirmed records of an additional 32 mammals, 19 birds, 9 reptiles, 4 amphibians, 31 fish and four butterfly species. The park comprises of such impressive mega fauna as Javan Rhinos (only one of two populations in the world), Asian Elephants, Gaur, Sun Bears and, possibly, Banteng, and wild Water Buffalo.

Cat Tien National Park is part of the wet tropical forest complex and one of the specious natural forests remaining in Vietnam. That is why this area is significant not only in Vietnam but in the world as well

### Hon Chong

Home to the Mekong's best beach – perhaps the only worthy one – Hon Chong (30km east of Ha Tien) is a fun spot for a day of dining in sand-floor fish shacks on a couple clean brown-sand beach that curl to a limestone formations. Vietnamese love it, and weekends can get filled with revelers from Chau Doc, Rach Gia, Ha Tien and Can Tho. Some call it 'little Ha Long Bay,' which is code for 'nowhere near as good as the original,' but that doesn't mean it's not good.

### My Tho fruit market

My Tho (pronounced mee-toh) is known for its huge district of exotic fruits and offers the best reality shows this side of the Pacific. Life happens and has no time for anyone to stop; you can be part of it or you can get out of the way.

The Mekong River Delta is the richest and most fertile area in Vietnam; the river itself has its source as far north as Tibet and passes through more countries in Asia than any other river. The name signifies the river "of nine dragons;" the atmosphere is languid and the heat is tough; the mangroves rule the swamps; and the canals' dark waters have tales to tell.

My Tho is the first stop on our bus tour, and we are going to get a lesson on exotic fruit; even if you are not passionate on the subject, the mere color and shape of some of these delicacies will change your mind. It appears that the *durian* has earned its place as king among the peers; it is huge, green on the outside, and smells like Camembert cheese on the inside. Hold your

nose and take a bite. We are also getting a culture lesson about wedding protocol: the betel leaf and areca fruit, which make teeth almost black, must be presented during the ceremony. The richer the family, the more betel and areca will be bestowed. The

### ***rambutan***

is very similar to lychee and tastes like a sweet, chewy apple. I just purchased some canned *rambutan*

from a local Vietnamese market in New York, and it's not quite the same. The most attractive to me was the

### ***dragon***

fruit, because it looked like a flower about to bloom. It has interesting black seeds inside and a white flesh, so that when it is cut, the red rind gives it a really lovely frame. We then stopped near a basket that held huge, brownish, seeded, pancake-like wheels, and surprise! It's a special type of banana that is eaten as a vegetable and apparently does wonders for rheumatism and kidney stones. I love to hear about these medicinal remedies, all of which are handed down from the Chinese.

The ***nhan*** fruit is Vietnam's most profitable: farmers in the Delta have already sacrificed coconut farming for this fruit, as it is favored by China, and considering the population of 1.3 billion, well, it's mad fruit!!! The star apple or ***vu sua*** is very sweet and creamy.

You will also see

***oi*** (guava), ***x***

### ***oai***

(which is mango);

### ***dua***

(pineapple); and lots of others.

### **Van Thanh Mieu Temple (Vinh Long).**

It's half 19th-century temple devoted to Confucius, and half modern temple devoted to a local up-yours-France hero Phan Thanh Gian, who escaped capture in 1930 by drinking poison and dying. The temple is a few kilometers south of the center; go south along the Long Ho canal via 30 Thang 4 St, which later becomes Tran Phu St, to the large temple.

## **2. 24h in Mekong Delta**

Begin your tour in My Tho, an inland port and commercial center for this rich agricultural region. Known for its vast orchards and immense rice fields, you'll also find the elegant Vinh Trang Pagoda here.

Built in 1849, this Buddhist pagoda is nestled amongst native trees and beautiful gardens. Take a turn around the grounds to admire the gracefully blended Asian and European architectural styles. Peek inside to glimpse the many attractive examples of Mekong River Plains' sculpture.

Move on to Dong Tan Snake Farm. Home to over 20 different species of both venomous and non-venomous snakes, the farm was created as a research facility for the medicinal uses of reptile venom.

