

Title: **Vietnam Tourism**
Credit(s) Arthur Asa Berger
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Vietnam is the fastest growing major economy in South East Asia. So if you want to go before the country loses its charm, will this book help you?

It's not your usual travel book and its ethnographic approach is claimed to be unique as Berger tries "to understand the deeper significance of the sights and experiences of his travels". He approaches his task in four steps by analysing, imagining, interpreting and reflecting on the country.

Berger lists six reasons for travelling to Vietnam including "experiencing the beautiful" and "to satisfy curiosity" and one to which I took exception to as will the Vietnamese Tourist Authority.

The pros and cons of the country as a destination are reviewed and Berger covers basic data on Vietnam and the tourist infrastructure (or lack of it), the legacy of the Vietnam War, the country as an exotic destination and he highlights places of historic and natural interest. A chapter on the logistics of his trip gets bogged down in his particular travel problems. Later chapters on semiotic Vietnam are Berger's views on what he saw and places he visited, food and culture. At the end he reflects on his trip. The book is illustrated with poorly reproduced half tones and a section of rather garish colour pictures.

A two page bibliography gives the game away, this is a book aimed at the tourism and travel departments of colleges and universities; Berger himself is professor Emeritus of Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts at San Francisco University.

Reading this book, I was reminded of writers such as Colin Thubron who write equally reflectively but are more readable. However this is a very personal and reasonably engaging book and may give you an insight absent from more conventional guides. It's on Amazon from £7.70

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