

Côn Đảo

Vietnam

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Côn Đảo is a small island group off the south coast of Vietnam. It combines quiet beaches, forest, coral reefs and the grim history of a French and later South Vietnamese prison.

Most visitors stay two to four nights. Days are for the historic prison sites, beaches, snorkelling and national park walks. The main town on Côn Sơn Island is small and calm.

When to visit

February to June is the best time. The sea is calmer, and diving and boat trips run easily. July to November is the rainy season, with rough seas and typhoon risk, mainly in October and November. Some boats and ferries stop in bad weather.

Sea turtles nest on Bay Canh and other beaches from about May to September. Visits are managed by the national park.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 27°	25° / 24°	Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 9 (Very high)
February	Great Great for watersports	26° / 27°	25° / 24°	Oppressive humidity · UV 11 (Extreme)
March	Great Great for watersports	27° / 28°	26° / 25°	22 sunny days · Oppressive humidity · UV 12 (Extreme)
April	Good Good for watersports	28° / 30°	28° / 27°	Oppressive humidity · UV 12 (Extreme)
May	Poor Poor for watersports	29° / 30° Feels like 33°	29° / 27°	26 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
June	Poor Poor for watersports	29° / 30°	28° / 27°	27 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Poor Poor for watersports	29° / 29°	28° / 27°	29 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	29° / 30°	28° / 27°	28 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
September	Poor Poor for sightseeing	29° / 29°	28° / 27°	28 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
October	Poor Poor for watersports	28° / 29°	28° / 27°	29 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	28° / 29°	27° / 26°	25 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 8 (Very high)
December	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 28°	26° / 25°	15 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · Windy · UV 8 (Very high)

Best months: January, February, March

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Con Dao Prison is the main prison complex. The cells, courtyards and "tiger cages" show the harsh conditions.
- B Phu Hai Camp is one of the prison camps. It has cell blocks and exercise yards.
- C Con Dao Museum tells the story of the prison and of the islands.
- D Hang Duong is the largest cemetery for prisoners who died on the island. Many visitors come at night to light incense.
- E Bãi Đầm Trầu is a quiet beach north of the town.
- F Bay Canh Lighthouse is a lighthouse on Bay Canh Island, reached by boat.



Côn Đảo – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

What to experience

- **Visit the prison sites**: A guided walk gives context for the history.
- **Snorkel or dive**: Reefs around the islands are among the best in southern Vietnam.
- **Watch turtles nest**: In season, the national park runs guided night visits.
- **Walk a forest trail**: Short trails lead through mangroves and old forest.
- **Relax on a quiet beach**: Beaches here are less crowded than on the mainland.

Day trips

- **Bay Canh Island**: a boat trip for beaches and turtle nesting in season. It needs a permit from the national park.
- **Hòn Cau and Hòn Tre Nhỏ**: islands for snorkelling and diving.
- **National park trails**: forest walks on the main island, including mangroves and old trees.
- Ⓐ Ba Ria-Vung Tau: the mainland province on the route from Ho Chi Minh City.



Where to explore

- **Mainland**: Ba Ria-Vung Tau is the coastal province north of the islands.
- **Gateway**: Ho Chi Minh City has the main flights to Côn Đảo.
- **Delta**: Mekong Delta lies to the west and has the ferry route.

Getting there

- **By air**: Sân bay Côn Đảo (VCS) has short flights from Ho Chi Minh City. The flight takes about 1 hour. Book early in peak season.
- **By sea**: Ferries run from the Mekong Delta coast. The crossing is long and can be rough. Check the schedule and the weather.
- **On arrival**: Hotels and tour agencies in the main town arrange transfers from the airport.

Getting around

- **Scooter**: Rental scooters are the main way to move around. Wear a helmet.
- **Bicycle**: The coastal road is flat in places and pleasant in the morning.
- **Taxi and electric cars**: Short rides inside the town and to nearby sights.
- **Tours**: Boat trips and park visits are booked through hotels and agencies.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The main town is compact, but beaches and sights lie farther out.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Roads are quiet and mostly flat, so cycling suits short trips.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** A scooter or a taxi is enough for the main island.
- **Roads**: The island roads are quiet and well kept. Watch for sharp bends near the coast.
- **Parking**: Parking is easy near most sights.

