



## Binh Thuan Province

### Including Phan Thiet City & Mui Ne Beach

Welcome to Binh Thuan Province, an area like nowhere else in Vietnam. Visitors often pass through Binh Thuan on Highway 1, as they travel between Ho Chi Minh City and Nha Trang, stopping along the way in the beach resort hotspot of Mui Ne. Mui Ne is known for its lazy groves of palm trees lining long stretches of quiet beachfront. A reliable coastal breeze and equally reliable sunny weather have also made Mui Ne the water sports capitol of Vietnam.

There's more to Binh Thuan than pleasant beaches however. The province contains South East Asia's only desert region, with vast Saharan dunes, cactus and boulder-strewn mountains. Binh Thuan receives the lowest rainfall in all of Vietnam. Still, the northern mountains of Binh Thuan support dense tropical rainforests with diverse ecosystems. The local cultures are no less varied, with numerous minorities living in the mountains and desert plains. The ancient Champa kingdom made its southernmost outpost with towers that still overlook Phan Thiet city, the provincial capital. The descendants of this matriarchal culture with its mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and unique indigenous beliefs still live in villages along the coast. Binh Thuan has been prominent in modern and French colonial history, with several important military outposts located around Phan Thiet. Ho Chi Minh himself made Phan Thiet his home for a brief time, while he taught at a local school before his days as a revolutionary leader.

For those who are tired of the hectic tourist track through South East Asia, it's common to come to the area planning to spend just a few days, and end up remaining for several weeks. If you are looking for a chance to just relax and forget about the checklists of tourist sites, you are certain to enjoy your time here, no matter how long you stay.

top: Khe Ga Lighthouse. right: Phan Thiet Water Tower.

