

Cultural Profile

VIETNAMESE



Introduction

The Multicultural Advisory Service offers this cultural profile as a resource and general guide only.

Please take care to avoid stereotyping a person on the basis of their language, culture, or religion. There are many variations in beliefs and practices depending on personal circumstances.



Background

The Vietnamese community in Australia are one of the most well-established migrant populations. Following the abolition of the White Australia policy in 1973, they were one of the first Asian populations allowed Australian permanent residency in large numbers.

Many Vietnamese arrived as refugees after the Vietnam War in the 1970s and 1980s. However more recently, many Vietnamese people have migrated due to better economic and educational opportunities that Australia can offer.

It is important to note that the majority of Vietnamese migrants have come from Southern Vietnam. They may hold negative opinions of the current Vietnamese Communist Party and many will have personal negative experiences of the Vietnam War.

Migration

There have been three main waves of migration to Australia. The main reason for migration to Australia came after the Vietnam war, where large numbers of Vietnamese people fled their country after Saigon fell to the Communist Government in the north in 1975.

Thousands of people fled Vietnam, generally via boat, seeking asylum in neighbouring South East Asian countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, The Philippines, Hong Kong and Cambodia. Up until 1975 there were fewer than 2,000 Vietnam-born people in Australia.

The very first Vietnamese refugees to reach Australia were the orphan infants evacuated by Operation Babylift in the weeks before the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Amid fears for their safety, more than 3000 infants were flown out of Vietnam, mainly to the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, but also to Australia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnamese_Australians



<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/vietnamese-refugees-boat-arrival>



The first adult boatload of refugees fleeing Vietnam sailed into Darwin Harbour in April 1976– this was the start of a series of arrivals over the next few years. This led to people referring to the Vietnamese people as the boat people. However, in reality the vast majority of refugees from Vietnam, arrived in Australia by plane (not boat), after selection by Australian officials in refugee camps established throughout South-East Asia.

The second wave occurred under the orderly departure program in 1983-84. This program allowed the relatives of Vietnamese Australians to leave Vietnam and migrate to Australia.

The third wave came in the late 1980s and was known as Australia's family reunion scheme. This saw over 90,000 refugees being processed, and entering Australia at this time.

After the war, many Vietnamese people experienced re-education camps which aimed to control and punish those who fought against the North. These camps were used to incarcerate members of certain classes in order to coerce them into accepting and conforming to the new social norms. Many people spent years in these camps under devastating conditions.

The Vietnamese refugees who tried to leave the country experienced pirate attacks. The pirates kidnapped, raped, murdered and stole all valuables from countless numbers of boat people. In addition, they have also had to face a number hardships of traveling by boat, some of which included being overcrowded, leaking, a lack of navigation tools, starvation, dehydration and illness.

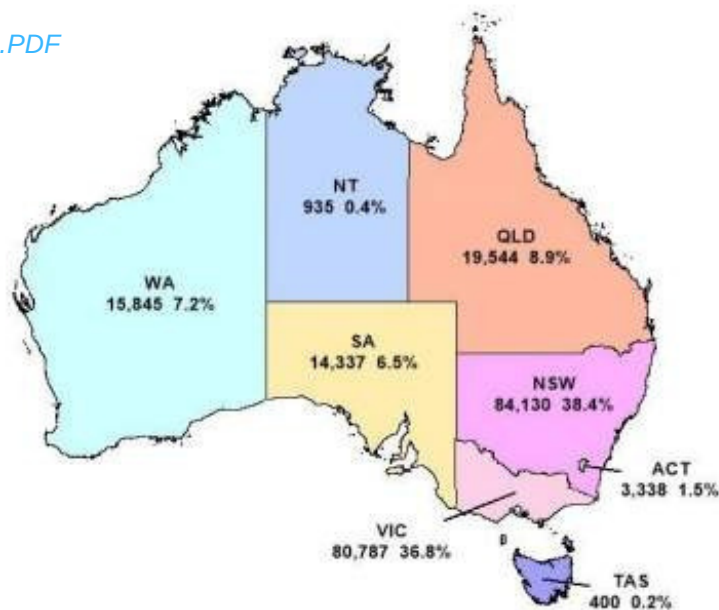


Statistics

According to the 2021 census, there were 257,997 Australian residents who declared that they were born in Vietnam. This has increased 17.6 per cent from the 2016 Census.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/mca/files/2016-cis-vietnam.PDF>