Hop aboard your boat and wind through the Mekong to your next stop, Con Phung Island. Enjoy a traditional Vietnamese lunch and see the process of making various handicrafts from coconut trees.

The rest of your afternoon will be spent gliding through the streams and quiet villages of Ben Tre province. Disembark once more to visit an orchard and beekeeping farm. Listen to live traditional music while you sample fresh tropical fruit, natural honey, and homemade honey wine. Watch as locals adeptly create handmade sweet coconut candy. On your way back to Saigon, stop by a bonsai garden to amble by the many plants tended there.

*Inclusions:*

- Private transportation
- English-speaking guide
- Vietnamese lunch
- Entry fees

*Available:*

Daily

*Duration:*

Approx. 9 hours

*Departure time and location:*

8 AM; from the lobby of your Ho Chi Minh City hotel

*Return time and location:*

Approx. 5 PM; to the lobby of your Ho Chi Minh City hotel

**24h in Can Tho:**

Are you ready to cruise along the small and picturesque tributaries by rowing boat to see the Cai Rang floating market? Together with Cai Be and Phung Hiep, Cai Rang Floating Market in Can Tho City is one of the three biggest in the Mekong Delta. Activities at the market are also

an occasion for you to study the cultural aspects of southerners.

Besides Cai Rang Floating Market, you can visit other places such as Can Tho Market, Ninh Kieu Quay, Binh Thuy Temple as well as private tourist gardens. In these gardens, you can walk, breathe fresh air, enjoy different kinds of fruits and countryside specialties and stay at nice guest houses in the shade of trees. Take in the beautiful scenery and the daily activities of the locals who lives along the Mekong canals and you will roam through the village to visit rice husking mill and a rice noodles making shop.

### ***24h in My Tho:***

Begin a new day by visiting Vinh Trang Pagoda. You can see its structure was built in a mixture of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Angkor (Cambodian) architectural styles with 5 buildings, 2 ornamental yards, and 178 pillars. Now, before your eyes are extensive orchards and immense rice fields. Do not hesitate to enjoy a boat ride on the Mekong River and visit an orchard on an island, with lunch en route at a local restaurant.

Let's continue our tour with a visit to Khamer temple which is recorded as the place with the most leaf prayer books in Vietnam in the Records Books, with about 150 series of prayer books on leaves.

### ***24h in Chau Doc:***

After some days cruising on the boat, it's the time for you to meet and talk with local people in Champa Village. Furthermore, catching some fish is so easy. Is it excited, isn't it? Do not leave out Sam Mountain. The 230m high mountain not only offers beautiful landscapes, but it is also where many historic remains deeply loved by the inhabitants of Nam Bo plain are located. From Sam Mountain, it is very convenient for you to Lady Xu Temple which is constructed according to the Chinese character "quoc", has 4 square roofs, roofed with blue pile-shaped tiles. For further culture experience, Thoai Ngoc Hau Temple, Tay An Pagoda... are most popular attractions.

### ***24h in Vinh Long:***

Heading out of town we travel by road to Cai Be in Vinh Long Province. On arrival we embark

on a boat for a leisurely trip around the tributaries of the mighty Mekong River. Our first stop is the vibrant floating market of Cai Be where each boat usually sells one particular items such as pumpkins, pineapples, sugar canes... In order to be known by the customers, people hang that item from the highest part of the boat. Along the way, we also visit the many fascinating local cottages industries including rice paper makers, sweet factory, bonsai nurseries...

### 3. Shopping in Mekong Delta

Shopping in Chau Doc: The market is the best starting point for any shopping expedition in Chau Doc. It offers a fantastic variety of goods, both from around Vietnam, and also from neighboring Cambodia and Thailand. Some great bargains can be had, although you may need to haggle hard to get a good deal. The market spreads from the riverfront down and along Le Cong Thanh Doc, Phu Thu, Bach Dang and Chi Lang streets. Long Xuyen's riverside marketplace is also well worth a visit, and is probably the highlight of a trip to the city.