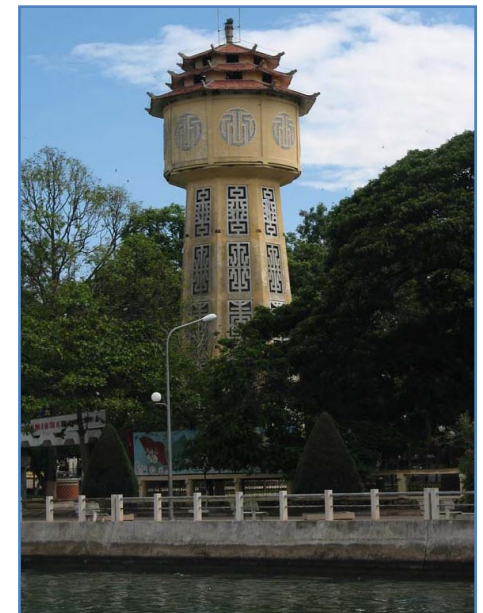
## Phan Thiet City

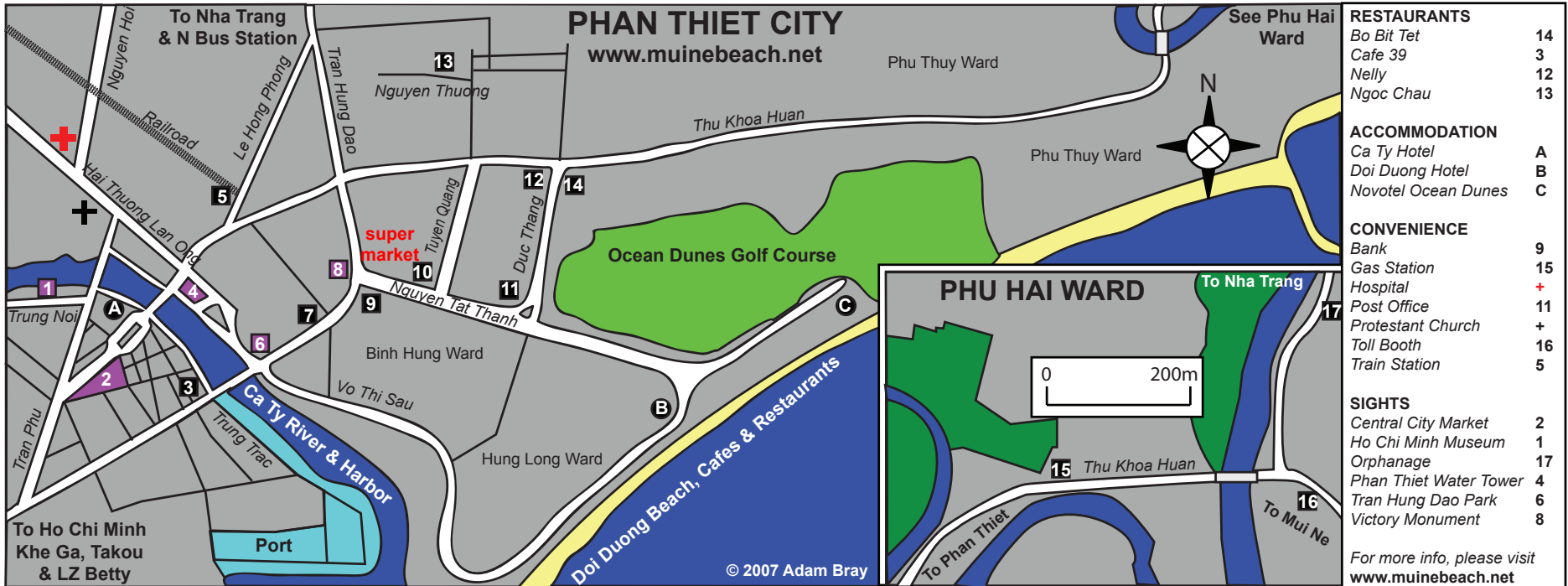
**PHAN THIET** is known internationally for three things: the production of *nuoc mam* (**fish sauce**), **dragon fruit** plantations, and tourism (centering in **Mui Ne Beach**). The old quarter is nestled along the banks of the **Ca Ty River**, but the new city has spread out for nearly 9 kilometers along the beach, nestled in a valley between mountains to the north and sandy bluffs to the east and west..

At the center of town, on the East bank of the river, stands the Phan Thiet **Water Tower**. This elegant symbol of Binh Thuan province is incorporated in numerous local emblems. It was designed in the 1930's by Prince Suphanouvong of Laos. Across the river is the city's **central market**, which is a great place to have breakfast and pick up fresh produce.

Near the market on Trung Noi Street is the **Ho Chi Minh Museum** and **Duc Thanh School** (Tues-Sun, 7:30-11:30am & 1:30-4:30pm; small admission fee). In 1910 Ho Chi Minh taught at the school for a year, before leaving to pursue more revolutionary endeavors. The school was abandoned but later rebuilt in his honor, along with a new museum on the site of his former home. The museum contains some of his personal effects, dioramas from the revolutionary period, and some local natural history displays and wildlife specimens.

Along the riverfront you'll find numerous vendors selling candied fruits, dried squid and peanut brittle. At Tran Hung Dao Bridge the Ca Ty River flows into the Phan Thiet **harbor**, with its brightly colored fishing fleet and small lighthouse beyond. This is the best place to watch celebrations of the **Cau Ngu/Nghinh Ong Festival** (dates depend upon the lunar calendar but may be altered by the local government, though usually the end of the summer) and **Mid Autumn Festival** (October 9, 2009). Cau Ngu & Nghinh Ong are a whale-worship festival with elaborate costumed parades, while the Mid Autumn





Festival is a traditional Chinese festival known for evening lantern displays and eating moon cakes. Phan Thiet is nationally recognized as the best place to observe both. The riverfront is especially beautiful during evening festivities when there are elaborate fireworks shows.

On the other side of Tran Hung Dao street, the road becomes Trung Trac and leads to the seaport. This area is always crowded with restaurant owners shoving each other to get to the best seafood right off the boat. Other vessels also dock here to buy supplies for far off islands and oil rigs. The nearby **Van Thuy Thu Temple** (7:30–11:30 a.m. and 2:00–5:00 pm; 3000VND) at 20A Ngu Ong Street is the oldest temple in Vietnam (built in 1762) dedicated to whale worship. The temple contains more than 100 whale skeletons, including a specimen on display that is 22 meters long; the largest in Vietnam.

Further up Tran Hung Dao Street and to the right, Nguyen Tat Thanh is a grand boulevard divided by immaculately kept gardens and lined by government buildings. At the end of Nguyen Tat Thanh street is **Doi Duong beach**, lined by inexpensive cafés full of young Vietnamese lovers sitting in the shade of wispy pine trees. East of the beach, you can play a round of **golf** at the *Ocean Dunes Golf Club*. Designed by Nick Faldo, it's ranked one

of the “Best 500 Holes in the World” by *Golf Magazine*.