The 2016 distribution by State and Territory showed New South Wales had the largest number with 84,130 followed by Victoria (80,787), Queensland (19,544) and Western Australia (15,845)



The age distribution showed 2.9 per cent were aged 0-14 years, 8.6 per cent were 15-24 years, 37.6 per cent were 25-44 years, 40.3 per cent were 45-64 years and 10.6 per cent were 65 years and over.

Of the Vietnam-born in Australia, there were 98,072 males (44.7 per cent) and 121,285 females (55.3 per cent). The sex ratio was 81 males per 100 females.

Ancestry



In the 2016 Census, the top ancestry responses* that Vietnam-born people reported were Vietnamese (175,446), Chinese (45,117) and English (4,796). In the 2016 Census, Australians reported over 300 different ancestries. Of the total ancestry responses* 294,798 responses were towards Vietnamese ancestry.

** At the 2016 Census up to two responses per person were allowed for the Ancestry question, therefore there can be more responses than total persons.*

Communication

Language

The main languages spoken at home by Vietnam-born people in Australia were Vietnamese (181,324), Cantonese (22,478) and English (8,573).

Of the 209,446 Vietnam-born who spoke a language other than English at home, 58.0 per cent spoke English very well or well, and 41.4 per cent spoke English not well or not at all.

Greetings

- Address a person by their title and family name when greeting them for the first time.
- People should always be greeted in order of age, with the oldest among the company being the first acknowledgment.
- The Vietnamese are accustomed to shaking hands. Some Vietnamese might use two hands to shake by resting the left hand on top of the grasp with the other person's hand. Bowing the head while shaking hands indicates respect.
- Elders should be greeted respectfully. Hold both their hands while greeting. If they do not extend their hand, a respectful bow should be made instead. It is expected that the gaze of the younger person be lowered from the elder's eyes during the greeting.
- It is uncommon for Vietnamese women to shake hands with men or each other. Wait for a woman to extend her hand first when greeting her.
- It is more appropriate to verbally greet someone of the opposite sex and give a brief bow or nod.
- People usually only hug to greet their relatives or very close friends.
- Questions about someone's family are appreciated during or after introductions.



Communication

Naming

- Vietnamese names are traditionally written with the surname first, followed by their middle name, with their given name last (eg Ms Dang Thi Thanh Van – Family name: Dang; sex indicator: Thi; Given name (2) Thanh; Given name (1) Van – should be addressed as Ms Van)
- Thi is used as the female indicator and Van as the male indicator
- Most names can be used by both genders
- Vietnamese people prefer to be addressed using their title eg Dr, Mr, Mrs
- Many Vietnamese people have also adopted western names

Non- verbal communication

- For certain feelings, Vietnamese people favour non-verbal communication. People generally do not express feelings of thankfulness or apology by verbal expressions such as “thank you” or “I am sorry”, but by non-verbal through silence or a smile.
- A smile is often used in many situations such as an expression of apology, an expression of embarrassment when committing an innocent blunder, and is the appropriate response to scolding or harsh words; as it shows that one does not harbor any ill feelings towards the other person, or that one sincerely acknowledges the mistake or fault committed.
- Smiling can show agreement, embarrassment, disbelief, mild disagreement, appreciation or apology.
- It is respectful to avoid eye contact when talking to a person who is not of equal status, the same gender or older than you. However direct eye contact is expected with one’s peers.
- Pausing before giving a response indicates that someone has applied appropriate thought and consideration to the question. It reflects politeness and respect
- Vietnamese people tend to show less emotion in their face as they communicate and often hold a sombre expression. It can sometimes be misinterpreted as being unfriendly.

