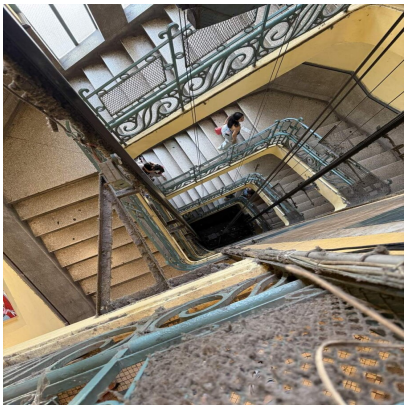


2 Days In Saigon (Part 2) â?? Where We Shopped And Everything Else

Description

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This is Part 2 of my 2-day Saigon trip. Part 1 covered how we got in, where we stayed, and all the food. This one covers shopping, the old buildings, and everything else we got up to.

Shopping â?? what to know

We shortlisted shops based on Instagram recommendations from influencers who had recently been to Saigon.

A reality check first. Walking under the scorching Saigon heat is a challenge. The pavements donâ??t help â?? they exist, but bikes are parked along them, so half the time you are walking on the road. It is what it is. Welcome to Vietnam.



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A typical view down the boutique stretch. Plenty of small shops, but the pavements are full of bikes.

Tran Quang Dieu street

This whole stretch is small boutique fashion shops. We checked out Rubyâ??s and a few others.

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RUBIES
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Inside Rubyâ??s. Mostly soft satin and silk pieces in cream, beige and black tones.

My wifeâ??s verdict on the street â?? the clothes here are Platinum Mall standard. Average price per garment is about SGD 10â??20.

Cocobebe

Mentioned a lot on Instagram. A bit out of the way from the main shopping street, so grab a taxi (about 5 minutes). Mostly basics wear.

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BASIC
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Cocobebe
Cocobebe
Cocobebe
1A

The Cocobebe shopfront. Shares the building with BASIC on the upper floor.

Garmentory

If you only have one place to shop in Saigon, I would strongly recommend Garmentory (also known as 11 Garmentory). I actually found something for myself. Mostly streetwear, good selection, multiple brands, and the quality is decent.

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11 GARMENTORY

11 Garmentory. Two floors of racks, plenty of brands.

Rue Miche

We took a Grab here on the way back to the hotel. Thereâ??s some overlap with Garmentory. If you are staying around District 1 and donâ??t want to go far, Rue Miche works â?? but the selection is smaller.

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NU:OAK
Threads
Hubert + Partners
HubertStudio
oasis
HOSPITALITY GROUP
DIEU HOLDINGS
BEUTER
RueMiche
BOUTIQUE

Rue Miche Boutique. White colonial-style building with outdoor seating in front.

The rundown building at 26 LÃ½ Tá»± Trá»•ng

This is the one that surprised me the most. The exterior is really old â?? wrought-iron gates, paintings lining both sides of the entrance hallway, a â??Khu Phá»? VÄ?n HÃ³aâ?• (Cultural Quarter) sign above the door.

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BAN CHỈ ĐẠO PHONG TRÀO TOÀN DÂN ĐOÀN KẾT XÂY DỰNG ĐỜ
PHƯỜNG SÀI GÒN
KHU PHỐ 3
KHU PHỐ VĂN H
SỐ 26

> The entrance at 26 LÃ½ Tá»± Trá»•ng. Youâ??d think itâ??s just a narrow alleyway full of paintings.

Once you walk in, the building opens up. The corridors are dim and worn â?? neon signs for boutiques like LIBÃ? and ohmytshirt glow at the end of narrow hallways.

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LIBÉ
ohmytshirt

The corridors. Dim, narrow, neon signs at the end.

Go up the staircase and the building reveals its age. French colonial wrought-iron railings spiralling up several floors.

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The central staircase. French colonial wrought-iron railings, multiple floors up.

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The top floor. Paper lanterns, a very old elevator door, and original mosaic tiles.

On the way up, I spotted a Vietnamese artist at his stall, painting a street scene mid-stroke. This is the kind of thing you stumble upon here.

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A local artist at work. Oil paintings of Saigon street scenes everywhere.

Itâ??s like Far East Plaza on steroids. Even if you have nothing to buy, come here for the photos and the atmosphere.