Phan Thiet was once home to the LZ Betty, an American **military base** situated on the bluffs Southwest of town. The landing zone was the scene of a major battle during Tet of 1968 and another on May 3, 1970. Little remains of the base other than the deteriorating airstrip and gateposts. Although of interest to many war veterans, most visitors should not wonder at this site as it contains patches of quicksand and likely has unexploded ordnances.

## Practicalities

Foreigners do not normally utilize the northern bus station or the one situated on 666 Tran Hung Dao, as the attendants and drivers don't speak English. However, the buses are just as nice as the regular tourist buses and sometimes cheaper. Otherwise, you can arrive on any tourist **bus** from Ho Chi Minh City or Nha Trang and request to be dropped off in downtown Phan Thiet. Binh Thuan Tourist, 82 Trung Truc (☎ 062/3816821, ✉ [binhthuantourist@hcm.vnn.vn](mailto:binhthuantourist@hcm.vnn.vn)) can also sell tickets and provide information about attractions and accommodation. For the best **maps** and a locally-produced guidebook (in both English and Vietnamese) try the Duc Thanh Bookstore near the Tran Hung Dao Park and Bridge. Bookstores are Vietnam's best kept shopping secret, as they double as gift shops. You can find Cham textiles, ceramics,

lanterns, chimes, maps, dictionaries, and more—all for rock-bottom prices. No haggling is involved because the prices are set.

Although largely unpublicized, private luxury **trains** now arrive at the Phan Thiet Railway Station on Nguyen Dinh Chieu/Thu Khoa Huan Street, from Ho Chi Minh City, several times a day. Check with the train station or a local tour office, as times and prices change periodically.

You can exchange currency, traveler's cheques, send or receive Western Union, or withdraw money from an ATM at the Incombank **Bank** on Nguyen Tat Tanh, near the Victory Monument. A **post office** is located further down the street on the corner of Duc Thang Street. The best place for **internet** is on Tuyen Quang Street, also off of Nguyen Tat Tanh.

## Accommodations

There are a few places to stay that cater especially to foreign tourists.

### Novotel Ocean Dunes & Golf Resort

(☎ 062/3822393, 🌐 [www.accorhotels-asia.com/2067](http://www.accorhotels-asia.com/2067), \$75-\$146) offers wireless internet, golf, tennis, a swimming pool, restaurants, bar & cafe, and is situated directly on the beach. They also have one of the few licensed casinos in the country.



**Doi Duong Hotel** (☎ 062/3822108, ☎ 062/3825858, \$40-\$75), across the street from the beach, is a high-rise offering tennis courts, a swimming pool, 2 restaurants and a lively nightclub.

**Ca Ty Hotel** (☎ 062/3815900, ☎ 062/3816619, 🌐 [www.catyhotel.com.vn](http://www.catyhotel.com.vn) \$20-\$40) is a high-rise on the Ca Ty River near the central market. It offers spectacular views of the mountains, city center, river, harbor and tower. There is a restaurant on the top floor and internet is available on-site.

## Dining

Phan Thiet is a foodie paradise, with its own local style and delicacies, but it's rare for a restaurant to have English menus, let alone English speaking staff, so invite a Vietnamese speaking friend to join you, or you may have to use the "point and pray method."

Phan Thiet cuisine is known for being uniquely sweet, incorporating local sugar cane, coconut milk and pineapple in many dishes. As Phan Thiet is the fish sauce capital of Vietnam, you'll find it liberally added to everything. Seafood also makes its way into most dishes, including *banh xeo* (pancakes with shrimp, squid and pork), *cha gio* (spring rolls), and *lau* (hot pot).

Doi Duong Beach is lined with a plethora of cafes on the east end, and seafood restaurants on the west end. Tuyen Quang Street is famous for its many *banh xeo* restaurants and other small eateries.

**Nelly** (10am-10pm), on the Corner of Duc Thang & Thu Khoa Huan St, was opened by an American and serves quality American & Italian food, with Italian ice cream. They are the only venue with English menus and English-speaking staff.