Manners/custom

Modesty and virtuousness are very important to the Vietnamese culture. These values underpin how Vietnamese people express manners. For example;

- A person who gives a compliment should not expect a “thank you” in return. In Vietnamese culture, a verbal expression of thanks can amount to a lack of modesty from the person who receives the compliment
- Vietnamese people will only apologise or thank a person when they truly believe the person’s actions have indebted them or deserve gratitude
- In Western culture the automatic responses of “thank you”, “excuse me” and “sorry” for minor incidents can be considered insincere by Vietnamese people. Therefore Vietnamese may not readily use these responses, this can sometimes come across as rudeness
- Age hierarchy is very important and this is reflected in how elders are treated respectfully, taken care of and how they are addressed and talked to.
- To be polite, Vietnamese people may not give you a flat refusal or negative response, even if they disagree with you. Their body language and hesitation may be good indicators of their refusal and disagreement.



Gestures

- Nodding – greeting, affirmative reply or agreement
- Shaking head – negative reply, disagreement
- Bowing – greeting or great respect
- Frowning – showing frustration, anger or worry
- Forefinger and top of thumb meet to form circle (Australian ok gesture) – poor quality
- Palm of right hand facing one, forefinger crooked and moving back and forth – this gesture is offensive to adults and threatening to children
- Crossing arms in greeting – sign of respect
- Pointing to other people while talking – means disrespect
- Beckoning a person with your index finger is reserved for animals or inferior people. Between two equal people it is a provocation
- Hands on hips or cross your arms in normal conversation – sign of rudeness



Avoiding cultural stereotypes

Whilst identifying as Vietnamese, each person has a strong sense of regional cultural identity. The region in which the person lived will impact on their preferences relating to such things as the festivals, food, drink, clothing, cultural personality, music and language dialect.

It is important to understand the dichotomy between the North and South, regarding the perceptions of historic events and the current Communist Party, can be a very sensitive subject for many Vietnamese people. While most Vietnamese in Australia are from Southern Vietnam, people's opinions may vary depending on their region of birth, age, education and personal experiences.

It is also worth noting that a person's cultural values may also change depending on how long they have been in their adopted country for. They may take on a number of new cultural values from the country that they are now living in.

Values

- The Vietnamese value system is based on four principles; allegiance to the family, yearning for a good name, love of learning and respect for others
- Family and community come before the interests of the individual
- Vietnamese people tend to be polite, guarded and non- confrontational. Disagreement may be expressed by non compliance, or not answering a question
- Modesty and privacy are important cultural values
- To the Vietnamese, a good name is better than any material possessions. To acquire a good name, one must avoid all words and actions that could damage one's dignity and honour. Heroic deeds, intellectual achievements, or moral virtue are another three ways in which to achieve a good name.



Cultural Profile VIETNAMESE



Family / family structure

Family is the most important aspect for Vietnamese people. It is much more interdependent and tight-knit than what many Western cultures are familiar with. The cohesiveness and health of the family unit is often a main imperative. The “family unit” itself is generally larger than the nucleus, it will often include aunts, uncles, grandparents and other extended relatives. Three generations normally live under the same roof and will provide support to one another. Therefore, to live alone can be quite an intimidating and unfamiliar experience for Vietnamese people.



The Vietnamese often feel a heightened sense of belonging and loyalty to their family. Individuals are expected to serve their family's interests before their own and show preferential treatment to fellow family members above friends or anyone else.

Families are recognised as having a collective face whereby the act of a single individual may impact the perception of the family name by others. In this sense, it is acknowledged that one must respect and protect the family reputation. In some cases, relatives may ostracise a family member who deeply dishonours them.

Within the household the family provider is usually the father or eldest son and traditionally they would be the one who would make the final decisions for the family. However in modern families, decisions are often made in consultation with elders and mothers.

