

Vietnamese Culture & Cooking*

- Vietnamese culture has been influenced by China, India and France.
- The Vietnamese come from both farm and urban areas of Southeast Asia.
- The Vietnamese are very proud people. They show this respect to elders, superiors and strangers they meet. Greetings are a smile and a nod, not a handshake.
- Vietnamese are generally friendly and giving people but not open and out-spoken. Greetings and food are closely related. They are more likely to ask you “Have you eaten yet” instead of “How are you?”
- Refrigerators are not as common in Vietnam as in the United States. This contributes to the fact foods are purchased fresh daily or grown in gardens.
- Vietnamese cooking is similar to the Chinese except the Vietnamese use less fat/oils.
- Basic foods in Vietnamese meals are rice supplemented with vegetables, eggs and small amounts of meat and fish.
- Fruit is often served for dessert or a snack – bananas, mangos, papayas, oranges, coconuts and pineapple.
- Vietnamese are lactose intolerant so milk and cheese are not common in their diet. The lack of refrigeration probably contributes to lack of dairy products.
- The Vietnamese drink large amounts of plain green tea and black coffee.
- The Vietnamese meals consist of breakfast, lunch and dinner.
Breakfast foods - light soup “pho”, rice or rice noodles, small portions of meat or poultry, bean sprouts, greens, boiled eggs, crusty bread and tea or coffee.
Lunch and dinner foods – rice, fish or meat, vegetable dishes with **Nuoc mam** and tea or coffee. **Nuoc mam** is a fish sauce made from fermented fish.
Snacks – fruits and clear soup.
- Chopsticks and small bowls are used for eating.

*Materials adapted from: Ohio State University Fact Sheet, Family and Consumer Sciences, “Cultural Diversity: Eating in America – Vietnamese” (#HYG-5258-95).



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