**Bo Bit Tet** (7am-10am and 5pm - 10pm) on the corner of Duc Thang & Thu Khoa Huan St. (Across from Nelly) has fried steak, pâté and eggs with baguettes.

**Café 39** (7am - 10am) on Nguyen Van Troi Near the market, offers the best *pho bo* (beef & rice noodle soup) in town.

**Kim Hong Restaurant** (daily) 76/11 Tuyen Quang, 062/3241301. Large selection of traditional and specialty Vietnamese dishes.





## Takou Mountain

Takou is a **nature reserve** located 30 km southeast of Phan Thiet. Visitors may hike up the mountain for free or take the **gondola** (5-minute trip/55,000 VND) through a beautiful tropical rainforest to the pagoda at the top. The current pagoda was built in 1879 and is surrounded by a series of 3-door gates, temples, Buddha statues, tomb towers and a **cave**. Legend says that a boy once followed the cave all the way to the sea, 20 km away. The main attraction is Vietnam's largest **reclining Buddha**, at 49 meters long.

There is a tourist restaurant at the gondola station, as well as a vegetarian restaurant at the pagoda. There is a new guesthouse on the mountain (☎ 062/3867484, 200,000 VND) that is open to foreigners. The entrance to the reserve is just off Hwy 1A, west of Phan Thiet.

## Khe Ga

The **island lighthouse** of Khe Ga is the tallest in Vietnam and was built by the French in 1897. The island is located off Tien Thanh, the longest continuous beach in the province. It's a beautiful spot, where large boulders jut out of enormous, wind-swept **dunes**. Visitors must be sure to bring proper sun protection, as this is one of the hottest and most desolate areas of South East Asia.

### Princess D'Annam Resort

(☎ 08/38409646 ☎ 08/38409647, 🌐 [www.princessannam.com](http://www.princessannam.com), \$40-\$75) offering numerous water sports, horseback riding, swimming pools, mountain biking, private villas with internet and widescreen tv. Several restaurants and cafes are on site. \$75-\$150

Khe Ga is about 45 minutes southwest of Phan Thiet, on a coastal road leading to Ham Tan. On the way, visitors will drive through the remains of the American **Landing Zone Betty** and glimpse a spectacular beachside **canyon**.

## Mui Ne Beach

**MUI NE** is Vietnam's largest and fastest-growing resort community. Until the solar eclipse of 1995 when thousands flocked to the area for the best glimpse, Mui Ne remained a relatively unknown fishing community hidden in the palm groves along the beach, reachable only by a primitive dirt road. Since then it has become one of the top beach get-a-ways in Vietnam, as well as the **water sports** capital of the country. November through March is windy season, and during this period the bay is crowded with kite boarders and wind surfers from around the globe.

**Jibes** (90 D Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847405, [www.windsurf-vietnam.com](http://www.windsurf-vietnam.com)) is sports central and hosts the popular **Vietnam Fun Cup** each February (9<sup>th</sup> annual is Feb 22-23, 2008). Other established centers include **Storm** at the Sailing Club (24 D. Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847442, 🌐 [www.stormkiteboarding.com](http://www.stormkiteboarding.com)), and **Windchimes** at Saigon Mui Ne (56 D Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 0909720017, 🌐 [www.windsurfing-vietnam.com](http://www.windsurfing-vietnam.com)).

The drawback to the kite boarding trend is that it can make swimming dangerous during late morning and afternoons when enthusiasts are on the water. The beach also tends to erode on the West end during windy season, although it is replenished later in the year. Mui Ne sits in the heart of the Binh Thuan **Desert**. As such, it is one of the driest spots in South East Asia. During the dry season there is typically no rain at all from November through April, and even during rainy season there is significantly less precipitation than nearby Phan Thiet.

Current regulations prevent resorts from building higher than the palm trees, so despite the onslaught of recent development, Mui Ne still maintains an out-of-the way, tropical atmosphere. A small but active **fishing community** remains at the center of the beach in Ham Tien and Mui Ne Village at the

east end. Fishermen can be seen hauling their nets to shore early in the morning along with women gathering shellfish.