Address: 26 LÃ½ Tá»± Trá»•ng, District 1, HCMC

The second old building (near A Taste of Saigon)

After our last lunch we noticed a lot of youngsters, locals and foreigners alike, heading up the old buildings nearby. We followed them.

To our surprise there was another old building â?? different from the one at 26 LÃ½ Tá»± Trá»•ng â?? where the 2nd and 3rd floors have been converted into small boutique retail shops.

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> The corridor. Tiled floor, peeling walls, original residential shutters on the left. Some units are still occupied by residents.

It reminded me of the pre-war shophouses in Tiong Bahru, where ground-floor residential units have been turned into cafes. If youâ??re familiar with Yong Siak Street, youâ??ll know what Iâ??m talking about. Some of the shops are still occupied by the original residents, which gives the place a unique and retro vibe.

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A boutique on the upper floor. Mannequins by the window, exposed concrete and wiring. The converted-residential-unit look.

A lot of the clothing overlaps with what we already saw at the other shops â?? quality is still standard, around SGD 10â??30 per piece. There are also some handicraft shops.

Even if you donâ??t buy anything, itâ??s a pretty cool place to hang around. After that you can go for coffee across the road.

New Playground

The main shopping spot we came for. Itâ??s a basement filled with local designer brands.

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THE
NEW
PLAYGROUND
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The entrance to The New Playground.

We were in and out in under 15 minutes â?? nothing caught our eye at first glance.

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SALE

Inside the basement. Racks of clothing, Vietnamese flags overhead. Platinum Mall vibes.

That said, thereâ??s a an extension of New Playground sits inside Vincom Mall that is more polished â?? individual brand units like HOWS, CECI CELA and TATICHU with proper shopfronts.

The setting is more pleasant â?? reminded me of Terminal 21.

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The brand units are more polished.

Book Street (bonus)

On the walk back to the hotel, we passed by Book Street. Short pedestrian stretch right next to Notre Dame Cathedral, with stalls selling all kinds of books.

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Book Street with Notre Dame Cathedral in the background.

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TIỆM SÁCH CŨ
CÔ CHI
Magnets
Postcards
Little Cats English BooKstore

Little Cats English Bookstore. Secondhand books, postcards, magnets.

Other stops worth a mention

Dop Cafe Stationery (and the Saigon night scene)

A hole-in-the-wall cafe we walked past. Itâ??s a cafe earlier in the day, but after a certain hour it turns into a chill-out spot with a DJ spinning music.

This is actually a common thing in Saigon. A lot of the cafes and small shops along these streets convert into open-air hangout spots at night. Youngsters pack the pavements on tiny plastic stools, the music goes on, and the whole street comes alive.

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The night scene. Youngsters packed on plastic stools outside a colonial-style shophouse. A couple on the balcony above. Very Saigon.

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> A sea of young people in a narrow lane, Vietnamese flags overhead. If youâ??re social, this is where you come.

Pretty cool if youâ??re up for it. Cheap drinks, good music, outdoor seating in the warm night air. Interesting place to just sit, watch, and maybe meet some people.

HÃ¤agen-Dazs (near hotel)

In Singapore we are down to one HÃ¤agen-Dazs outlet near Orchard Road, and itâ??s just a small kiosk with outdoor seating. The Saigon one still has a proper air-con area plus outdoor seating. They serve proper sundaes when you sit down.

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Häagen-Dazs

The HÃ¤agen-Dazs outlet near our hotel. Proper seating area.

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Häagen-D
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The sundaes. About SGD 8 each. Felt nice to sit in a real HÃ¤agen-Dazs again.

MiuMiu Spa

We had time to spare and decided to try the massage place near our hotel. They have several outlets, two within 5 minutesâ?? walk from us.

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MiuMiu Spa at 04 Chu Máº¡nh Trinh, District 1. The full price list is right outside.