Culturally, the mother is expected to do all the domestic duties as well as take care of the children. Husbands and sons are rarely expected to do any chores around the home. Vietnamese women generally have a dual identity as mother and wife. Mothers have a lot of authority in their households and are highly respected by their children. On the other hand, as a wife, a woman is expected to be a subservient, a doting partner to her husband.

Age is another important aspect in the family, it determines the level of respect and responsibility a person has within the family system. Firstborns are given preference and generally an age hierarchy is observed by siblings. In the south of Vietnam (particularly along the Mekong Delta), siblings address each other by the pronoun that describes their age and relationship within the family – for example, “anh hai” (older brother two) or “chị ba” (older sister three). However, they would refer to each other’s personal name when speaking in English.

The eldest child is responsible for helping the mother to raise and mind younger siblings. Traditionally the firstborn would inherit everything (including the family home); they could then distribute possessions among other siblings as they see fit.

If arguments occur within the family, older family members’ views prevail. Vietnamese children almost never reprimand or talk back to their parents without consequence.

Cultural taboos

- Wearing a white headband is reserved for funerals only
- It is important not to visit or call anyone on Lunar New Year without an invitation
- Do not give handkerchiefs, anything black, yellow flowers or chrysanthemums
- Top of the head is considered the most sacred part of the human body. Do not pass anything over someone’s head or touch someone on the top of the head
- Items should be passed, given and received with both hands



- Never make promises you cannot keep as it may lead to a loss of face
- Do not ask personal questions such as “Are you married”, “Do you have children? Why not?”, “How much money do you earn?”
- Speaking in a loud tone with excessive gestures is considered rude – especially if done by women
- Nakedness and family discussion of sexual matters are forbidden
- Everything done on Lunar New Year will determine your luck for the next 12 months so avoid people in mourning
- Feet are thought to be the dirtiest part of the body. People should sit in a way that the soles of the feet are never pointed at anyone.
- Generally, Vietnamese people are punctual and expect the same of others
- Do not talk about the war or mental health issues



Attitudes and beliefs towards aged care

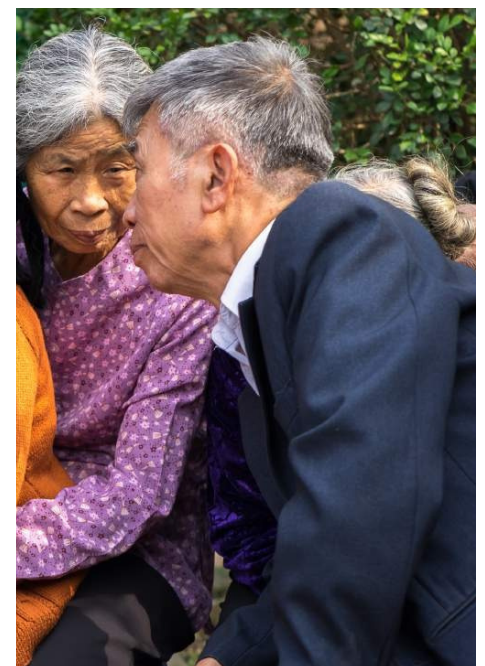
There are no retirement homes in Vietnam or sufficient government subsidies to support the elderly population. Therefore, families need to stay close-knit as parents depend on their children for aged care, usually the eldest son. This expectation remains for those Vietnamese families living in Australia.

Some Vietnamese people may feel a loss of face in their community if they accept outside help with caring for their ageing parents, or permit their parents to move to alternative accommodation. They can be regarded as lacking filial respect, or being self centred or cold hearted.

Older people who move away from living with their families might feel shame for being abandoned by their children, or guilt for being considered a “bad parent” and deserving this treatment.

Traditionally family members (especially daughters and daughter in laws) take care of older family members. This is still the expectation for many elderly Vietnamese people, so residential facilities are generally not accepted.