Food & drink

Côn Đảo food is simple and based on seafood. Look for grilled fish, squid, shrimp and fish soups. Local snacks include almond fruit and sweet potato dishes. The night market in the town has small stalls.

Most restaurants are near the centre of Côn Sơn.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Pho · Phở
Beef or chicken noodle soup with a fragrant broth, fresh herbs, and rice noodles; commonly eaten for breakfast.

LUNCH

Bun Cha · Bún chả
Grilled pork patties and slices served with rice vermicelli, herbs, and a sweet-sour dipping sauce; a Hanoi specialty.

Bun Bo Hue · Bún bò Huế
A spicy, lemongrass-scented beef noodle soup from the city of Hue.

Cao Lau · Cao lầu
A noodle dish unique to Hoi An, with thick chewy noodles, pork, and greens, traditionally made with local well water.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Banh Mi · Bánh mì
A French-influenced baguette sandwich filled with pork, pate, pickled vegetables, and herbs.

Banh Xeo · Bánh xèo
A crispy turmeric rice-flour crepe filled with pork, shrimp, and bean sprouts, wrapped in lettuce and herbs.

Goi Cuon · Gỏi cuốn
Fresh (uncooked) spring rolls filled with shrimp, pork, herbs, and vermicelli, wrapped in rice paper.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Che · Chè
A category of sweet dessert soups or puddings made with beans, fruit, jelly, and coconut milk, served hot or over ice.

DRINKS

Ca Phe Sua Da · Cà phê sữa đá
Strong drip coffee served over ice with sweetened condensed milk; Vietnam's signature drink.

Bia Hoi · Bia hơi
Cheap, light draft beer brewed fresh daily and sold at street-side stalls, especially in Hanoi.

Côn Đảo – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Côn Đảo is a quiet and safe island, but some points need care.

- Seas can be rough in the rainy season. Boat trips may be cancelled.
- Wear a helmet when riding a scooter.
- Sun is strong. Use sunscreen and drink water.
- Follow park rules. Take no coral, shells or turtle eggs.
- Medical services are basic. Bring any medicine you need.

History

The islands were a prison site for decades. The French opened a prison in 1862, and many Vietnamese political prisoners were held and died here. The camps, including Phu Hai Camp, were used again after 1954.

After 1975 the prisons were turned into memorials. Today the islands are also a protected national park known for turtles, reefs and forest.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Vietnam at a glance:

CURRENCY

VND ₫

ELECTRICITY



Type A / Type C / Type F
220 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