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SPA SERVICES
SINCE 2009
MIUMIU SPA
EXPRESS SERVICE - DỊCH VỤ NHANH
お手軽マッサージ / 신속 마사지 / 快速按摩
Head spa / Thư giãn đầu
ヘッドスパ / 헤드 스파 / 头部舒压按摩
30 mins 330.000 vnd
Quick foot massage / Chăm sóc chân
お手軽フットマッサージ / 신속 발 마사지 / 快速脚底按摩
30 mins 300.000 vnd
Head - Neck - Shoulders / Cổ vai gáy
頭、首、肩マッサージ / 머리 – 목 – 어깨 / 头 - 颈部 - 肩膀肩虎膏
30 mins 300.000 vnd
Back - Neck - Shoulders / Cổ vai lưng
背中、首、肩マッサージ / 등 – 목 – 어깨 / 颈部 - 肩膀 - 背部用油
30 mins 330.000 vnd
HAIR WASH - GỘI ĐẦU
ヘアウォッシュ - 머리 감기 - 洗头
30 mins 250.000 vnd
FOOT CARE - CHĂM SÓC CHÂN
フットマッサージ / 발 마사지 / 脚底按摩
70 mins 440.000 vnd
90 mins (*) 550.000 vnd
(*) with hot stone / Với đá nóng
(*) ホットストーン使用 / 뜨거운 돌 사용 / 有热石
SKIN & FACIAL CARE - SĂN SÓC DA MẶT
フェイシャル / 피부 및 얼굴 관리 / 面部按摩
Basic facial care / Săn sóc da cơ bản
基本的なフェイシャルケア
기초 페이셜 케어 / 基础脸部保养
60 mins 730.000 vnd
Aqua peel & Cryo treatment
Làm sạch & trẻ hóa da công nghệ Hàn Quốc
アクアピール&クライオトリートメント
아쿠아 필 및 냉동 요법 / 水潔净肤 & 冰肌保湿导入
70 mins 900.000 vnd
FULL BODY - TOÀN THÂN
ボディマッサージ / 전신 마사지 / 身体按摩
Hot stone / Đá nóng
ホットストーン マッサージ / 뜨거운 돌 마사지 / 热石按摩
60 mins 550.000 vnd
90 mins 700.000 vnd
120 mins 900.000 vnd
Ginger oil / Dầu gừng
ジンジャーオイルマッサージ / 생강 오일 마사지 / 姜油压按摩
60 mins 550.000 vnd
90 mins 700.000 vnd
120 mins 900.000 vnd
Miu Miu's signature Aroma / Hương thơm
Miumiu のシグネチャーアロママッサージ
미우미우 대표 아로마 마사지 / 精油按摩
60 mins 550.000 vnd
90 mins 700.000 vnd
120 mins 900.000 vnd
Shiatsu / Ấn huyệt kiểu Nhật
指圧マッサージ / 일본식 지압 마사지 / 指压按摩
60 mins 550.000 vnd
90 mins 700.000 vnd
120 mins 900.000 vnd
Traditional Thai / Thái truyền thống
タイ式マッサージ / 태국식 마사지 / 泰式按摩
60 mins 550.000 vnd
90 mins 700.000 vnd
120 mins 900.000 vnd
Herbal treatment / Thảo dược
ハーブマッサージ / 허브 마사지 / 泰式草药球蒸汽按摩
90 mins 850.000 vnd
120 mins 1.020.000 vnd
Four hands / 4 tay
フォーハンドマッサージ / 네 손 마사지 / 四手按摩
60 mins 1.020.000 vnd
90 mins 1.270.000 vnd
BODY SCRUB - TẨY DA CHẾT TOÀN THÂN
ボディスクラブ / 전신 스크럽 / 去身体死皮
60 mins 700.000 vnd
PACKAGES / CÁC GÓI
パッケージ / 패키지 상품 / 套餐
Package 1 (2 hours) 920.000 vnd
Foot 60 mins + Body 60 mins
Gói 1 (Chân 60' + Toàn thân 60')
パッケージ1 (フット60分 + ボディ60分)。
패키지 1 (발 60분 + 전신 60분).
套餐1 (足疗60分钟 + 身体按摩60分钟)。
Package 2 (2.5 hours) 1.550.000 vnd
Body 90 mins + Aqua peel facial 60 mins
Gói 2 (Toàn thân 90' + Làm sạch & trẻ hóa da công nghệ Hàn Quốc 60')
パッケージ2 (ボディ90分 + アクアピール&クライオトリートメント60分)。
패키지 2 (패키지 (전신 90분 + 아쿠아 필 및 냉동 요법 60분).
套餐2 (身体按摩90分钟 + 水潔換肤Cryo保湿再生管理60分钟)。
Package 3 (2.5 hours) 1.500.000 vnd
Body 60 mins + Hair-warh 30 mins + Basic facial care 60 mins
Gói 3 (Toàn thân 60' + Gội 30' + Săn sóc da mặt cơ bản 60')
パッケージ3 (ボディマッサージ60分 + ヘアウォッシュ30分
+ ベーシックフェイシャルケア60分)。
패키지 3 (바디 마사지 60분 + 헤어 샴푸 30분 + 기본 페이셜 케어 60분).
套餐3 (身体按摩60分钟 + [illegible]部护理60分钟)。
Package 4 (3 hours) 1.940.000 vnd
SAUNA / STEAM BATH: 200.000 vnd
FREE SAUNA / STEAM BATH:
Complimentary for customer who use from 60-minutes service.
Xông hơi khô / ướt: 200.000 vnd/khách
Miễn phí cho khách sử dụng các dịch vụ từ 60 phút trở lên.
サウナ / スチームバス: 200.000 vnd
無料サウナ / スチーム:
60分以上のサービスをご利用のお客様は無料でご利用いただけます。
사우나 / 스팀목: 200.000 vnd
무료 사우나 / 스팀:
60분 이상 서비스를 이용하시는 고객님께 무료 제공됩니다.
桑拿 / 蒸汽浴: 200.000 越南盾
免费桑拿 / 蒸汽浴:
凡使用60分钟以上服务的顾客均可免费享用。
The prices above include ~ 20% Tip for therapist.
Giá trên đã bao gồm ~ 20% Tip cho kĩ thuật viên.
Tel: 028 6659 3609
WhatsApp: + 849 7175 3759
Open time: From 9:30AM - 11:00PM
Open
Please mind your steps!

