

MEAL PLANNER

HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

CHECK IN



EXPERT

LINH PHAN

The Reverie Saigon has a new "A Taste of Hidden Saigon" tour for hotel guests, run by Linh Phan, the Vietnamese-Canadian operator of tour company, Hidden Saigon. It introduces the adventurous to street-food stalls, local markets and contemporary fine dining in the city. See thereveriesaigon.com

BREAKFAST

There's no shortage of noodle dishes in Saigon, from the well-known pho (beef noodle soup) to bun rieu (tomato, crab, rice noodle soup) and canh cua (thick rice noodle crab and shrimp soup). Try Hu Tieu My Tho Thanh Xuan. They've been serving up hot bowls of hutieu tom thit – shrimp, crab, pork rice noodle soup, for more than 70 years. Order it wet or dry. Either way it's delicious. Or you can try your luck and look for the street food carts crowded with people. If it's busy you know it'll be a good one. (62 Ton That Thiep, Ben Nghe Ward, District 1)

COFFEE

Wander outside of the city centre and head over to Cafe Vot Hem, a tiny hole in the wall that has been making Vietnamese coffee for more than 60 years. This spot is jammed with parked motorbikes picking up takeaway cups of strong caffeine goodness. Instead of the metal filter coffee filter system (phin) you see all around town, this coffee is made using the old-fashioned brewing method, using spoon-net filters, which look similar to a small fishing net. It is placed on top of a metal jug filled with ground coffee and then boiling water is poured into the net where the coffee then steeps. Add condensed milk and ice, pull up a red plastic stool and enjoy the street life. (220/2 Phan Dinh Phung Street, Ward 1, Phu Nhuan District)

LUNCH

If you're wandering around the Cho Lon (Chinatown) district, follow the smell of charcoal BBQ meats to Com Tam An Duong Vuong and order up a plate of com tam suon bi cha – broken rice with grilled pork chop, shredded pork and pork skin and steamed egg and meat cake. Top it up with an egg – the runnier the better. This traditional



southern dish is a staple in Vietnamese cuisine. (500-502 An Duong Vuong Street, Ward 4, District 5)

DINNER

Vietnam House is the first restaurant in Vietnam by Australian-Vietnamese celebrity chef Luke Nguyen. If you're after some stellar food in a more upscale setting this is the place to book a table. The menu here is



Clockwise from main: Ho Chi Minh City by night; banh xeo, a version of the classic Vietnamese crepe; and a Banh Mi cocktail from the Gin House.

a modern take on popular dishes – including the incorporation of premium ingredients. One must-try dish is the banh xeo, an elevated version of the classic Vietnamese crepe that uses crab meat and Iberico pork as its main filling. See vietnamhouse.com

DRINK

The Gin House, a laid-back, speakeasy-type establishment tucked away in an old building, was the first gin bar in Vietnam and has more than 150 types of gin to choose from. These include a wide selection of their own infusions made using local ingredients such as kumquat, pomelo and peppercorn. The cocktail selection is extensive and innovative, and includes drinks such as a banh mi cocktail. (28/2A Ton That Tung Street, Pham Ngu Lao Ward, District 1) 📍

Julietta Jameson