

VIETNAM: THE COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL & SUSTAINABLE FOOD GUIDE

Food is the cultural pulse of Vietnam. To truly experience the country, you must eat like a local.

This guide is built on a "Local First" philosophy: celebrating the small, family-owned stalls, street food institutions, and social enterprise restaurants where both locals and travelers dine side-by-side.

Every recommendation here is verified as currently active and operating, supporting the local economy directly or practicing sustainability in its most authentic, low-waste form.

OUR LOCAL & SUSTAINABLE SELECTION CRITERIA

We vet establishments based on the following sustainability and community-support pillars:

- Local Ownership (Economic Retention):** 100% owned by local families or operated as social cooperatives, keeping tourism revenue directly within the Vietnamese community.
- Social Inclusion & Education:** Highlighting enterprises that provide culinary and hospitality vocational training to disadvantaged youth or disabled individuals.
- Low-Waste & Traditional Dining:** Supporting local eateries that naturally minimize single-use plastics through dine-in habits (reusable bowls, chopsticks, and glassware).
- Local Sourcing (Zero Food Miles):** Prioritizing spots that buy ingredients fresh daily from neighborhood wet markets, local fishermen, or organic farms.
- Strict Wildlife Protection:** Absolute prohibition of serving endangered animals, forest game, or traditional wildlife-infused liquors.

8 ICONIC LOCAL DISHES & HOW TO EAT THEM SUSTAINABLY

To eat responsibly in Vietnam, embrace local habits and reject single-use plastic waste:

1. Phở (Noodle Soup)

The ultimate Vietnamese comfort food.



Sustainable Practice: Eat at traditional sit-down shops rather than ordering takeaway.

2. Bún Chả (Grilled Pork Noodles)

Charcoal-grilled pork patties served in warm dipping sauce with rice noodles and mountains of fresh herbs.



Sustainable Practice: Refuse plastic straws if you order nước mía (sugarcane juice) or trà đá (iced tea).

3. Bánh Mì (Vietnamese Baguette)

Crusty bread filled with paté, meats, cucumber, cilantro, and chili sauce.



Sustainable Practice: Ask the vendor to hand it to you wrapped in simple paper, without using a small plastic bag.

4. Mì Quảng (Quang-style Noodles)

Central Vietnam's rich, wide rice noodles served with pork, shrimp, quail eggs, fresh herbs, toasted rice crackers, and a splash of savory broth.

5. Cơm Tấm (Broken Rice)

Southern-style fractured rice topped with a caramelized grilled pork chop (sườn nướng), egg meatloaf (chả trứng), and scallion oil.

 **Sustainable Practice:** *The broken grains were historically considered waste but are now celebrated, reducing food waste and supporting local rice mills.*

6. Bánh Xèo (Crispy Pancakes)

Turmeric rice flour pancakes stuffed with pork, shrimp, and bean sprouts, wrapped in fresh mustard leaves and herbs.

 **Sustainable Practice:** *Eat with your hands! Wrap the pancake in the fresh leaves provided. No plastic gloves needed.*

7. Bún Riêu Cua (Crab Noodle Soup)

A tangy tomato-based freshwater crab noodle soup topped with fried tofu, herbs, and banana flower curls.

8. Cà Phê Sữa Đá (Iced Coffee with Condensed Milk)

Strong dark roast Robusta brewed slowly through a metal filter (phin) directly over ice and sweet milk.

 **Sustainable Practice:** *Sip slowly in a sit-down cafe to avoid plastic takeaway cups and straws.*

REGIONAL EATERY DIRECTORY (30 ACTIVE STALLS & RESTAURANTS)

HANOI REGION

★ Featured Social Enterprise: KOTO Villa (Tây Hồ)

Locality & Sourcing: Sources ingredients from local organic farms.

The Impact: A highly respected 2-year hospitality training program for street children and at-risk youth. Eating here directly funds their housing, health, and vocational training.

Location: Alley 28, Lane 12, Dang Tai Mai St, Hanoi.

★ Featured Local Institution: Phở Gia Truyền Bát Đàn

Locality & Sourcing: Locally owned, serving Hanoians for over 70 years.

The Impact: A legendary local spot where people queue daily. No plastic is used; food is prepared and eaten fresh on-site using traditional, reusable bowls and metal spoons. Sourced from local beef suppliers.

Location: 49 Bat Dan St, Hanoi.

Additional Recommended Local Spots in Hanoi:

Eatery & Location	What Makes It Special
3. Bún Chả Hàng Quạt <i>74 Hàng Quạt St, Hanoi</i>	A hyper-local street stall tucked deep in a narrow alley, serving legendary charcoal-grilled pork patties with sweet-savory broth. Run by a local family, popular almost exclusively with Hanoians, producing zero packaging waste.
4. Bun Cha Tuyet 34 <i>34 Hàng Than St, Hanoi</i>	A favorite street-side Bun Cha among locals. Quick, zero-waste dine-in, family-run.
5. Phở Thìn Bờ Hồ <i>19 Hàng Voi St, Hanoi</i>	Relocated from its legendary 70-year lakeside alley, the descendants of founder Mr. Bui Chi Thin preserve the exact traditional clear-broth beef Pho recipe that has defined Hanoi's taste since 1955.
6. Cha Ca La Vong <i>14 Cha Ca St, Hanoi</i>	Traditional fish eatery popular with local families. Serves fresh local snakehead fish with dill and scallions.
7. Banh Cuon Gia Truyền Thanh Van <i>14 Hàng Gà St, Hanoi</i>	Decades-old family stall steaming rice sheets by hand. Fresh local ingredients, zero plastic wrapping.
8. Bun Thang Ba Duc <i>48 Cau Go St, Hanoi</i>	Tucked in a tiny alley, serving traditional shredded chicken and egg noodle soup to locals. Very low waste.
9. Bun Rieu Cua Hàng Bạc <i>11 Hàng Bạc St, Hanoi</i>	A tiny local counter serving rich crab noodle soup. Fresh ingredients sourced from early morning wet markets.
10. Cà Phe Lam <i>60 Nguyễn Huệ Huan St, Hanoi</i>	One of Hanoi's oldest traditional coffee houses. Preserves historical art and Robusta coffee culture.