Some of the various things which you may wish to purchase here include silk, which is fashioned into various articles of clothing and bags, as well as purchasing some of the numerous antiques or handicrafts on offer, or even perhaps some of the local embroidery.

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### Travel around Mekong Delta

#### In An Giang

##### ***Sam Mountain***

Location: Vinh Te Commune, 6km west of Chau Doc Town.

Characteristics: The 230m high mountain with beautiful landscapes and many historic remains. From Long Xuyen, you have to travel almost 60km to get to Sam Mountain which lies west of Chau Doc Town, at approximately 2km from the frontier between Vietnam and Cambodia. The 230m high mountain does not only offer beautiful landscapes, but it is also where many historic remains deeply loved by the inhabitants of Nam Bo plain are located. Ba Chua Xu Temple, Tay An Pagoda, Thoai Ngoc Hau Tomb, Tao Ngo Garden, and Bach Van Hill are among the famous sites to visit near Sam Mountain.

##### ***Ba Chua Xu temple***

Location: At the foot of Sam Mountain, Vinh Te Commune, Chau Doc Town.

Characteristics: Ba Chua Xu Temple is constructed according to the Chinese character "quoc", has 4 square roofs, roofed with blue pile-shaped tiles.

Ba Chua Xu Temple was built in 1820 on Sam Mountain. According to a legend, in the early 1800s villagers found a statue of a lady dating to the 6th century in the forest. They built a

temple in her honor, hoping that she would bring them better crops and better lives. This is why the marble statue of Ba Chua Xu, meaning "country lady," is worshipped. Ba Chua Xu Festival is organized annually at the end of the 4th lunar month; worshippers touch her statue and ask for her protection and benediction.

### ***Oc-Eo Remains Site***

**Location:** Oc-Eo Remains Site is located in the mountainous region of Sap - Ba The in Thoai Son District, An Giang Province; 30km from Long Xuyen.

**Characteristics:** It is a vast ancient vestige of the Phu Nam Kingdom, a powerful nation in the Southeast Asia about two thousand years ago. In the Middle Ages, the ancient citadel of Oc-Eo used to be a commercial center.

Oc-Eo Remains Site was rediscovered when the soil was dug out to build the Ba The Channel. The site has an area of 4,500ha still hold many mysteries to researchers and archaeologists.

Nowadays, the Oc Eo Remains Site not only receives many researchers and archeologists who come to study and investigate but also attracts many local and foreign tourists who come to visit and study about a booming era of the former An Giang.

### **In Kien Giang**

### ***Phu Quoc National Park***

Situated in the North-East of Phu Quoc Island and have the Northern and Eastern boundaries with the coastline, Phu Quoc National Park covers of 31,422 ha, accounting for 70% area of Phu Quoc Island, which is regarded as a precious thanks to the prosperity of natural beauty.

According to director Pham Quang Binh, Phu Quoc National Park is located on an island that has a mixture of continental and coastal climate, creating a rich ecosystem of primeval, secondary and indigo forests. Its indigo forests are distributed in the wetlands or the lowlands that is flooded in the rainy season and sloping hills.

### ***Phu Quoc beach***

*Pristine beaches* here are seemingly captivating to those fond of unspoiled beauties. The one listed in the "World Hidden Beaches" is "Long Bank" ("Bãi Dài"), which is most beautiful from October to March. The beach honorably ranks higher in the list to many other world famous beaches, such as Wildcat Beach in California, the USA, Pink Beach in Barbuda, or Cayo Costa State, south Florida, and so forth.

Besides, other suggested beaches to visit are *Kem Bank, Dam Bank, Sao Bank, Ong Doi Cape*, and so forth. You can come here by ship or airplane (Hochiminh City – Phu Quoc Flight). Swimming, sun bathing, boat-sailing, scuba-diving, etc. are all the exciting and relaxing seaside activities, healthful for every individual tourist. There is some nice coral to see and if you are lucky you might see a bamboo shark. After about an hour dipping yourself in the cool and clean blue sea water, imagine that

you are now served with a series of especially tasty seafood; you would feel like you were the happiest guy in the world!