Most Vietnamese elderly prefer to stay with their families so separation should be the last resort. This is usually achievable provided that the older person accepts outside help and support.



Religion

Religion in Vietnam is closely related to the history and most importantly the culture of Vietnam. The earliest established religions in Vietnam were Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. These religions have been coexisting in the country for centuries and mixed well with the Vietnamese tradition of ancestor worship. This special mix explains why Vietnamese people find it hard to say exactly which religion they belong to. They usually classify themselves as non religious, despite visiting religious temples several times every year.



Christianity was initially brought into Vietnam by the Portuguese Catholic missionaries in the 16th century. This increased in numbers when the French ruled the country for six decades starting in the 1880's.

According to the 2021 census, the major religions practiced by Vietnamese born people were:

44.7%	Buddhists
29.2%	No religious beliefs
19.8%	Catholics

The religion observed by each Vietnamese person impacts on every day observances, for example:

- **Buddhists fast for 3 days each month, celebrate Buddha's birthday and some of them are vegetarians**
- **Christians will celebrate Christmas, Easter and All Saints Day**

Remember there could be a difference between nominating a particular religion to practicing that religion in one's everyday life, or whether all or only some rituals/practices within that religion are observed.

Cultural days of significance

There are a variety of special events with many of the dates varying from year to year due to many Vietnamese people following the Lunar calendar

Some of the significant days include:

Tet –

Vietnamese New Year – This is the most important day of the calendar for Vietnamese people. People spend their time feasting and visiting family and friends. Before Tet, people clean their houses, refurbish ancestral graves, settle debts and mend strained relationships.

Wandering Souls Day –

This is the second most important holiday after Tet. People worship and offer prayers in temples, homes and even offices.

Buddha's Birthday –

Celebrations take place at Buddhist temples.



Mid – Autumn Festival –

This festival has become a loving celebration of children. During the festival children parade around the neighbourhood wearing colourful masks and carrying bobbing lanterns that illuminate. The festival is celebrated by the whole family consuming moon cakes, fruit and wine

Easter –

Celebrated only by Christians. They attend church and prepare special food like eggs

Health and Wellbeing

- *day to day routines*

Vietnamese people generally like routines, they usually eat meals, bathe and do activities at certain times each day. It is quite structured and the times are generally adhered to.

- *personal hygiene*

The routines and preferences surrounding the following personal hygiene activities greatly impact on the person's sense of self pride, dignity and confidence.

Bathing:

The older Vietnamese person will usually prefer to use a basin/sink and a hand towel for a morning wash, and a shower at night.

Dress:

Vietnamese people value comfort in dressing. They prefer to wear plain dark coloured trousers and a shirt or blouse covering the neck. Older Vietnamese women (especially those who have been living in Australia for a long time) usually prefer to wear dark coloured skirts.

Bright colours are worn mainly by the young.

For formal celebrations like Tet or mass at church, Vietnamese women like to wear Ao Dai (long dress) made from silk or cotton.

Grooming:

Most women do not wear makeup and prefer to tie their hair back.



Food/diet

Food is a very important part of the Vietnamese culture. The Vietnamese not only enjoy eating but believe eating good food can bring harmony and closeness to the family and relationships. The types of food are chosen to bring luck and these vary from province to province.

In general, Vietnamese people are not as concerned about nutrition as Western people. They are more concerned with the food's texture, flavour, colour and aroma. Some common ingredients used in Vietnamese cuisine include fish sauce, soy sauce, rice, fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs and spices. Throughout all regions of Vietnam, the emphasis is always on serving fresh vegetables and herbs as side dishes along with a dipping sauce. The most common meats used in Vietnamese cuisine are pork, chicken, prawns and other types of seafood. Beef is usually used for one of the most popular dishes in Vietnam, 'pho' (noodle soup).

A typical meal for the average Vietnamese family usually consists of individual bowls of boiled rice with one or two meat and/or seafood dishes, a vegetable dish, fresh vegetable and herbs on the side and a dipping sauce.