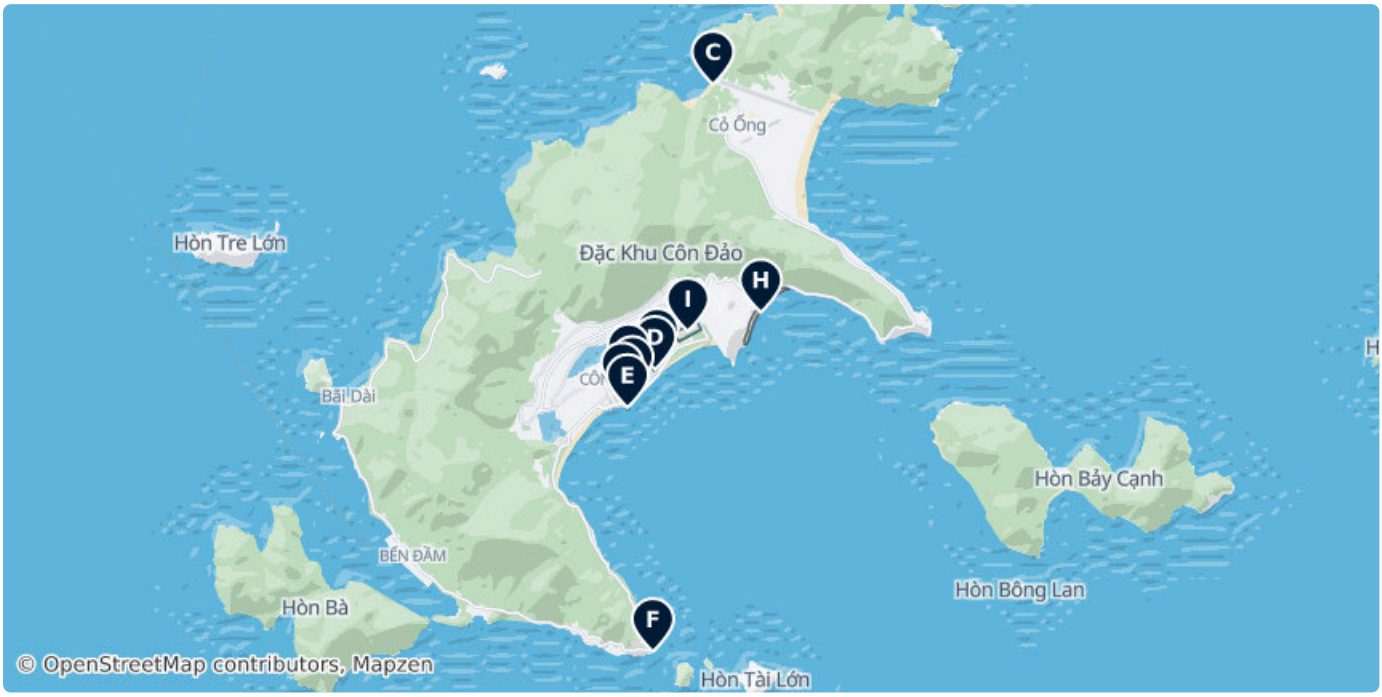
Vietnamese

TAP WATER

Not safe to drink

Côn Đảo Essentials

Côn Đảo preserves a complex legacy, balancing its history as a colonial penal colony with its status as a marine park. This list features essential historical sites, including the French-built Phu Hai Camp and the infamous 'Tiger Cages' at Phu Tuong Camp. Natural highlights include the plane-spotting beach of Bãi Đầm Trầu and the sunrise views at Shark Cape. Visitors can explore the island's administrative past at the Palace of the Island Chief or browse fresh seafood and local produce at the central Con Dao Market.



A Phu Hai Camp

The oldest and largest prison camp on the island, established in 1862. The complex includes a chapel, workshop, and solitary confinement cells used during the French colonial era.

(8.68401, 106.61005)

B Phu Tuong Camp

Built in 1941, this facility is the site of the notorious 'Tiger Cages'—small, open-roofed cells where prisoners were kept in harsh conditions and monitored from overhead walkways.

(8.68860, 106.61423)

C Bãi Đầm Trầu

A crescent-shaped beach located near the airport, known for its golden sand and the unique experience of watching commercial planes fly low over the water during landing.

(8.73432, 106.62352)

D Con Dao Museum

This museum houses over 2,000 artifacts, photographs, and documents detailing the history of the Côn Đảo prison system and the lives of the political prisoners held there.

Nguyễn Huệ 10 (8.68730, 106.61383)

E Pier 914

A historic stone pier begun in 1873. It is named after the 914 prisoners who reportedly died during its construction over several decades of colonial rule.

(8.68101, 106.60927)

F Shark Cape

A coastal viewpoint offering expansive views of the sea and surrounding islands. It is a primary location for watching the sunrise over the rugged southern coastline.

(8.64075, 106.61350)

G Palace of the Island Chief

The former residence of the island's governors during the French and American eras. The building now serves as a museum displaying colonial-era artifacts and historical records.

(8.68298, 106.60835)

H Bãi Đất Dốc

A long, secluded stretch of white sand beach with clear water, bordered by steep hills and tropical greenery.

(8.69671, 106.63151)

I Phu Binh Camp

Also known as Camp 7 or the 'American Tiger Cages,' this prison was built in 1971 and features specialized concrete cells designed for isolation.

(Unnamed Road), Vietnam (8.69360, 106.61930)

