

Exploring Vietnam; a quick getaway to Can Tho city

Ngoc - Phan Nguyen^{1*}, Duong Dat², Tam - Truong Hoang³

ABSTRACT

Can Tho city is the central city of nine dragon river delta, Mekong river. International tourist may reach Can Tho city faster from Ho Chi Minh City International Airport. From the airport, the visitor may take a car or van. There are some unique places that worth to visit by the traveler. They are The Ong Pagoda and Ninh Kieu Quay. The Ong Pagoda is the oldest pagoda in Can Tho city while Ninh Kieu Quay, a port and cultural tourist destination of Can Tho city, was

established in the 19th century. Settled in the delta of the Mekong river, makes the town becomes a place where traditional fuse in harmony with the growth of city hustle bustle. In the area, there are some beautiful landmarks with high historical value that worth to visit, as well as new gastronomy experiences in tasting Vietnamese-style cuisines.

Keyword: Can Tho city, The Ong Pagoda, Ninh Kieu Quay

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BACKGROUND

If your next plan for the upcoming holiday is enjoying good food, taking a quick snap on unique landmarks, as well as the breath-taking beach, then Vietnam must be the first country on your list. Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia, which borders by land with Cambodia, Laos, and China. If you by any chance also live in the Southeast Asia region, you may directly start your adventure in this country without having to bother with Visa permit.

But, where should we start our journey?

Keep your worry inside your pocket! Take your passport and backpack, let start our trip to the southern part of the country, Can Tho city.

Can Tho city name derived from *cầm the giang*, means river of poems. Some people also refer it as *Tay Do* which means the western capital. It is the central city of nine dragon river delta, Mekong river. International tourist may reach Can Tho city faster from Ho Chi Minh City International Airport. From the airport, the visitor may take a car or van, then follow the map straight to the busiest city in the Mekong Delta.¹ There are some unique places that worth to visit by the traveler. They are The Ong Pagoda and Ninh Kieu Quay.

THE ONG PAGODA

After reaching the city, the very first place you may find interesting in the area is The Ong Pagoda.

The Ong Pagoda is the oldest pagoda in Can Tho city. Here, the community pray to Guan Gong or



Figure 1 The Ong Pagoda²

Kuan Kung, a prominent figure in three kingdoms period which represents cleverness, loyalty, reason, justice, intelligence, and honor. There are also other temples in the site: one for the Goddess of Fortune on the right and the General Ma Tien on the left. The folk prays in this temple for Guan Gong on the 26th of the 6th Lunar month, on the 23rd of the 3rd Lunar month for Holy Mother and a thanksgiving ceremony at the end of the year. They will pray for peace and safety, also serve offerings consists of incense, flowers as well as fried pork.

The temple was built in 1894, on a land area of over 500m². It is decorated with porcelain with good Chinese legends relief, classic references on the roof with two sides of gates. Indeed, Chinese architectural style influenced the grand design of this monument. In the past, Ong Pagoda used to be a central hall and act as government building of

¹Master's Student of Healthcare Administration
Taipei Medical University
Taipei, Taiwan

²Freelance Civil Engineer and Photographer, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

³Postgraduate student in Intensive Care Unit, the University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*pnnngocctump@gmail.com

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Figure 2 The Ong Pagoda entrance³

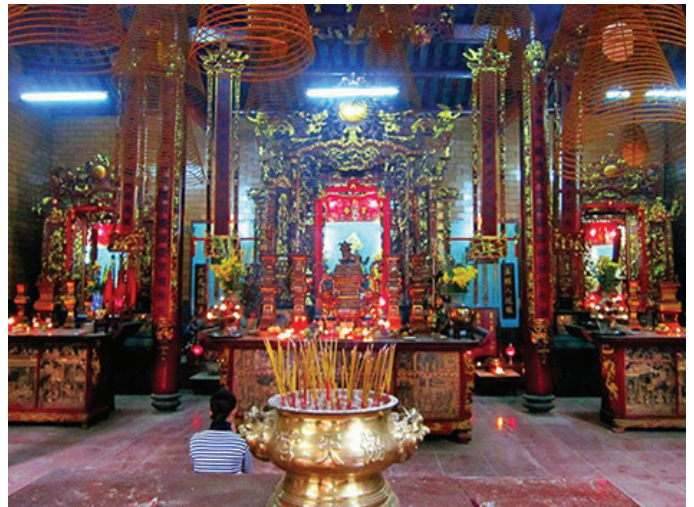


Figure 3 Central chamber of Ong Pagoda²

Chinese merchants in the 20th century. Another fact is every ten years; the community holds the lantern auction in the site. It is a rare event that always attracts tourist to visit.⁴

From The Ong Pagoda, it is wise to let yourself get lost with the city hustle bustle. There are some worth to visit cafes nearby such as Cafe Ut Hieu and Cafe Am Thanh Xua. These places offer vintage ambiance with tons of Instagram-worthy spots, where you want to spend your afternoon break with friends if you travel in a group, or try to mingle and find new friends if you go alone. And of course, the food is tasty with reasonable price.

However, if you are into something more traditional, you may want to take a bite on some local foods such as a warm bowl of *Pho*, rice noodles with seasoned beef broth, *Nem nuong*, a famous Vietnamese rolls or finger-licking good sandwich called *Banh mi*⁷ before your next visit to other landmarks.

Since Can Tho city is a famous place for its floating market, thus, our next stop is Ninh Kieu Quay.



Figure 4 Cafe Ut Hieu⁵



Figure 5 Cafe Am Thanh Xua⁶



Figure 6 Ninh Kieu Quay Market⁹



Figure 7 Ninh Kieu Quay Market⁹



Figure 8 The place reaches its peak time in the evening, where visitors spend their time sightseeing, or just strolling to admire the park's lighting system¹⁰

WHAT IS NINH KIEU QUAY?

Ninh Kieu Quay, a port and cultural tourist destination of Can Tho city, was established in the 19th century. It is a perfect getaway spot to overlook at Hau River with its captivating scenery. The folk used to call the area *Hang Duong Quay* since there were abundant poplar trees decorated its landscape. In 1957, the Government changed its name from Hang Duong Quay to Ninh Kieu Quay. Some people also referred to the area as *Le Loi Quay* because the road along the river was previously known as the Le Loi road.⁸

The tourist can find the spot just next to Hai Ba Trung road, Tan An ward, Ninh Kieu district, Can Tho city. The port is on the right bank of the Hau river, between the Hau river and Can Tho river. Today, Ninh Kieu Quay has become a tourist destination that attracts many visitors to visit every year.

On the day, hundreds of boats of trader flock the floating market to sell their goods to the customer. You may find a bronze statue of President Ho Chi Minh on a high platform in the middle of the site. The place reaches its peak time in the evening, where visitors spend their time sightseeing, or just strolling to admire the park's lighting system. Craving for street food? just visit Ninh Kieu Night Market which is only a few steps nearby. There you may enjoy various street culinary and other shops with interesting stuff to grab. The management of Ninh Kieu Quay heavily invested in decorating the site thus it is suitable to accommodate as an international standard leisure spot.⁸

CONCLUSION

Can Tho city in the southern part of Vietnam offer memorable experiences for you, who wish to spend a quick getaway from your routine. You may reach

Can Tho city from Ho Chi Minh city by the land trip. Settled in the delta of the Mekong river, makes the town becomes a place where traditional fuses in harmony with the growth of city hustle bustle. In the area, there are some beautiful landmarks with high historical value like The Ong Pagoda and Ninh Kieu Quay that worth to visit, as well as new gastronomical experiences in tasting Vietnamese-style cuisines.

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