In case one has interest in the local fishing life, he may pay a visit to *Ham Ninh fishing village*, where the routine daily fishing work of the locals are available at your observation.

Motorcycles are plentiful and cheap, hire one off a local and go cruising around the island. Petrol can usually be purchased around the island at various beaches served fresh in glass bottles. Also bicycle is a great way to observe the island.

### In Bac Lieu

#### ***Xiem Can Pagoda***

Location: The Xiem Can Pagoda is located 7km from the town of Bac Lieu, on the same road that leads to the Bac Lieu Bird Sanctuary.

Characteristics: This Khmer pagoda is over a century old, and was built, carved, and decorated in an original ethnic style

#### ***Quan De Pagoda***

Location: Quan De Pagoda is located on the bank of Bac Lieu River in Bac Lieu Town, Bac Lieu Province.

Characteristics: The architecture of the Quan De Pagoda deeply characterizes the Hoa people. The Hoa people in the area consider the pagoda to be a cultural symbol. Quan De Pagoda was built in 1835 by a Chau Quai salt merchant who encouraged the local people to raise funds for its construction.

It houses several precious religious artifacts; and Quan Van Truong, a Chinese military mandarin from the San Kuo period, is worshipped here.

### In Tra Vinh

#### ***Ba Dong Beach***

Ba Dong Beach is 55 km from Tra Vinh, in the area of Truong Long Hoa, in Duyen Hai district. Ba Dong Beach coast is lined with white sand for tens of kilometers. The air is clear and fresh.

During the colonialism era, the French built a resort and used it to rest and swim. This resort is also enjoyed by Vietnamese who spend weekends and vacations there.

#### ***Ang Pagoda***

Ang pagoda is one of the Khmer ancient pagoda system in Tra Vinh. The pagoda is 7km from

the centre of Tra Vinh town, located in an area of 4 ha in Tra Cu hamlet, Nguyet Hoa Commune, Chau Thanh District. The pagoda is surrounded by old trees of Ba Om pond. The architecture of pagoda is ancient and unique. It was recognized a national cultural relic by Culture Information Ministry

### **In Dong Thap**

#### ***Tram Chim National park***

Tram Chim is 40 km by road from Cao Lanh town in Dong Thap province. Within the national park, you can hire boats to reach good birding sites. From January to May each year, when sky is clear, visitors will see from the horizon many black spot coming. It is crane flock returning after months of emigrating to evade flood. This is also the season for photographing cranes in the dawn and sunset.

Tram Chim National Park is one of the best developed and most well-known sites for ecotourism in the Mekong Delta. The national park already has basic tourist facilities, and previously received many visitors. There are some small guesthouses in Tam Nong town with basic facilities. Tram Chim National Park, with natural history of collective ecology of geomorphology, hydrography and underwater creatures, is an ideal rendezvous place of tourists from all over the world.

#### ***Sa Dec flower garden***

Sa Dec Flower Garden — one of flower centers of South Vietnam — locates in Tan Qui Dong Commune, Sa Dec Town. This garden occupies 60 hectares with 600 households – 3,600 laborers specialized in growing flowers and ornamental plants.

Located by the bank of annually windy Tien River of fertility and sun, Flower village Sa Dec is a fatherland of hundreds “uncanny flowers and strange herbs”. Here tourists can see scarce and priceless bonsai of hundreds years old. There are simple trees close to life of laborers like thistle, areca, fig... but through skillful, industrious, talent hands of artisan-artists, they became priceless bonsai with beautiful and uncanny forms.

### **In Can Tho**

### ***Ninh Kieu Wharf***

Ninh Kieu Wharf is located on the bank of Hau River, a tributary of the Mekong River, close to the centre of the city. The wharf is the city's main trading centre where hundreds of boats plying the river, bringing products from the rest of the Delta region.

Close to Ninh Kieu Wharf is Can Tho Harbor, which was built according to a modern design and can accommodate ships of up to 5,000 tons. Can Tho Market, which is near Ninh Kieu Wharf, is one of the major markets in the western region of South Vietnam.

The market is attractive with its floating restaurant located on Hau River. Connoisseurs can enjoy the province's specialties while watching hundreds of boats pass by.

