

## VIETNAMESE CULTURAL TIPS

### GREETING

Vietnamese culture values respect and etiquette in daily conduct. There are many ways to greet each other in Vietnam depending on the situation, the closeness and the role hierarchy between two people; however, there are still some general rules in greeting as follows:

- Addressing a person by their title and first name when greeting. For example: Mr. (name), Ms. (name), Uncle (name), Professor (name), etc.
- Greeting in order of age. The oldest should be respectfully greeted first.
- Greeting by shaking hands, giving a slight bow, or nodding to show respect.
- Tip to make the Vietnamese delighted :)

The most general expression for “Hello” in Vietnamese when greeting is “*Xin Chào*” (seen chow)

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### GREAT RESPECT FOR THE ELDERS

Vietnamese society is built on Confucian beliefs so that experience and wisdom are highly respected. It means that the older you are, the more respect you gain. In every situation, it is best to give honor and preference to the eldest member of the group.

- At dinners, the eldest people are served first.
- At home or at work, the opinion of the elder carries more weight.
- Younger people must pay respect to the elder by the way to greet, the use of language and gestures. Greeting the elder by politely bowing head.
- Always keep in mind *respect is everything*.

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### THE ART OF SAVING FACE

The concept of face in Vietnam has long been an extremely important part of life. It reflects individual reputation, social standing, dignity and honor.

- Mind your manners, the use of words and behaviours in public to protect one's reputation.
- Avoid causing someone to lose face at all costs as it is often unforgivable.
- Tell the truth but not directly if it hurts one's feelings.
- Harmony is valued. Others' well-being should always be considered.

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### OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES

• In Vietnam, dates follow the “day-month-year” order. This format is different from the West so keep in mind to not misinterpret.

- Objects should be passed, given or received with both hands.
- The top of the head is seen as the most important part of the human body. To touch someone's head is considered rude and insensitive. Also, avoid passing things over others' heads.
- Do not rest your chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice as it symbolizes the burning of incense on the altar.

Basic phrases you may want to learn:

- *Cảm ơn* (gam un): Thank you
- *Xin Lỗi* (sin loy): Sorry / Excuse Me
- *Dạ* (yah): Yes
- *Không* (comb): No
- *Không sao* (comb saow): No problem
- *Chúc ngon miệng* (Chook ngon mieng): Bon appétit!
- *Ngon quá* (ngon what): Yummy!
- *Hẹn gặp lại* (hen gap lie): See you again