Mui Ne is a place to simply come and relax, but there are a few sights of interest renowned for their natural beauty. The **white sand dunes** are the most popular spot, about a 45 minute trip by jeep, usually stopping in the market at Mui Ne Village to pick up refreshments. The **red sand dunes** (if you are in a hurry, skip these), **red canyons** (really more of an eroded bluff, but it still makes for nice photos), and **Fairy Stream** (*Soui Tien*) are all along the way. Sunrise and sunset are the best times to go for photos and to avoid the heat, but drivers have a tendency to cut the trip short, so be prepared to hold your ground. Custom jeep tours range \$20-\$25 and last a few hours.

Fairy Stream cuts across layers of blood-red, gold, and silver sand dunes undulating through the countryside. Freshwater crabs and tasty **mudfish** make their home in the stream, **while dollar birds** and **kingfishers** perch in the branches above. The walk is about 30 minutes return. Leave your shoes at the shop near the road for a few VND. You'll be wading in ankle-deep water all the way to the small waterfall at the other end. A guide is not necessary.

Mui Ne Village proper is well worth exploring on foot or bicycle. With its winding roads swept with sand, rows of white-washed shops shaded by palms, and dooryards lined with cactus fences, it invokes comparisons to coastal towns in northwestern Mexico, if not for crumbling French-colonial architecture in the back alleys. The harbor below with its brightly painted wooden fishing boats make a great photo opportunity.

*Bau Trang*, or the **White Sand Dunes**, are an immense Saharan range of golden and snow-white dunes, 45 minutes drive from Mui Ne. Nestled in the dunes are two large reservoirs and a series of smaller lakes, which offer excellent opportunities to see native bird species, including four species of heron, the red-wattled lapwing and several species of bee-eaters. There are always village kids standing by, waiting to rent sleds to visitors for "dune surfing." Bring plenty of water, sunscreen and a hat.

The nearby **Thap Poshanu Towers** (km5, admission is 2000VND if an attendant is present, but free much of the time) are a complex of three Cham towers (the southernmost in Vietnam) that were originally built as a temple to Shiva in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The site offers the best view of Phan Thiet city, the Ca Ty river, and the surrounding mountains. A pagoda, abandoned French military outpost, and an excellent shop selling inexpensive Cham crafts are all located on site.



