

The best guide to massages in Vietnam

One of the first stops in Vietnam for many tourists is the massage parlour! Getting a massage in Vietnam is a big part of tourism here and is a perfect escape from the heat and bustle outside. But what's the big deal with massages in Vietnam? Here's a run down to go along with our other [Vietnam visa](#) travel tips...

What is a Vietnamese Massage?

Massage therapy has existed in Vietnam for centuries. In the early days, massage establishments were considered shady businesses where men would go to commit adultery or to simply get away from their wives. In fact, it was considered shameful to be recognized while coming out of such an establishment. Not so much the case anymore, so feel free to enjoy massages here as much you'd like!

Vietnamese massage is influenced mostly from Chinese methods of therapy but has evolved to be unique in that it really focuses on kneading and working out the knots in the muscles. By contrast, Thai massages use a lot of muscle movement, stretching, and moving limbs. To add more confusion to the mix, a foot massage isn't necessarily just a foot massage! Most places will add in a body massage to some degree. And does reflexology really work? It depends on whom you ask! But the many foot massage parlours claim it does and can do wonders for your body simply by invigorating pressure points on your feet. Some parlours will also use hot stones strategically placed at points on your body to stimulate and warm the muscles in the area. Again, does this work? Maybe, but the point is that it feels good. So how do you know which massage parlour or spa is right for you? Here's how...

What you need to know about Massages and Massage Parlours

There are parlours with scantily clad women eyeing potential customers as they walk by. It may seem like it's not a legitimate spa but it is indeed! It's more like a men's club where men can get a proper shave, sit in the sauna or lounge in the VIP area, order food and get a massage at the same time!

Many masseuses offer their services roadside or on the beach in a public setting. These massages tend to be much cheaper than at established spas but for a basic foot massage it doesn't get better than this!

If you go to a place that specifies that it's a foot massage spa, the routine and choices are pretty simple. You will be instructed to lay down on a foot massage chair/bed and will be given shorts to change in to, although some places don't require you to change. After that, all you will have to do is simply fall into a state of complete bliss for the duration of your massage!

- At established spas, the massage menu can be quite lengthy. These spas are usually more expensive as well so it would be hard to find a spa that offers a \$5 massage. It's questionable whether a simple foot massage would be that much better at these places than at a dedicated foot massage parlour. The spas are more known for their facials, body scrubs and other spa treatments.
- A word about tipping - many of the 'men's club' type establishments will demand a hefty tip. For instance if your service was only 120,000 VND, you may have to put down more than 100,000 VND in tips. The reason is that the girls who work there earn solely on commission so a tip is almost expected. Be careful of this as it catches many tourists by surprise. At spas and foot massage parlours, many advertise a price with tip included. If it doesn't state

that anywhere, be sure to clarify! This is very important because they will either say that a tip is not necessary or give you a specific number as to how much the minimum tip should be. It is best to establish all of this before you start your massage.

- A word about safety - don't walk into a spa or massage parlour with many valuable belongings. If a place looks suspicious, it probably is! Go to the one of the other 100+ massage establishments in the city. And for our female readers, it's not uncommon to have a male masseur, especially at foot massage places, but feel free to relax and enjoy the massage as it's very doubtful that they will make you feel uncomfortable or do anything inappropriate.
- For a good massage in Ho Chi Minh City, here are a few of our recommendations:
 1. Nails & Beauty Shop – 118 Pasteur, District 1
 2. Ngoc Anh Spa – 36-38 Nguyen Cu Trinh, District 1
 3. Indochine Spa - 69 Thu Khoa Huan, District 1

Source: getvietnamvisa.com