



Must visit places in Da Nang

There's plenty to do in this gorgeous coastal city. Here are some of its top attractions...

Thanks to its central location, vast stretches of beach, and variety of things to do, the coastal city of Da Nang has become something of a tourism hotspot.

The city, which lies halfway between Hanoi in the North and Ho Chi Minh in the South, is the fifth-largest in Vietnam, and the third most populated. It has an international airport and is a short drive away from Hoi An, making it a great spot for international tourists to stay a few days on a tour of the country. Locals and ex-pats living in Vietnam also love this destination for its relaxed lifestyle, burgeoning food scene, and exciting nightlife. Here are just some of the top places to go when you visit Da Nang.

THE BEAUTIFUL BEACHES

The best thing about Da Nang is its long and wide beach frontage stretching for kilometers from the Sơn Trà Peninsula to Hội An. All along are white-sand beaches that are quiet for large parts of the day. At the southern end, the main beaches are Non Nuoc, Pham Van Dong, My Khe, and My Anh. Of these, My Khe is the most popular. It gets busy just before sunset when locals flock to its soft sand and clear water to swim or play sports. There are many seafood restaurants and sky bars nearby, so you can go out for a sumptuous dinner or sunset cocktail directly after.



Da Nang's long beachfront stretches from the Sơn Trà Peninsula to Hội An. Here, you'll find the popular My Khe beach.

SƠN TRÀ PENINSULA

When at any of these beaches, look left. You'll see the beautiful white Lady Buddha statue on the hill. At 67m, the Goddess of Mercy is the tallest Buddha statue in the land. To see it up close, head out to the Linh Ung Pagoda at Sơn Trà Peninsula, a nature reserve about 10km north-east of the city. The Sơn Trà (Monkey) Mountain protects the city from approaching sea storms. A hike or ride to the top will reward you with stunning views. And you may even spot the endangered *Pygathrix nemaeus* (red-shanked douc) on the way up. The verdant rainforest surrounding the mountain covers 4,000 hectares, making it a cool, lush alternative to the beach on hot days.





"The 100m Goddess of Mercy Buddha statue, at the Linh Ung pagoda at the foot of the Sơn Trà Mountain, watches over the beautiful beachy city of Da Nang."

HẢI VÂN PASS

Motorbike enthusiasts will be keen to adventure along this mountain pass, which Top Gear presenters raved about in their 2008 Vietnam Special TV show. Jeremy Clarkson said the pass is "a deserted ribbon of perfection—one of the best coast roads in the world".

The scenic 21km-long 'Ocean Cloud' pass is famous for many reasons. It's one of the longest and highest in the country. It was a strategic boundary during war times. And it separates the climates of the tropical south from the subtropical north. Another reason it's popular is that it's easily accessible from Da Nang, Huế, and Hội An. For an epic road trip, ride the pass for 165km between these three cities. Get up early to make a day of it. Or break it up over a couple of days by overnighting en route.



"Take a scenic road trip on the Hải Vân Pass, which links Da Nang, Huế and Hội An. British motor enthusiast Jeremy Clarkson raved about it in the 2008 Top Gear 'Vietnam Special'."

THE DRAGON BRIDGE

Many cities in Vietnam boast beautiful suspension bridges. But Da Nang lays claim to having the longest of these: Dragon Bridge. This six-lane, state-of-the-art bridge features an impressive dragon structure, which locals are rather proud of. Dragons are important symbols in Vietnamese culture, representing growth and the power of the nation.

At night, the dragon on this bridge is beautifully lit up with LED lights. And, come Saturday and Sunday night at 9 pm, it sprouts fire and water from its mouth in a performance attended by many onlookers. Best spots for viewing the show? Get close to the action on the bridge itself. Sit at a café on Trần Hưng Đạo Street. Or grab a seat and a snack at the Sơn Trà night market down below.



"Locals and foreigners, kids and adults enjoy the Dragon Bridge show. On weekends at 9pm, it sprouts fire and water from its mouth."

BÀ NÀ HILLS

For a family-friendly day outing, head to Bà Nà Hills. This hilltop resort in the Trường Sơn Mountains is a 40-minute drive to the west. It was first established as a resort by the French back in 1919. While most of the villas were destroyed during the war, the Debay Wine Cellar still remains. Purchase tickets to enter the hills in advance, to skip the queues. Your entry includes a round-trip on the impressive cable cars going up and down the mountain. Once there, there are lots to see and do at the themed, castle-like Sun World Amusement Park. Walk the flower gardens or French village; visit the Linh Ung temple; or play games at the amusement park. Of course, many people go to take pictures of the famed Golden Bridge. This 150-meter-long architectural marvel features two gigantic concrete hands elegantly holding a shiny gold walkway. Impressive (and Insta-worthy) indeed.





"The hilltop resort at Bà Nà Hills is a popular day trip from Da Nang. This is where you can see the 150-metre-long Golden Bridge, frequently featured on Instagram."

THE MARBLE MOUNTAINS

A shorter drive from the city, going towards Hội An, will take you to the Marble Mountains. These are a cluster of five limestone and marble mountains named after the five elements: Thuy (water); Moc (wood); Kim (metal); Hoa (fire); and Tho (earth). Take the many steps up to get to a series of sacred sites. Think atmospheric grottoes containing beautiful shrines and statues. Of course, the sea views are also spectacular. Once back on ground level, step into one of the souvenir shops below to buy a special keepsake.

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