Meals:

Breakfast – is preferably rice or noodles, and some older people enjoy a bread roll

Lunch – could consist of pork, chicken or fish with noodles or rice. (Vietnamese people generally do not eat lamb). Soup for lunch is desirable but preferably separate containers for the soup and rice

Afternoon tea – a piece of cake and a cup of herbal or green tea

Dinner – is the main meal and should be rice, a meat dish and vegetables and should not be a sandwich



Medical care

Vietnamese people are use to going to health professionals and understand the medical system (ie General Practitioners for overall health with referral to Specialists as needed for more in depth treatment). Due to language barriers, older Vietnamese people prefer Vietnamese speaking medical practitioners.

Some older Vietnamese people would prefer to go to the pharmacy and ask for medication, and can get frustrated if they need to visit the GP and ask for a prescription. For them going to the GP unless they want to see a specialist, is a waste of time. Vietnamese patients may be reluctant to speak up about their illness. They often expect quick relief from symptoms. Some are cautious about Western medicines and may take a lower dosage than prescribed. Some believe that Western medicine can be quick and effective in removing symptoms, but not a permanent cure. They prefer to rely on Chinese medicine for long term treatment.

Attitudes to illness

Vietnamese people usually display stoicism towards pain and may suffer in silence. They may not disclose their feelings about pain to staff, doctors or other people for fear of losing face and honour. Older Vietnamese people may accept and hide the pain as they may be motivated by a strong desire to go home.



Buddhism also has a great influence on the thinking and behaviour of Vietnamese people. For Buddhists, they believe in rebirth and that their present life is a reflection of actions in a previous life. Thus pain and illness are often endured rather than immediately trying to find a remedy. There is the belief that all the pain in which they suffer is caused by desire; desire for life, happiness, riches and power. If desire is suppressed, then the cause of the pain will be destroyed.

Some Vietnamese Christians believe pain may come from God, therefore they have the opportunity through prayer to pay for and atone for previous bad behaviours.

Activities

Family activities have an important role in leisure, with no definite preference for indoor or outdoor activities.

Outdoor activities could include walking, doing easy exercises like Tai Chi or gardening. Indoor activities could include listening to music, watching movies or playing chess.

Vietnamese people enjoy eating and celebrating special occasions which are usually a time for families to come together.



Social Groups:

Vietnamese Womens Association of Qld

<https://www.facebook.com/Vietnamese-Womens-Association-of-Qld-H%E1%BB%99i-Ph%E1%BB%A5-N%E1%BB%AF-Vi%E1%BB%87t-Nam-Qld-2253546601570634/>

Vietnamese Community in Australia - Queensland Chapter Inc.

2709 Ipswich Road, DARRA, QLD, 4076

Ph: 07 3375 5700

- media: music, TV, radio, newspapers, books

Television:

SBS provides Vietnamese news. Check your TV program guide or the SBS website for local viewing times

[https://www.sbs.com.au/language/vietnamese/vi?](https://www.sbs.com.au/language/vietnamese/vi?fbclid=IwAR0NIEZQzc73vzvJ4Uz3PtlaT7xrjcbqRGulfMuSg_MiaAl2dDbnc9qecsc&language=vi)

[fbclid=IwAR0NIEZQzc73vzvJ4Uz3PtlaT7xrjcbqRGulfMuSg_MiaAl2dDbnc9qecsc&language=vi](https://www.sbs.com.au/language/vietnamese/vi?fbclid=IwAR0NIEZQzc73vzvJ4Uz3PtlaT7xrjcbqRGulfMuSg_MiaAl2dDbnc9qecsc&language=vi)

Radio:

SBS radio –

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/vietnamese>

4EB

Vietnamese broadcast every Sunday from 6pm – 7pm (81.1FM)

<https://www.4eb.org.au/vietnamese/>

3zzz

Vietnamese broadcast every Thursday from 6pm – 7pm
(92.3FM)

<https://www.3zzz.com.au/shows/vietnamese/>



Movies:

Vietnamese movies are available to borrow in some video libraries or the Brisbane City Council Library located at the Inala Civic Centre, Corsair Ave, Inala

A few Vietnamese shops at the Inala Civic Centre have Vietnamese movies for sale.