The price board. Foot Care 90 mins at 550,000 dong per person.

We went for the 90-minute leg massage. Total: 1.1 million dong for two.

The place is clean and pleasant. They even provide lockers for your bags. One thing different from Bangkok â?? when they quoted us the 1.1 million, they also told us that 300,000 dong of that is the masseuseâ??s tip. The tip is already built into the price. Fixed pricing for that.

After the massage, they served complimentary tea, a sorbet palate cleanser and a bowl of dried fruit snacks. Nice touch.

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The post-massage spread. Sorbet, green tea and dried fruit. A nice way to wind down.

The massage itself was good. Strong, hit all the right spots. Highly recommend if you are staying nearby.

Address: 04 Chu Máº¡nh Trinh, District 1, HCMC

My overall thoughts

My last visit to Saigon was about 15 years ago. Things have changed a lot. Where the roundabout used to be mostly motorbikes â?? maybe 20 to every one car â?? the ratio is now a lot more balanced. A lot more cars. You can see the country is doing well.

If you are into what Iâ??d call vibrant, systematic chaos, then Saigon is an interesting place to visit. If the whole point of your holiday is to relax, this may not be your go-to. You probably want to check out the outskirts, or try Hanoi or Da Nang instead.

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Food-wise I didnâ??t have a bad meal. But if I compare Vietnam to Bangkok, Thailand has a lot more variety. Maybe I havenâ??t explored enough, but the food in Saigon doesnâ??t deviate too much â?? pho, baguette, dry vermicelli. In Thailand I can get a lot more varied items.

The malls are nothing to shout about. Coming from Singapore, the international brands are the same ones I can find at home. I did not check the prices closely but I doubt the savings are significant.

Food: 4/5 â?? plenty of variety from cheap eats to Michelin. Anan Saigon and 4Pâ??s were the standouts. NUC was the only mild miss.

Shopping: 3.5/5 â?? Garmentory saved it. Most other spots felt like Platinum Mall. The building at 26 LÃ½ Tá»± Trá»•ng is worth visiting even if you donâ??t buy anything.

Hotel Indigo Saigon: 4/5 â?? good location, comfortable room, complimentary refills are a nice touch.

Will I return? Yes. Two days is too short. Next time I would stay 4 days, hit the spots I missed, and go a little further out of District 1. I hope if you are going for a short two- or three-day getaway, the places Iâ??ve been to can serve as a good starting point.

Missed Part 1? Catch up on where we ate over the two days. If you enjoy a slower-paced trip, my 12-day Aomori & Hokkaido self-drive series is a different mood altogether.

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