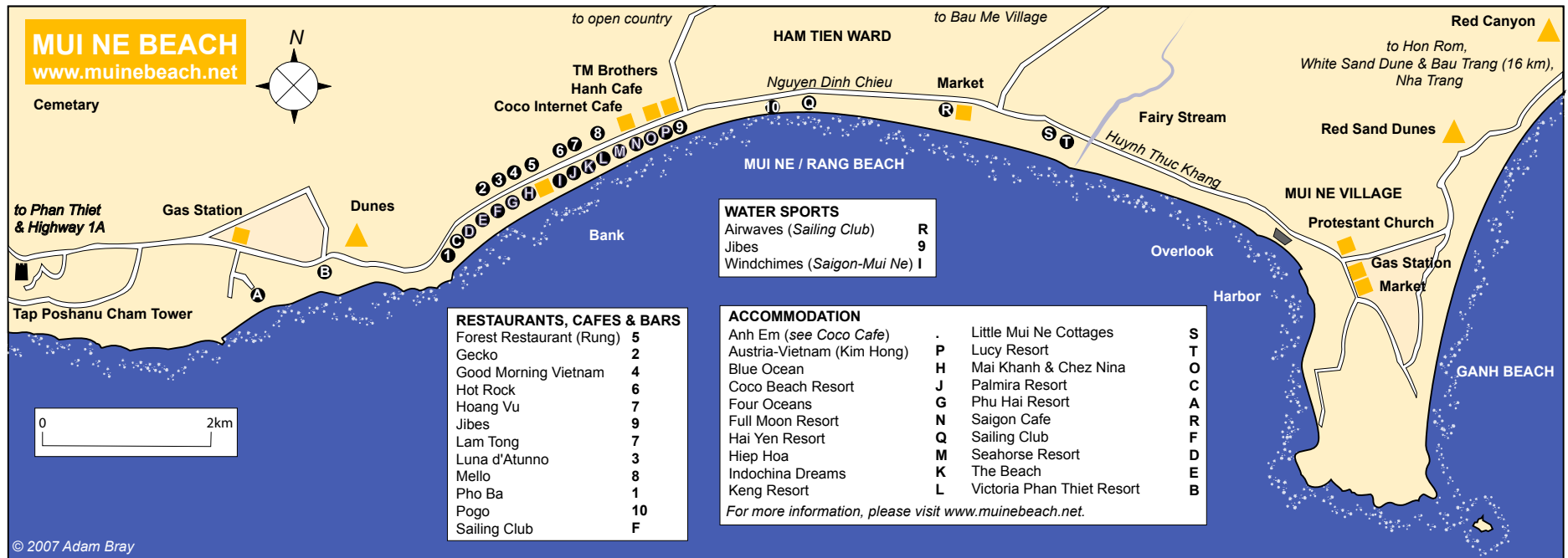
## Practicalities

Open **busses** arrive and depart from Ho Chi Minh City (\$5/5 hours) and Nha Trang (\$5/5 hours) around noon and midnight. Night busses to and from Mui Ne should be avoided as they are extremely unreliable and at times unsafe.

There is a single highway in Mui Ne, running the length of the 10 km beach, with most resorts on the beach side, and most restaurants on the dunes side. Because everything is so spread out, the best option for getting around is via motorbike or bicycle.

Many resorts offer unreliable **internet**, but only **Coco Café** (121 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, open 8am till 10pm or later, 7000VND/hr) offers a professional, high-speed internet café. The biggest inconvenience which plagues Mui Ne and the surrounding areas are frequent power outages (usually Monday and Tuesday during daylight hours). Larger resorts and guesthouses have their own generator to compensate, but never trust your laptop to them, even with the addition of a surge protector.

top: Tap Poshanu Cham Towers



A number of resorts now have 24-hr ATM's or full-fledged banks (M-F, 7.30am-noon & 1.30-4.30pm) on site to change currency, and cash travellers' cheques; including Tropic, Saigon-Mui Ne, and Swiss Village.

For more information about Mui Ne and Binh Thuan province, visit [www.muinebeach.net](http://www.muinebeach.net).

## Accommodation

There is a wide range of resorts and guest houses along the beach to match every budget, but they are difficult to research on foot because all the venues are so spread out. Few places use street numbers—most still use kilometer markers (based on the distance from Phan Thiet. There's only a little leeway for room rate negotiation

in Mui Ne, and prices are often fixed during high season. Booking online can be problematic because many of the venues do not check their email regularly and their websites tend to come and go. Be very careful about supplying your credit card info online, as most of the local resort websites do not use secure connections.

### Budget Hiep-Hoa

80 Nguyen Dinh Chieu ☎ 062/3847262, ☎ [hiephoatourism@yahoo.com](mailto:hiephoatourism@yahoo.com). Clean and simple with just 12 rooms, offers friendly service around a small garden. Rooms with fans or a/c. **\$12**

**Saigon Café** 168-170D Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847091, 062/3168170. Offering basic but tidy rooms on the quieter east side. Includes a restaurant, ticket office and internet café. **\$5**

**Keng Resort** 72 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847015, 0909106672, 12 Rooms & 9 Bungalows with a/c or fans, private bathrooms with hot water. Tidy and pleasant, with 2 restaurants. **\$15-\$20**

**Anh Em (Coco Café)** 121 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847729. Basic but tidy rooms with fan and private a/c. High-speed internet and motorbike rental. **\$5**

★**Vietnam-Austria House (Kim Hong)** km 13.5, ☎ 062/3847047 Nice rooms with a/c and private bath, or fan and shared bath. Small swimming pool. Next to Tam Hanh bus company. **\$8-\$25**

### Moderate

**The Beach** 18 Nguyen Dinh Chieu ☎ 062/3847626, ☎ [www.thebeachresort.com.vn](http://www.thebeachresort.com.vn). Cozy rooms include a/c, satellite TV, fridge, & sauna on site. **\$30-\$75**

**Lucy Resort** km 18, ☎ 062/3847017, ☎ [www.lucyresort.net](http://www.lucyresort.net). Thatched-roof bungalows on the east end. Swimming pool and breakfast included. **\$18-45**

**Blue Ocean** 54 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847322, ☎ [www.blueoceanresort.com](http://www.blueoceanresort.com). Rooms include a/c and satellite TV, surrounding a large swimming pool, and a Sheridan's Irish Pub and Restaurant on site. **\$30-\$150**

**Indochina Dreams** 74 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847271. Small and quiet but well managed resort on the eastern beach. **\$20-\$25**