### ***Phung Hiep Floating Market***

From Ninh Kieu River port in the centre of Can Tho, 160 km from Ho Chi Minh City, boats bring visitors to Cai Khe Island, Con Au, Phu An Park, and Con Son.

Beneath the trees bearing *sau rieng*, areca, and oranges, one can enjoy delicious meals or lie in a hammock while listening to birds singing.

Tourist guides bring all visitors to Phung Hiep Floating Market. The immense surface of the river is divided into seven branches.

Phung Hiep Snake Market, located close to the floating market, is known worldwide. Visitors from all over the world go there to taste the snake liquor and see the dangerous snake dance.

## **In Vinh Long**

### ***Tien Chau Pagoda***

Location: Tien Chau Pagoda is situated in An Binh River Island of An Binh Commune, Long Ho District, Vinh Long Province.

Characteristic: At first it was called Di Da Tu. At the end of the 19th century, Di Da Temple was severely damaged and restored in the year of pig (1889).

This name Tien Chau Tu (Tien Chau Temple) was officially accepted then. The present Tien Chau Temple is of the same size as that of 1899. Di Da Tu is an old temple and Bai Tien (the Fairy Beach) is a scenery spot so this place of interest has attracted lots of tourists. This Tien Chau Temple was officially recognized by the Ministry of Culture and Information as a national art and architecture heritage on December 12, 1994.

## **In Ca Mau**

### ***Cape Camau National Park***

**Cape Ca Mau National Park** is originally covered by natural mangrove forest; however, the vast majority was destroyed during the Second Indochina War. Most of the aqua cultural ponds have been abandoned and now support extensive areas of re-colonizing mangrove forest. There are extensive mudflats which are also being colonized naturally by mangrove. These areas are continually growing due to accretion rates along the coastline of up to 50m per year in places.

The park has a rich fauna with 13 species of animals belonging to 9 families, including 2 species listed in the Red Book of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). They are the long-tailed monkey and *ca khu* (*Trachypithecus cristatus*). The park is also considered to be an important site for a number of migratory water birds with 74 species of birds belonging to 23 families, including 5 species listed in IUCN Red Book, namely the Chinese stork, grey-legged pelican, ibis leucocephalus, curved beak snipe and black-headed ibis

### ***Hon Khoai Island***

Hon Khoai is one of the well-known landscapes of the southernmost province of Ca Mau, about 15kilometres from the mainland. Hon Khoai is a group of islets and the biggest island is called Hon Khoai. Hon Khoai is a rock island with hills and forests including various kinds of precious wood such as Star wood. The wild natural landscapes attract tourists a great deal. Formerly, Hon Khoai was called Giang Huong, Independence Island and Poulo Obi in the French domination. However, the locals get used to calling it Hon Khoai because it looks like the shape of a giant potato. A path to the top of the island zigzags round the hillside and is shadowed by high and big trees. Jackfruit and mango trees are seen lush and many of them have become century-old trees. Many wild flowers blossom in rock cavities. Tourists can hear sounds of running water and birds, it is really a paradise.

## **In Soc Trang**

### ***Tan Long Stork Sanctuary***

Location: The sanctuary lies at Long Binh Commune, Nga Nam District, Soc Trang Province; 17km from Phu Loc Town.

Characteristics: Over the past 20 years, this sanctuary has been home to thousands of storks. It has been recognized as one of the green tourist attractions.

### ***Doi Pagoda***

Location: Doi Pagoda is located on Le Hong Phong St., 2km from downtown Soc Trang, Soc Trang Province.

Characteristic: The pagoda is famous for its beautiful architecture, especially its very large roof that houses tens of thousands of bats.

Doi Pagoda (Bat Pagoda) also called Ma Toc Pagoda, or Mahatuc Pagoda was built during the 16th century, and it has been renovated several times since. The pagoda is famous for its

beautiful architecture, especially its very large roof that houses tens of thousands of bats. They cling to tree branches all day, fly away at night to seek food, and return the following morning. The bats never eat the fruit in the garden.