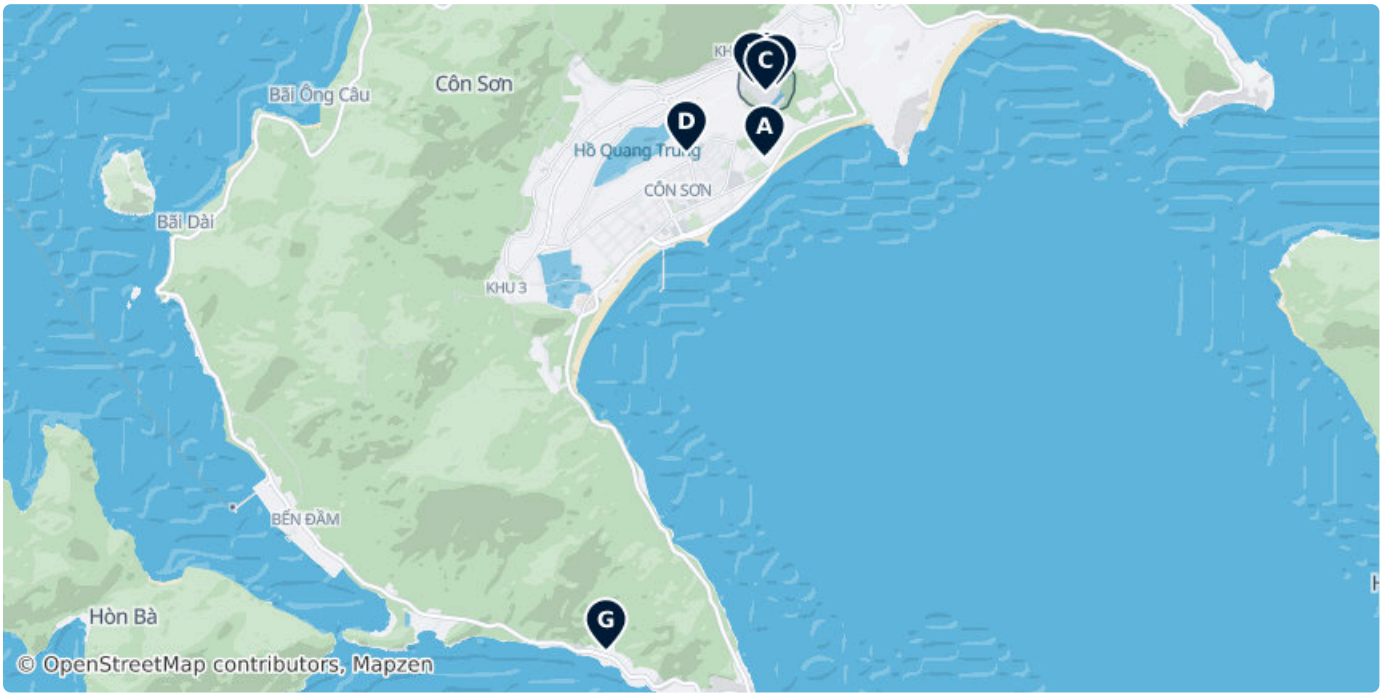
J Con Dao Market

The island's main commercial hub where vendors sell fresh seafood, local fruits, and traditional Vietnamese breakfast dishes. Activity is highest in the early morning.

(8.68603, 106.60943)

Historical Sites & Memorials

This collection documents the somber history of the Côn Đảo archipelago, which served as a brutal penal colony under French and South Vietnamese rule for over a century. The list features the infamous Tiger Cages and Cow Stables, where political prisoners were detained in harsh conditions. It also includes the Hàng Dương Cemetery, the final resting place of thousands of revolutionaries, and the grave of national heroine Võ Thị Sáu. These sites preserve the architectural remains of the prison system and serve as memorials to those who died during the conflict.



A Tigerkäfige

Infamous prison cells built in 1940 by the French. These units are known for their barred ceilings, which allowed guards to monitor and harass prisoners from a walkway above.

(8.68844, 106.61448)

B Hang Duong

The largest cemetery on Côn Sơn Island, containing the graves of over 20,000 prisoners and revolutionaries who died at the Côn Đảo prison complex.

(8.69497, 106.61470)

C Vo Thi Sau Grave

The burial site of a young Vietnamese revolutionary executed by the French in 1952. Located within Hàng Dương Cemetery, it is a significant site for local pilgrimage.

(8.69425, 106.61457)

D Cow stables

Originally built by the French in 1863 for cattle, these facilities were converted into detention cells for political prisoners in 1930 and later expanded in 1963.

(8.68886, 106.60750)

E War Victims Graveyard

A solemn memorial ground dedicated to the patriots and political prisoners who died during the island's history as a penal colony.

(8.69494, 106.61344)

F Tượng Đài Liệt Sỹ

A central monument honoring the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for national independence during the various periods of the island's prison history.

(8.69476, 106.61559)

G Prison Escape

A memorial commemorating historical attempts by political prisoners to escape the island's detention centers and return to the mainland.

(8.64480, 106.60029)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikidata, Wikipedia, Tripomatic

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 11, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.