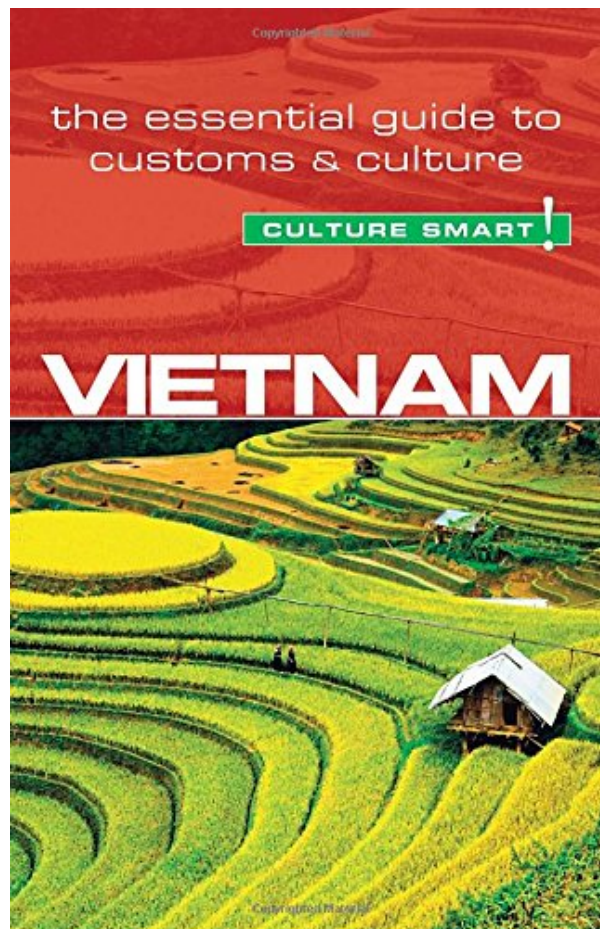
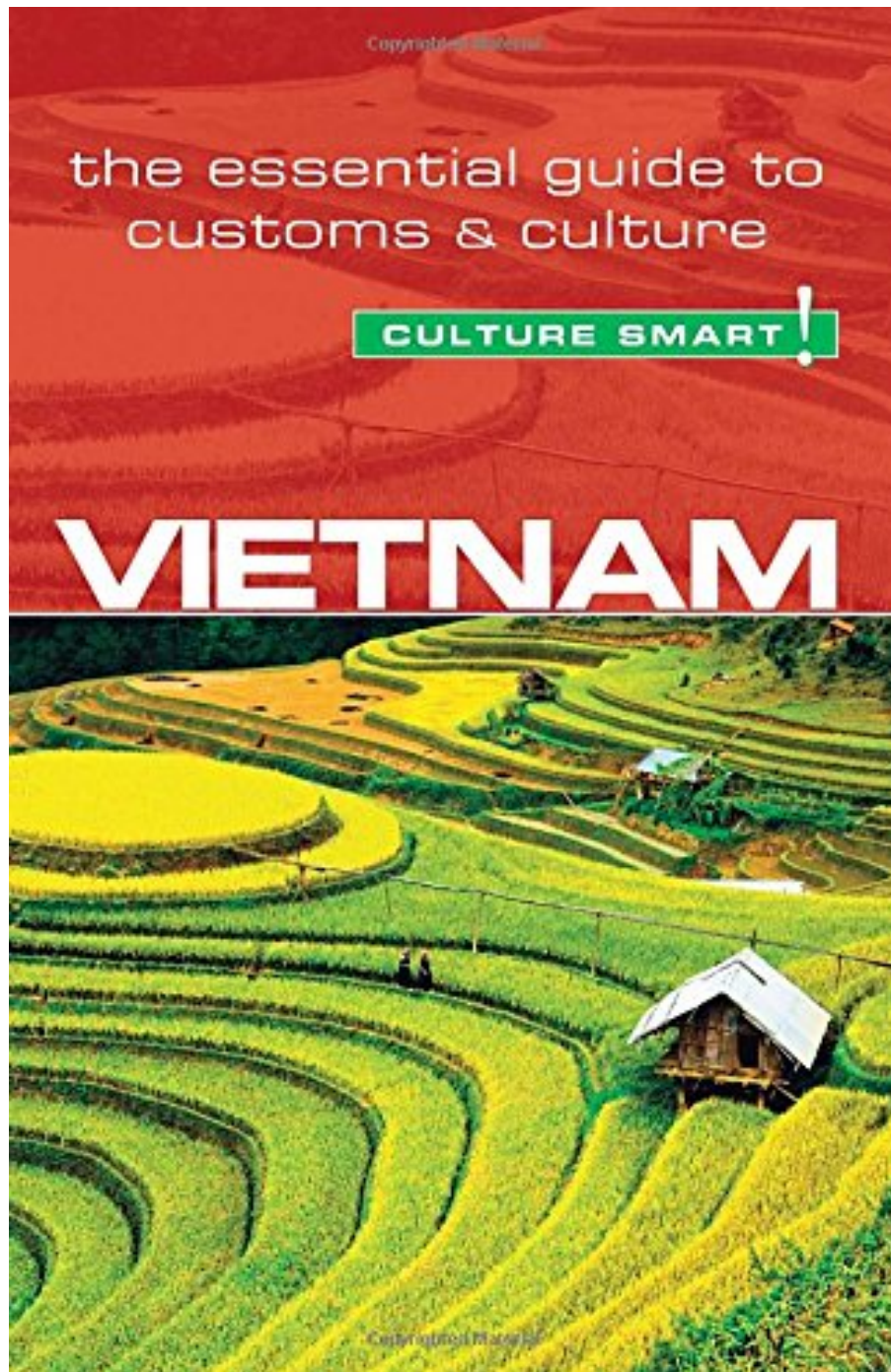