### ***My Phuoc River Islet***

Location: My Phuoc Islet is located in the middle of the Hau River, in Nhon My Commune, Ke Sach District, Soc Trang Province; about half an hour by boat, 10km from Ke Sach small town.

Characteristics: My Phuoc Islet (also called Cong Dien or Bun Islet) has many tropical fruit trees. The river islet, which is in a refreshing and cool area with a beautiful river landscape, is an attractive tourism spot in Soc Trang Province.

### ***Ooc-om-bok Festival***

Time: In the evening of the 14th day and the 15th day of the tenth lunar month.

Place: In the yards of the pagodas or of the residents' houses.

Objects of worship: Moon deity.

Characteristics: Moon worshipping ceremony, floating lights on the water, boat race.

Participants: The Khmer people in the South, the Hoa and the Viet people.

## **In Tien Giang**

### ***Dong Tam Snake-Breeding Farm***

Dong Tam is the centre of snake breeding for taking venom for exportation, as well as medicinal plant cultivation and the study and treatment of snake-bites, for people in the Cuu Long River Delta.

The farm is 9 km from My Tho. There is a snake-breeding zone with dozens of species to feed or even to play with. There are also crocodiles and other species of birds and animals on hand.

### ***Cai Be Floating Market***

Location: Cai Be Floating Market is held where the Tien Giang River forms the border

between the provinces of Tien Giang, Vinh Long, and Ben Tre. It takes about one hour to reach the market from the town of Vinh Long Province.

Characteristics: Approximately 400 to 500 boats filled with fruits, vegetables, and other products are anchored along the banks of the river, from 5 am to 5 pm every day. The merchandise sold in each boat is hung on a pole in front of the boat to attract customers.

### ***Vinh Trang Pagoda***

Location: Vinh Trang Pagoda is located in a large garden in My Phong Commune, My Tho City, Tien Giang Province.

Characteristics: The architecture of the pagoda is a harmonious combination of Asian and European types of architecture, creating the splendid, but simple features of this Buddhist pagoda. Vinh Trang Pagoda is the greatest pagoda of Tien Giang Province, in an area of 2,000m<sup>2</sup> with many beautiful trees.

### ***Tu Kiet Festival***

Time: 15th to the 16th day of the eighth lunar month.

Place: Thanh Hoa Commune, Cai Lay District, Tien Giang Province.

Objects of worship: Four men: Duoc, Long, Rong, Than who become the heroes during the struggle against French colonialism.

Characteristics: Incense offering ceremony.

## **In Long An**

### ***Binh Ta Vestiges***

The vestiges are remnants of the Oc Eo-Phu Nam culture from the first to seventh centuries.

Binh Ta's architectural and archaeological vestiges including Go Xoai, Go Don and Go Nam Tuoc can be found 40km north-east of the town of Tan An in Long An Province.

Go Xoai Temple at a depth of 1.7 to 1.9m is considered a one-time celebration place of the Phu Nam people. On a collection of 26 gold objects discovered in Go Xoai, there are thin gold leaves with sentences of Buddhist sutra written in the ancient Sanskrit language.

Other valuable objects were also excavated here. There are pieces of Oc Eo pottery, metal, precious stones, sandstone and a series of other relics from primitive man discovered around the temple.

Architectural works discovered in Binh Ta's vestiges are a temple dedicating to the Siva deity of Brahmanism which appeared in India around the first century BC and was introduced to

southern Indochina at the beginning of the Christian era. Most of the works were constructed for religious purposes, but at the same time played a role as a cultural and political centre of the ancient state.

### ***Ton Thanh Pagoda***

Location: Ton Thanh Pagoda is situated in Thanh Ba Hamlet, My Loc Commune, Can Giuoc District, Long An Province.

Characteristics: This is the oldest pagoda in Long An.

Built in 1808 by northern emigrants, Ton Thanh Pagoda is the oldest pagoda in Long An. Several valuable ancient statues with its design in 19th century still are remained in the pagoda. Vietnamese poet Nguyen Dinh Chieu lived in this pagoda from 1859 to 1861.

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