YouTube and Netflix also have a selection of movies.

Newspapers and books:

Brisbane City Council Libraries at Inala, Mt Ommaney and West End have a variety of books, DVDs and CDs in Vietnamese.

A free Vietnamese newspaper (SS Tuan Bao Weekly) is available on Friday from the Inala Civic Centre. You can also buy other Vietnamese newspapers in this area.

Living in Australia

-Pensions and Social Security

Vietnam older people are not eligible for any pensions from the Vietnamese government.

Australia and Vietnam have not signed any formal agreements relating to this issue.

Vietnamese veterans may be entitled to a service pension through the Australian government.

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia can help with any enquiries about this -

<http://www.vvaa.org.au/contact.htm>

Vietnamese older people may access the age pension if they are over 66 years of age, an Australian resident for at least 10 years and are under the income and assets test limits. See Services Australia website for more details.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/age-pension>



End of Life

- Attitudes to death and dying

A person's attitude towards death and bereavement is shaped to a large extent by their cultural heritage, religious practices and family beliefs.

In Vietnamese culture, religion dictates some of the rituals in the dying and bereavement process.

In Buddhism for older people who are ill and know they are going to die, death is acceptable and not shocking for the family. If a dying person is in hospital or residential facility, they may ask for a monk to come to their bedside to chant. They may also wish for the monk to stay with them during the last few hours of their life.



In the case of death it is important to contact the family and ask them what they would like to do, before the officials come. Some people believe that within the body, the brain may die but the heart is still working. This makes the last minutes of life a very important time for the person to settle and to get ready for rebirth.

For Christians, they may ask for a priest to perform last rites and communion at the end of life.



Older Vietnamese people may prefer to be at home at the end of life with family members around them. If the older person has to die in the hospital or residential facility, they may wish that family members have the opportunity to stay with them. Generally if a person doesn't die at home, it is regarded as causing bad luck for the family.

Therefore the body should ideally be at home for one day, so the lost spirit does not bring bad luck to the family. Emotional and spiritual issues are more important than physical issues, regardless of religion.

Palliative care

The family has a central role in the Vietnamese culture. In case of terminal illness the family should be consulted to make the health care decisions to avoid worrying the ill person.

The diagnosis of a terminal illness should not be communicated to the person concerned but rather to their family. In the Vietnamese family structure, traditionally the eldest male (father or son) is responsible for the decision making, but often the person with the best English assumes this role.

The family may wish to 'protect' the person from diagnosis and prognosis of a terminal illness, thereby placing the responsibility for the decision on the entire family rather than on the individual. There is a general belief that if the person is told they have a terminal illness, they will give up hope and lose the will to live. Also, any discussion about the removal of life support may require extensive family involvement.

Rituals and funerals

Variations within the Vietnamese culture occur between regions, religious affiliations, ethnic backgrounds, etc. However, there is one common principle, that family and community involvement is extensive throughout the whole process. Funerals are a time for close and extended family and friends to come together to assist their loved ones into the afterlife.

Ancestor worship is the most common religious practice in Vietnam. It's called "Đạo Ông Bà," or "belief in grandfather and grandmother." When a Vietnamese parent dies, the children make an altar in their homes for the parent's spirit to live on. The practice is common to Buddhists, Catholics, and adherents of other religions. Respect and worship of elders are universal.