CENTRAL VIETNAM: DA NANG & HOI AN

★ Featured Green Michelin Star: Nén Danang

Locality & Sourcing: Vietnam's first and only MICHELIN Green Star restaurant.

The Impact: Celebrates sustainable gastronomy by using 99% hyper-local ingredients sourced directly from their own organic farm in Da Nang and local sustainable growers.

Location: 16 My Da Tay 2 St, Da Nang

★ Featured Social Enterprise: Noodle House by STREETS (Hội An)

Locality & Sourcing: Uses locally sourced organic ingredients and runs a culinary training school.

The Impact: STREETS International provides a comprehensive 14-month professional culinary and hospitality program for marginalized and vulnerable youth, ensuring 100% employment post-graduation.

Location: 512 Hai Ba Trung St, Hội An – Da Nang

Additional Recommended Local Spots in Central Vietnam (Da Nang, Hoi An, Hue):

Eatery & Location	What Makes It Special
3. Reaching Out Teahouse <i>131 Tran Phu St, Da Nang</i>	Silent teahouse run entirely by deaf and hearing-impaired local youth, serving local organic teas.
4. The Field Restaurant <i>Tong Van Suong St, Da Nang</i>	Zero-waste restaurant surrounded by paddies, composting 100% of waste and using graywater.
5. Banh Mi Phuong <i>2B Phan Chu Trinh St, Da Nang</i>	Legendary family-owned bakery. Highly active, supporting local vegetable, herb, and meat producers.
6. Com Ga Ba Bui <i>22 Phan Chu Trinh St, Da Nang</i>	Traditional chicken rice shop run by the same local family since the 1950s. Sourced from local free-range farms.
7. Quan Be Man <i>Vo Nguyen Giap St, Da Nang</i>	Massive open-air seafood institution right on the beach, buying fresh catch directly from local Da Nang fishermen.
8. Bánh Bột Lọc Ô Lê <i>Kiệt 104/17/9 Kim Long St, Hue</i>	Tucked deep in a local residential garden, this legendary family-run home serves authentic steamed Hue cakes (bèo, nậm, lọc) wrapped in banana leaves. Fully local, zero-waste.
9. Cao Lầu Thanh <i>26 Thai Phien St, Da Nang</i>	A simple, open-front local shop serving the best Cao Lau noodles in town. Run by a local family, using water from the ancient Ba Le well, highly loved by locals.
10. Cơm Hến Hoa Đông <i>64 Kiệt 7 Ung Binh St, Hue</i>	Tucked on Hen Island (Clam Island), this rustic, open-air local eatery serves traditional clam rice (Cơm Hến) to locals, using fresh clams harvested directly from the Perfume River.

HO CHI MINH CITY / SAIGON

★ Featured Social Enterprise: Noir. Dining in the Dark

Locality & Sourcing: Sourced from local organic farms; supports visually impaired workers.

The Impact: Employs and trains visually impaired individuals as hosts and servers, promoting social integration and providing stable, high-paying jobs.

Location: 178/180D Hai Ba Trung St, Ho Chi Minh City

★ Featured Local Institution: Com Tam Ba Ghien

Locality & Sourcing: Family-owned, legendary broken rice shop serving thousands of Saigonese daily.

The Impact: Supports local pork and rice agricultural chains. Uses traditional cooking methods and minimizes waste through high volume dine-in.

Location: 84 Dang Van Ngu St, Ho Chi Minh City

Additional Recommended Local Spots in HCMC:

Eatery & Location	What Makes It Special
3. Hum Vegetarian <i>32 Vo Van Tan St, Ho Chi Minh City</i>	Globally recognized green restaurant, sourcing organic vegetables from small Mekong Delta farmers. Zero-plastic.

Eatery & Location	What Makes It Special
4. Pho Le 370 Nguyen Trai St, Ho Chi Minh City	The ultimate Southern-style Pho institution, family-owned since 1970, highly popular with locals.
5. Banh Xeo Dinh Cong Trang 46A Dinh Cong Trang St, Ho Chi Minh City	Legendary street-side family business famous for crispy Southern crepes packed with local herbs.
6. Hu Tieu Nam Vang Nhan Quan 122D Cach Mang Thang 8 St, Ho Chi Minh City	Locally loved Southern noodle soup spot, open 24/7, employing local staff with fair wages.
7. Cơm Tấm Hồng 259 Calmette St, Ho Chi Minh City	A beloved local broken rice shop, family-run, serving high-volume local workers with zero-waste dine-in meals.
8. Quan Bui 19 Ngo Van Nam St, Ho Chi Minh City	Serving rustic home-cooked Vietnamese meals in clay pots. Sourced organic, no MSG, zero-plastic policy.
9. Oc Dao 212B/C12 Nguyen Trai St, Ho Chi Minh City	Tucked in a local alleyway, serving fresh shellfish and snails sourced daily from Mekong Delta coastal markets.
10. Phở Bình 7 Ly Chinh Thang St, Ho Chi Minh City	A historic Pho shop that served as the secret headquarters of the F100 Viet Cong cell during the 1968 Tet Offensive. You can eat delicious northern-style Pho in reusable bowls downstairs, and visit the historic command room upstairs, preserved by the same family.