VIETNAM - CULTURE SMART!: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CUSTOMS & CULTURE BY GEOFFREY MURRAY



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Review

If you worry about being socially correct, you are likely to find Culture Smart! A genuinely useful guide

“The cultural guides offer glimpses into the psyche of a faraway world.”

About the Author

Geoffrey Murray is a journalist, author, and teacher who has worked in Asia for more than forty years. He has published fifteen books on a wide range of business and socioeconomic issues. He has closely followed developments in Vietnam ever since he served as a news agency war correspondent with the Australian army in the mid-1960s, winning the Australian government’s “Vietnam Logistic and Support Medal.” He is officially listed as a Vietnam War veteran by the Australian government.

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In the second half of the twentieth century war raged in Vietnam. It was hard to know if it would ever end, and harder still to understand fully the rights and wrongs of the various protagonists. At last, the North Vietnamese turned out to be tough, resilient, and ultimately victorious. Patience in adversity sums up the Vietnamese character. After reunification in 1975 the Vietnamese experienced many difficulties. The immediate postwar years were harsh. Some fled into exile; others underwent “rehabilitation” to make them fit to live in a Communist state. To this were added economic hardships and even starvation. Since then, however, life has been transformed. The decision to abandon the centrally planned economy in favor of a “socialist market economy” was a bold step, as was the decision to throw open the doors and invite the world to invest in the new Vietnam. Visitors today will find a confident, independent people, nursing few if any grudges about the war. They are open and friendly, with a sense of humor and irony, and frankly curious about the outside world. Kind and generally helpful toward strangers, they are industrious, shrewd, and determined to improve their lot. Culture Smart! Vietnam outlines the history, culture, traditions, sensibilities, and modern way of life of the Vietnamese. It explains certain deep-seated attitudes, describes some of the social and cultural changes now under way, and gives practical advice on what to expect and how to behave in unfamiliar situations. It aims to help you discover for yourself the warmth and vast potential of this fascinating country and its delightful people.

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Most helpful customer reviews

36 of 37 people found the following review helpful.

Vietnam: A Quick Guide to Customs & Culture

By D. D.

As the title says, the book is a quick guide to Vietnamese customs and etiquette. It does not go into great depth but covers the subjects overall pretty well. I'd recommend it. Contents include how to avoid culture shock; Vietnamese attitudes and values; historical and political background; religion, customs, and traditions; the Vietnamese at home; leisure, social, and cultural life; dos, don'ts, and taboos; body language; hospitality, food, and drink; giving and receiving gifts; business briefing; and language and communications. That's a lot to cover in 168 pages in a pocket sized book. I'd also recommend "Vietnam Today" by Mark A. Ashwill for a little more depth.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Out of Date

By Annie D

This might have been a little useful five years ago when it was first published, but it is quite out of date in 2011. I would not recommend purchasing it until, and if, it is updated. Vietnamese people have really moved forward in the last decade and are currently a bustling and very capitalistic society. Also, it is relatively superficial and provides relatively little of practical use.

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Vietnam - Land of Smiles!

By Anthony P. O'Donnell

It's a cliché in our consumer-oriented world to say that yet another new device or accessory is "must-have". Even so, I don't hesitate to say that for the intending traveller to Vietnam this little book, clearly designed to fit easily into the pocket or backpack pouch, is a must-have item.

I write with some authority because, although I've not yet been to Vietnam, I have a Vietnamese wife who in turn has Vietnamese children and numerous relatives and friends from her homeland and who now live here in Australia.

This means that my exposure to many aspects of their culture has been and is reached from the privileged position of head of our small family. I can therefore vouch for the accuracy of much of the excellent advice Mr Murray has provided in this book.

That I can't give my blessing to the whole of the contents is not a reflection on the author, or those contents, but rather is my bowing to his vastly superior knowledge of both the people and the land he describes. In other words I found, in spite of my experience, there was much for me to learn, and indeed one reading is not sufficient to take in and retain all that he has to offer.

In recent years Vietnam has been re-discovered. After decades of civil war followed by more decades of dislocation and isolation this little country is finally emerging again, and in doing so is giving the lie to the view that it is a hostile place. Far from it, visitors from around the world are being surprised by its beauty and charm.

So, if you're planning a trip to the land of these friendly and hospitable people, or even if you're merely curious about them, their ancient culture, and their long and fascinating history, I can only repeat, "Culture Smart - VIETNAM" by Geoffrey Murray is a compact, sensitive, authoritative, informative, easy-to-read, must-have.

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