★**Full Moon Resort**, 84 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847008, ☎ [www.windsurf-vietnam.com](http://www.windsurf-vietnam.com). Rooms include a/c and wireless internet. One of the top resorts for wind surfing and kite boarding lessons. **\$35-\$80**

**Little Mui Ne Cottages** 10b Huynh Thuc Kang, ☎ 062/3847550-1, ☎ [www.littlemuine.com](http://www.littlemuine.com). Tidy rooms and large bungalows around a sizable pool in the quiet east end of the beach. Free wireless internet in the bar and restaurant. **\$50-\$85**

**Sailing Club** 24 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847440, ☎ [www.sailingclubvietnam.com](http://www.sailingclubvietnam.com). Popular with water sports enthusiasts & expats from HCMC, with a large open bar & restaurant facing the beach. Beautifully landscaped with complete privacy for each bungalow. Suffers from periodic beach erosion. **\$55-\$100**

**Mai Khanh & Chez Nina** 86 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847177. Small but cute bungalows surround a beautiful garden. Near several tour companies and Coco Internet Café. **\$15-\$75**

**Palmira Resort** 14 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847373, ☎ [www.palmiraresort.com](http://www.palmiraresort.com). The domed main building, art deco styles and

large swimming pool make the look and feel of this resort distinct. **\$30-\$75**

### Expensive

**Four Oceans** 30 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3741081, 82, 83, ☎ [www.bonbienresort.com](http://www.bonbienresort.com). Luxurious rooms surrounding a large pool and beachside restaurant. Offers water sports with or without instruction. **\$75-\$150**

**Seahorse Resort** km 11, ☎ 062/3847547, ☎ [www.seahorseresortvn.com](http://www.seahorseresortvn.com). By far the most luxurious resort in Mui Ne, with large solitary bungalows lavishly furnished and spread across a sizable, well manicured estate. Large pool and beachside restaurant. **\$110-\$253**

**Victoria Phan Thiet Resort** km 9, ☎ 062/3813000, ☎ [phanthiet@victoriaresorts-asia.com](mailto:phanthiet@victoriaresorts-asia.com). Luxuriously furnished rooms and cottages on a secluded stretch of beach, the resort offers a long list of activities including tennis and horseback riding. **\$150+**

**Phu Hai Resort** km 8, ☎ 062/3812799, ☎ [www.phuhairesort.com](http://www.phuhairesort.com), 80 rooms & villas nestled in a dense tropical jungle around a multi-tiered swimming pool with waterfall, tennis court & full spa. **\$75-\$150+**

★**Coco Beach Resort** 58 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, ☎ 062/3847111, ☎ [www.cocobeach.net](http://www.cocobeach.net). The first resort to open in Mui Ne has large villas and 28 thatched-roof wooden bungalows, all with modern conveniences. The friendly staff and multiple bars and restaurants ensure everything you'll need for a perfect getaway is right on site. **\$85-\$210**

## Restaurants, Bars & Cafes

All the local resorts have at least one restaurant on the premises, but if you'd like some variety, check across the street, where the restaurants are often cheaper. Most of the smaller venues offer the standard mix of pseudo-western backpacker food and popularized Vietnamese dishes, but a few stand out.

**Forest Restaurant (Rung)** offers traditional gourmet Vietnamese cuisine, in an elegant jungle setting. Many of the staff are ethnic Cham from Phan Rang, some of whom put on nightly shows of live music and dance. A traditional loom sits in the back where artisans weave Cham textiles. An enormous contraption at the front of the restaurant produces one of the last remaining examples of authentic Vietnamese bamboo water music.

**Luna d'Atunno** and **Good Morning Vietnam** are the resident Italian restaurants offering fine wine and a large selection of wood-fired pizzas (70,000-80,000VND). Good Morning Vietnam is a cut above its sister outlets throughout Vietnam and takes special orders for home-made breads and other delights.

**Lam Tong** next to Jibes, and **Huong Vu** across from Blue Ocean offer local Vietnamese, Thai and Chinese dishes in a modest atmosphere. Typical western favorites are also available. Most dishes range 25,000VND-35,000VND.

If you'd like to dine with the locals, try **Pho Ba** (8am-10am and 5pm-9pm), a roadside hut offering beef and rice noodle soup (7,000VND) on the right, just as you come to Mui Ne Beach from Phan Thiet. Ham Tien Market in the center of the beach is a great place to catch breakfast up to 11 am, and the Mui Ne Village market is a great place to get a cheap dinner or late snacks (5pm-10pm).

