



Hue is one of the most popular destinations for visitors to Vietnam. Straddling the Perfume River, this mysterious, somber city is a historian's dream comes true, with numerous 19th century ruins, royal tombs, an excellent museum and many [good hotels in Hue](#).

The Imperial City of Hue was the capital of Vietnam during the reign of the Nguyen dynasty, the last dynasty in Vietnam. Even today, the Vietnamese regard Hue with awe and respect. Hue also has the distinction of being one of the rainiest cities in Vietnam, receiving more than 120 inches each year.

The Citadel, a mooted, walled fort, constructed during the early 19th century, dominates Hue. Within these walls lies the forbidden Purple City, former home of the royal family. The Citadel was also the scene of brutal fighting and staggering casualties during the 1968 Tet Offensive, when the North Vietnamese held the fort for 26 days before being driven out by American forces. The damage inflicted to the architecture is still being repaired and the Citadel may never be fully restored. In somewhat better shape are the various royal tombs of the Nguyen emperors, which can easily be reached by boat, car or motorbike.

The historical museum is one of the best in the country.

The Vietnamese regard Hue as the pinnacle of Vietnamese fashion, language and cuisine. The women of Hue, wearing the traditional ao dai and non bai tho, are reputed to be the most beautiful in all of Vietnam. The Hue accent is regarded as the most distinct and pleasing to the ear. The food, including local dishes such as banh khoai, is said to be the tastiest. Some of this is surely legend rather than fact, but who am I to argue? You won't be alone when you visit Hue. At any time of the year this small city is bustling with tourists. Hue is on almost every tour itinerary and it is the northern terminus of the infamous "open tour" bus route.

Lots of tourists also means lots of hawkers, cyclo drivers and children selling chewing gum. It sometimes seems impossible to walk more than 10 feet without being accosted by someone wanting to sell you something. Smile a lot, say thank you (preferably in Vietnamese) and go about your business and you will be left alone. Hue can easily be visited as a day trip from Danang where foreign tourists can [get Vietnam visa on arrival](#) at airport, or as an overnight stop on the way to Hanoi or before returning to Saigon. The best time to visit Hue is from May to August, when it tends to be driest. Bring a raincoat anyway, as it's still likely to rain.

Three out of ten artifact groups in the central city of Hue have been listed for recognition as national treasures, including nine sacred cannons, nine urns and a great bell, said an official on Feb. 7.

According to the Nguyen dynasty (1802-1945) history, the nine cannons were cast in Hue by soldiers from February 1803 to January 1804. After being enthroned, King Gia Long ordered the confiscation of bronze weapons from the previous reign, in order to cast the cannons as eternal souvenirs.

They were named after the four seasons and five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth, according to Eastern philosophy, and were placed at The Nhon and Quang Duc gates in Hue imperial city in the early 20th century.

Outstanding symbols of the country's immortal reign and wealth, the nine urns were cast in late 1835 and completed in early 1837. The tallest urn is 2.5 metres tall and 2,600 kg in weight. The smallest is 2.31 metres high and weighs more than 1,900 kg. Considered the most valuable bronze works in Vietnam, the urns were carved with 153 patterns, using images such as mountains, rivers, moon, stars, trees, animals, weapons, vehicles and ships.

Meanwhile, the great bell of Thien Mu pagoda was engraved with dragon and phoenix patterns and became a treasure of Thuan Hoa Buddhism. The 2.5 metre-high bell weighs about 2,000 kg and was cast during the rule of Lord Nguyen Phuc Chu in 1710 for worshipping at a national pagoda.

Tomb of Gia Long, Hue, Viet Nam To visit Gia Long's tomb, tourists can go by boat about 18 km along the Perfume river and then land directly at the wharf of the tomb, or they can go about 16 km by car to Kim Ngoc wharf, take the bac from there and walk for some more kilometers. The tomb of Gia Long is in fact a group of tombs including those of the Emperor's relatives. The whole compound is spread on a joint mountain with 42 small and big mounts, amongst which Dai Thien Tho is the biggest. The Emperor's Tomb is located on a flat, big hill. In the front, Thien Tho Mount form a natural screen, and in the back seven hills raise like natural defenses. On the left, 14 peaks form the "left blue dragons" (Ta Thanh Long), and on the right, another 14 form the "right white tigers" (Huu Bach Ho).

The tomb complex is composed of three areas

- In the middle: There are the double-grave tomb of the Emperor and Queen Thua Thien Cao. Passing the Honor Court, visitors can see imposing stone statues. Seven steps of the worship-yard lead to Buu Thanh on the hill top. Inside Buu Thanh, the stone double-grave is built according to the concept of "Can Khon Hiep Duc" a symbol of happiness and loyalty.
- On the right: The main monument is Minh Thanh Temple, dedicated to the Emperor and his first Queen. Formerly, it used to contain many artefacts related to Gia Long's military life.
- On the left: The main monument is the stele pavilion. Nowadays, only the stele is left, minutely inscribed with Emperor Minh Mang's singing of the late Emperor's praises.

To move along the paths among the grass and wild flowers, under the fresh shady pines, tourists can visit other neighboring tombs in this section such as Quang Hung Tomb (the second wife of Lord Hien Vuong Nguyen Phuc Tan (1620- 1687), mother of Lord Nguyen Phuc Tran), Vinh Mau Tomb (the wife of Lord Nguyen Phuc Tran (1650-1691)); Thoai Thanh tomb (the second wife of Nguyen Phuc Luan and mother of Gia Long Emperor).The most noticeable one is the tomb of Thuan Thien Cao Queen, mother of Emperor Minh Mang. Next to it is Gia Thanh Temple, dedicated to her. Gia Long's tomb is a wonderful picture of nature and architecture, which provides a superb view of the boundless mountains and the solitary pine forest.

Source: www.dulichso.com