

FILMING IN VIETNAM

The secret's out: Vietnam is open for business and offers production houses a nearly untapped smorgasbord of exotic and adventurous locations.

In recent years, the beautiful Southeast Asian country of Vietnam has finally emerged from the shadow of its war with the US. In terms of economy, its GDP is currently growing by around 6% a year while there was also a significant increase in tourists during 2015. From a film and TV production point of view, Vietnam is also opening up.

Although it has some way to go before catching up with regional alternatives such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, it has a wonderful range of locations and a hard-working, relatively inexpensive crew-base. International film, TV and commercial producers are now discovering Vietnam, though present lack of tax breaks makes it harder for the country to secure major feature film projects but the astonishing locations do go a long way in nullifying that.

PAST AND RECENT PRODUCTIONS

High-profile projects that have come to the country include M. Night Shyamalan's 2010 movie The Last Airbender and 2002 movie The Quiet American, based on Graham Greene's classic novel and Oliver Stone's Heaven & Earth. Films that deal with the French colonial period in Indochina (as it then was) seem to have been more likely to locate in Vietnam, examples being Indochine and The Lover. The latest King Kong film Kong: Skull Island just had an extensive shoot in the Halong Bay area.

India has entered Vietnam with the most expensive Malayalam film Puli Murugan, starring the superstar Mohanlal, being extensively shot recently in this idyllic paradise.

WORK PERMITS AND VISA

By law, every foreign shoot in Vietnam requires a filming permit, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Culture and Information. Cast and crew also need special visas to allow them to enter the country for filming purposes. The final schedule and itinerary, final list of all locations and local contributors and a script, if applicable is needed for the permit. As such, all prep, scout, research and bookings must be done before applying for the permits. Applications must normally be handed in 15 working days before the start of the shoot, though at times exceptions can be made. Still, to alleviate sleepless nights, it is best to apply sooner than later! Most foreign crew members must have a visa before entering the country

USP OF VIETNAM FROM SHOOTING PERSPECTIVE

- Chaotic, bustling cities that film themselves!
- Many untapped locations, including the world's biggest cave and the old Ho Chi Minh trail
- Not a carnet country!
- Inexpensive crew



WHEN TO SHOOT? AVOID THE TET

Although Vietnam has its fair share of national holidays, they usually don't pose too many problems for productions and is an all round the year shooting destination. The big exception to this is Tet (Vietnamese New Year), which renders the country busy in celebrations. Usually landing between the end of January and the end of February, it is not advisable to plan a production during that time due to unavailability of crew and difficulty in getting transportation and permissions.

TALENT

Talent is non-union and buyouts are negotiable. Most citizens are of Viet origin. Vietnam has 54 recognized ethnic groups, the Chinese being the largest minority group. All other talent looks need to be brought in from abroad.

CREWS

Vietnam has a small but good pool of local directors, directors of photography and stills photographers, with both Vietnamese and expat options available. Supporting crews are hard working and quickly gaining experience in servicing visiting

production houses. Key crew is best brought in from abroad. Vietnam's close proximity to Bangkok and Hong Kong allows easy access to those crews should you ever need to look further.

EQUIPMENT

All the standard camera, grip and lighting equipment are available locally including some aerial photography gear. More specialized equipment needs to be brought in from abroad. Vietnam is not an ATA Carnet member country.

ART DEPARTMENT

Art department beyond traditional Vietnamese looks is very basic. Set construction crews are skilled, hard working and inexpensive.

STUDIOS AND BACKLOTS

Not Available

TAX INCENTIVES

At present there are no tax incentives for foreign commercials or films shooting in Vietnam.

POST PRODUCTION

Some basic facilities exist. Bangkok is the closest production centre with

world class labs and sophisticated post facilities.

TRANSPORTATION

Road quality varies considerably. Major roads are of a good standard. Most other roads are slower going particularly during the rainy season. Several international airlines service flights to Vietnam.

But what ultimately keeps Vietnam in the mind space of all is locations, locations and locations.

Vietnam has amazing locations, many unseen to outsiders- bustling modern cities, rainforests, mountains, sandy deserts, pristine countryside and beautiful white, sandy beaches all are within driving distance of major cities. Moving around locations is very cost efficient in Vietnam due to the close proximity of locations, saving your production's much valued time and of course money. Soaring mountains, a killer coastline and radiant rice fields, Vietnam is simply stunning. Blanketed from head to toe with a patchwork of emerald-green rice paddies, timelessly tended by peasant women in conical hats, Vietnam is a country of contrasts, offering a great travel experiences.

FILM LOCATIONS

- Hanoi is arguably Asia's most charming capital city. Hanoi, meaning 'where the river bends' is a city of broad, tree-lined boulevards, elegant French villas and colonial-era buildings painted in muted hues of yellow and orange.
- Sapa is one of the most breathtaking hill stations in the world which reflects the signature of French architecture and colorful hill tribal cultures.
- The Halong Bay is a popular tourist destination and one of the most beautiful places in Vietnam because of its unusual rock formations, islands and caves. Halong Bay has twice been recognized by UNESCO as a World Natural Heritage Area for its exceptional scenic beauty and outstanding geological & geomorphic values. In 2012, the New 7 Wonders Foundation officially named Halong Bay as one of new seven natural wonders of the world.
- The Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park is now the fifth UNESCO recognised site in Viet Nam after Ha Long Bay, the imperial city of Hue, the ancient quarter of Hoi An and the My Son historical site. It is here that you have the world's longest cave, Hang Son Doong. At more than 200m high, 150m wide and 5km long, the Hang Son Doong cave in Vietnam is so big it has its own river, jungle and climate. With ceilings towering over 200 metres high in places, the cave is a humbling and belittling experience.

'Vui lòng truy c p. Chúng tôi ờng ch ' Loosely translated, it means, 'please visit, we are waiting. Indeed...



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"Son Doong"
World's largest cave !
National Geographic

KINGKONG 2 - Skull Island

Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson, John C. Reilly, Samuel L. Jackson

They're coming to us,
how about you ?

Vietnam - where the great scenes in movies came from .

Kingkong 2: Skull Island (Son Doong cave/ Ha Long bay/ Trang An/ Tam Coc Bích cave)

The Quiet American (Saigon, Hanoi, Hoi An, Ninh Binh)

Pan - Neverland (Ha Long bay/ Trang An)

Indochine (Ha Long bay/ Hue)

The Chinese Botanist's Daughters (Sapa/ Cuc Phuong/ Tam Coc/ Ba Vi)