

Vietnam Community

Development

"A great experience, it allows you to bond with other U of A students as well as Vietnamese students! It is so life changing to experience another culture in a deep way and participate in service learning. It broadened the way I view the world and I feel very different, in a positive way, now that I'm back."

What's the best advice you can give future students to maximize their experience abroad?

"Leave all inhibitions at home- you are overseas to learn about yourself in the same way you learn about your subject matter. Don't be afraid to try new things and be happy that you have the opportunity to participate in such a program. You'll never forget it!"

"Be aware that everything is going to be new and different from home, so open your minds to a new culture and you will learn a lot!"

"I wish I would have read more about Vietnam before I went. I feel that I did not have a great sense of my purpose there or an understanding of the country and its ways until a few days in."

"Get to know all of your classmates. The trip itself is great, but the people are what make it awesome!"

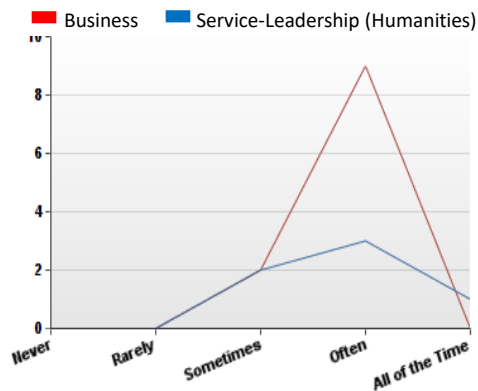
What items did you not bring that you wish you had?

- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Over-counter meds
- Snacks
- Casual-nice outfits
- Cotton clothes

What items did you pack and NOT need while abroad?

- Laptop
- Too many clothes
- Linen clothes (it's not breathable)
- Long sleeves

Was Internet widely available?



Most common ways to communicate with family and friends back home:

#1. Through WiFi-enabled smart phones apps

- Skype
- Whatsapp
- iMessage

#2. Email/ Facebook

Approximately how much did you spend out of pocket during the program (in USD)?

| Answer | Business | Service-Leadership (Humanities) |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| Food: | 34.29 | 37.73 |
| Going out/free time: | 14.29 | 25.91 |
| Other: | 2.14 | 0.00 |
| Personal travel/excursions: | 11.57 | 8.50 |
| Program related travel/excursions: | 0.00 | 30.00 |
| Souvenirs/gifts: | 43.57 | 24.55 |
| Total | 105.86 | 127.14 |

What advice do you have for students to budget and spend money wisely?

"The Night Market in Can Tho is more expensive because that's where most tourists hang out. Bargain with the sellers (It is ok to do so in Viet Nam)."

"Buy things in the rural areas, not the museums or resorts."

"Everything there is cheap in comparison to American prices, but it's easy to keep saying "oh my gosh this is so cheap let's get it!" and go over the budget. So just be mindful of how much money you are spending."

"Don't exchange all of your money at once. Exchange some - you can always go back and exchange more."

What do you wish you had known more about before you left?

“Drink so much water, bring protein bars to keep your strength up if you don't liked the food. Always go out with other people.”

“The history of Vietnam!”

“There is a lot of mosquitoes. Take bug spray. I didn't bring one. - A mattress pad for the dorm's in Can Tho because the beds there were pretty flat and tough.”

“I wish I had known more about farming and agriculture before I left for Vietnam.”

How might students best get to know the people and culture of your host country?

“Be completely open minded! Live like the culture of the community lives and try as hard as you can to become good friends with the people around you.”

“Spending time with the Vietnamese volunteers. That way you get to know them and also get to meet their friends and peers.”

“I feel that if you go to a country with a mindset of no expectations, you will leave with a deeper, less bias understanding of its culture.”

“By sharing a meal with them. The meals in Vietnam are very intimate and are a good way to get to know the people and culture.”

“The best way is interact with the Vietnamese students and not to be shy to talk with them. They want to practice English and make American friends, and it is the best way to learn their culture as well.”

Did this program deepen your interest in your academic field of study?

“It really gave me field experience in a different environment and economy. Now more than ever I am more interested in learning more about other countries and their economy.”

“It helped me further realize how great of a need there is for agriculture development in developing countries and showed me that I do have the skills and ability to help with that issue.”

“I'm a psychology major--this program sparked 2 particular areas of my field. 1) social psychology: it was interesting to observe the other students in the context of being abroad. 2) Treatment for mental healthcare is practically non-existent in Viet Nam. I'd be interested to study why that is and how to "fix" it.”

“It showed me that there is a lot more to life than just going through the daily routines. I want to travel and see the world and do what I can to help people in rural communities. I am pre-med so this showed me that I would like to go on medical mission trips in my career.”

“I can see the importance of market surveys in real life now and the problem that market researchers face.”

How did you pay for things on a daily basis?

1. Cash (exchanged from US currency)
2. Cash (withdrawn from local ATM/bank from US bank account)
3. Credit Cards/Debit Cards

What credit cards were most accepted?