**Nightlife** in Mui Ne still doesn't compare to Saigon or Nha Trang, but it has been picking up in recent years. **Wax**, at Wind Champ Resort, with its loud dance beats and lively bar is the favorite spot for backpackers and the kite boarding crowd, while the more subdued **Hot Rock**, 12.5km, and the **Sailing Club**, 24 D Nguyen Dinh Chieu, are especially favored by expats. Newcomers to the scene include **Mellow**, **Pogo** and **Gecko**, where pool tables and loud music are also to be found.

## Ca Na & Vinh Hao

The road North to **VINH HAO** and **CA NA** leads past **Whiskey Mountain**, a solitary peak that once supported a small American military outpost and helicopter pad. Plantations of enormous green dragon cactus line Highway 1, with long white flowers and florescent pink fruit the size of ostrich eggs, decorating their octopus-like arms. Soon the dragons and rice pattie gives way to the Binh Thuan Desert where vast dunes sweep across the parched countryside. The area is prone to drought and sand storms during dry season. Passing through the town of Cho Lau and the quaint fishing port of Phan Ri Cua, you may notice ethnic Cham residents wearing traditional clothing. The men wear long white robes and turbans with red accents. As you venture closer to Phan Rang, you will travel deeper into the heart of the Champa kingdom and see ancient red temples on the hillsides.

At Vinh Hao and Ca Na the **rocky mountains** tumble into the sea in one of the most rugged landscapes in the country. This is a seismically active area. Water at the Vinh Hao **mineral hot springs** is bottled and sold across the nation. Upwelling in the bay contributes to some of the best **coral reefs** in the country, which are the main attraction. In the reefs surrounding **Cu Lao Hon Island** there are 147 known species of coral, 46 crustacean species and 211 recorded species of fish. To explore this underwater paradise, you'll want to stay at **Vietnam Scuba**, ☎ 062/3853917, ☎ 062/3853918, 🌐 [www.vietnamscuba.com](http://www.vietnamscuba.com), in Vinh Hao, 100 km NorthEast of Phan Thiet. The comfortable resort offers convenient bungalows overlooking the bay. Room, 3 meals and a day of **diving** costs \$130. Night diving is also available.

Three kilometers away, Ca Na is an active fishing village on the border of Ninh Thuan Province, and offers some great hiking in the mountains or a chance to explore the village. A steep climb up to **Lac Son Pagoda** provides a spectacular view of the bay. Although there are a few hotels in Ca Na, unless you are looking for complete isolation from other foreign tourists, and don't mind the sounds of traffic from the highway, there's little reason to stay in Ca Na overnight.



Mui Ne Harbor

## About the Author & This Edition

Adam Bray is a travel writer, location scout and translator closely tied to the tourism and entertainment industries in Vietnam. Adam has co-authored and contributed to numerous guidebooks for Vietnam and Cambodia, including guides for DK Eyewitness (Vietnam & Angkor Wat 2009), Insight Guides (Vietnam 2009, Vietnam Pocket Guide 2009, Laos & Cambodia 2009), Berlitz (Vietnam Pocket Guide 2009), Thomas Cook (Vietnam 2009, Cambodia 2010), Things Asian (To Vietnam With Love 2008, To Cambodia with Love 2010), and Time Out (Cities of the World 2009). He relocated to Vietnam in 2003, with further adventures across Thailand, Cambodia, China, New Zealand, the UK and even archeology in Israel. Previously Adam worked

with orangutans and bonobos (including the infamous Kanzi) in a world-renowned language research program, as well as 80 chimpanzees at the Primate Foundation of Arizona. His work brought him in touch with the likes of Jane Goodall, Francine Patterson and Sue Savage-Rumbaugh. Adam also has music interests with a new album available on iTunes titled "Under a Tamarind Tree."

This guide is the first in a series of free guidebooks written and produced by Adam Bray in conjunction with MuiNeBeach.net. Keep an eye out for future free guides to other popular locations within South East Asia in the coming months.

All prices given are in US dollars or Vietnam Dong. While we have made an effort to be as accurate as possible, prices change frequents and some errors are inevitable. We welcome feedback and corrections from readers.

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