

Hanoi



Temple of Literature

INSIDER TIP

From 1–10 Oct, **Hanoi celebrates its 1,000-year anniversary**. Fireworks, festivals, music performances and street parties will light up the town.

SHOP TALK

At **Au Delice**, grab a bottle of wine, a hunk of French cheese, some Italian cold cuts and a baguette for a lakeside picnic or a snack in your room. 19 Han Thuyen St, Hai Ba Trung, tel: +84 (0)4 3971 5753, www.au-delice-online.com

JAVA JOLT

Café Ngoc is a coffee shop serving fruit juices, shakes, beer, coffee and a range of other beverages. Ngoc, the young owner of the café, speaks English better than many people who claim it as their native tongue. 25 To Hien Thanh, Hai Ba Trung

CHEAP EATS

Le Cooperative is a huge, new rustic space from the owner of the venerable Chim Sao, serving both French and Vietnamese food in an arty atmosphere. 46 An Duong, Tay Ho, tel: +84 (0)4 3716 6401, www.hoptacxa.net

TOP TABLES

The beautiful people meet at **Halia** monthly for the business

card- and flirting-friendly Martini Night, on which delectable fusion cuisine is served. 83B Ly Thuong Kiet, Pacific Place Courtyard, Hoan Kiem, tel: +84 (0)4 3946 0121, www.halia.com.sg \$\$\$

AT YOUR LEISURE

A sea of green tranquility in the concrete jungle of the city, the **Ha Noi Botanical Gardens** or Vuon Bach Thao are one of the few places where it's possible to escape the city without leaving it. Find it west of the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. Entrances on Hoang Hoa Tham and Ngoc Ha.

LATE & LIVELY

An old-school music lover recently opened the **LP – Vinyl Café** with the aim of attracting audiophiles who insist on enjoying the traditional, warm sound of LP records with their cocktails and shisha. Calm in the afternoon, rocking at night. 9A Ngo Bao Khanh, tel: +84 0914 339 439

OVERNIGHT

The Rising Dragon Hotel in the Old Quarter boasts a youthful, polite and well-trained English-speaking staff. Drawing cards include newly decorated rooms and a family-friendly atmosphere. 61 Hang Be, Hoan Kiem, tel: +84 (0)4 3926 3494, www.risingdragonhotel.com \$\$

Ho Chi Minh City



Mausoleum

INSIDER TIP

Galleries that reproduce paintings by the likes of Van Gogh and Monet can also generally produce portraits based on photographs provided by visitors. Agree on a size and price and come back in a few days to pick up your painting.

SHOP TALK

Newly opened **Ethophen** has brought a touch of "hippie luxe" to downtown Saigon. The two-level space is all decked out in a maximalist style and stocks funky, Boho clothes and accessories ideal for fashionable neo-Bohemians. 89 Mac Thi Bui, District 1, tel: +84 (0)8 3825 8325

JAVA JOLT

The opportunity to enjoy Vietnamese-style coffee in a restored colonial-era villa helps make **AQ Coffee** the quintessential local café experience. Marvel at its patterned tiles, high ceilings and deliciously smooth brews. 32 Pham Ngoc Thach, District 3

CHEAP EATS

The city's most **central mosque** – and a one-of-a-kind dining venue – dishes up delicious curries at rock-bottom prices in its shaded courtyard out back. The fried chicken is an absolute must. 66 Dong Du, District 1

TOP TABLES

Shang Palace is the go-to spot for delectable *dim sum*. Contemporary Asian décor, efficient service and a decadent seafood menu round out this restaurant's list of attractions. 17-19 Ly Tu Trong, District 1, tel: +84 (0)8 3823 2221, www.shangpalace.com.vn \$\$\$

AT YOUR LEISURE

Learn to prepare a range of Vietnamese dishes at **Saigon Cooking Class**, which offers half-day lessons for up to eight people. Special prices in September. Hoa Tuc, 74/7 Hai Ba Trung, District 1, tel: +84 (0)8 3825 8485, www.saigoncookingclass.com

LATE & LIVELY

Ho Chi Minh City is awash with brewpubs, and **Hoa Vien** is one of the best. This European-style beerhall serves up Vietnamese eats, Czech-style beer and a raucous atmosphere. 28 Mac Dinh Chi, District 1, tel: +84 (0)8 3829 0585, www.hoavien.vn

OVERNIGHT

The **Caravelle Hotel** is steeped in history. Its central location and rooftop bar make it the best place to stay in the city. 19 Lam Son Square, District 1, tel: +84 (0)8 3823 4999, www.caravellehotel.com \$\$\$

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