Vietnamese-Catholic funerals

- ancestor worship is common
- altars to God and the deceased are next to each other.
- mass and wake, are interwoven with Buddhist protocols to create a unique funeral experience.
- There is a mass on the 7th, 49th, and 100th day after death
- After three years, a 'completion mass' is held—symbolic of the soul's passage as an ancestor into the afterlife.
- The family bathes and washes the body. They dress the deceased in their finest clothes for the vigil.
- Family and friends take turns keeping vigil over the body throughout the night.
- Close family members hold prayer services before laying the deceased in the coffin.
- Family and friends give offerings to the deceased like incense, food, and money.
- The family lights incense daily to remember their loved one.



Depending on the family's wishes you may see some of these practices or all of them.

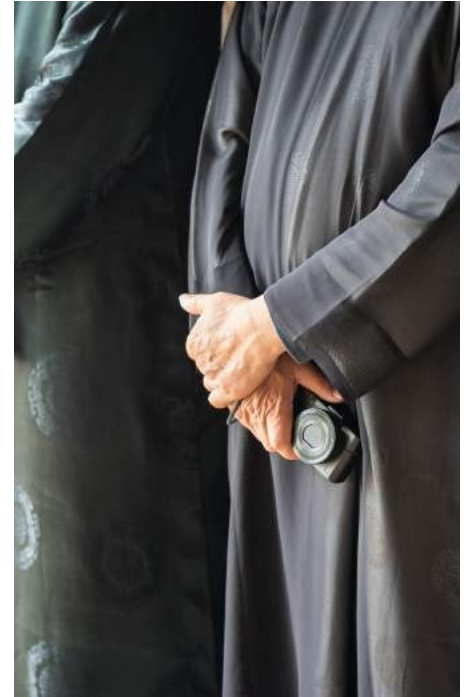
Vietnamese Buddhist funerals

Most religious Vietnamese are Buddhists. Even if the family isn't aren't practicing Buddhists you may find Buddhist traditions present.

Most Vietnamese Buddhists belong to the Mahayana school.

Here are the most common funeral rituals at a Buddhist funeral:

- The day when death takes place is incredibly important. An unlucky day means bad fortune for the family. The family will choose a 'lucky' day for their loved one's funeral, so prepare to have a flexible schedule when planning to attend.
- The funeral will last three days. The family places the body in the coffin on the first day, relatives and friends visit on the second, and on the third, they bury or cremate the body (cremation is a traditional Buddhist approach, but customs differ among families).
- You can expect to take part in lighting the funeral pyre if the family chooses cremation.
- Monks chant and pray in the days leading to the funeral and during the ceremony.
- The body is treated with the utmost care. This is so the spirit can gently move into higher states and be reborn in a better realm.
- The burial is another time for the family to grieve and say their last goodbye.
- The deceased will be buried or cremated based on the family's wishes and religious preferences.



Every year after a Vietnamese person's death, their children and grandchildren make a feast. Families share stories, food, and offerings at the altar. The family believes that the deceased's soul comes back on this day to share in a feast and meet new family members.

References

- Nguyen, A. (2019) Vietnamese death anniversaries unite young and old. Retrieved from <https://www.kalw.org/show/crosscurrents/2019-01-17/vietnamese-death-anniversaries-unite-young-and-old>
- Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Cultural Atlas. Vietnamese Culture. Retrieved from <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/vietnamese-culture/vietnamese-culture-core-concepts>
- Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs (2018) Vietnam-born Community Information Summary. Retrieved from <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/mca/files/2016-cis-vietnam.PDF>
- National Museum Australia (2021) Vietnamese refugee boat arrivals. Retrieved from <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/vietnamese-refugees-boat-arrival>
- Wikipedia (2021) Vietnamese Australians. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnamese_Australians
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 census
- Van Hoa Viet. Vietnamese Mourning Customs. Retrieved from <http://www.vanhoaviet.info/mourning.htm>
- Diversicare Vietnamese Cultural Profile 2009

Cultural Profile VIETNAMESE



CONTACTING US

Compliments or complaints

- Whether you wish to make a suggestion, comment or a complaint, you can contact the MAS Team Leader:
- Mobile: 0431 017 943
- Email: masteamleader@eccq.com.au

Cultural Profile VIETNAMESE

