



# THE HOI AN POST

ISSUE 04

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is a gastronome's dream

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A happy and prosperous  
Lunar New Year at La Siesta Resort



## MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN

A warm welcome to all our Hoi An guests.

Please enjoy this edition of the Hoi An Post, with suggestions of what to see and do around Hoi An, as well as EHG updates.

Savor La Siesta Resort & Spa's culinary delights. Enjoy Red Bean's BBQ feast every Saturday night. Dinner is accompanied by traditional Vietnamese music and 'Ao Dai' attire if you wish to dress for the occasion. Alternatively, dine at The Temple Restaurant delighting in sublime melt-in-the-mouth international and seafood menus, whilst looking out at the saltwater pool. A famous Hoi An specialty is a simple dish of rice & chicken - Com Ga. We look at Com Ga Ba Buoi, one of the town's most famous rice & chicken eateries.

One of the best ways to enjoy the Hoi An countryside is on two wheels so take one of our guided cycle tours around the local villages meeting the locals and wildlife along the way.

As we head into the Year of the Dog, those visiting during February can delight in Hoi An's Tet celebrations. Tet Nguyen Dan is Vietnam's most important festival and public holiday where we welcome the Lunar New Year and the arrival of spring.

EHG and all the staff at La Siesta Resort & Spa wish you a happy and prosperous Lunar New Year. May all your wishes come true.

Thank you for reading and please enjoy your stay in Hoi An.

**Do Van Dan (Mr.)**  
Chairman/CEO

Elegance Hospitality Group



## Tet: Hoi An style

Governed by tradition, taboos and legends, Tet Nguyen Dan (Tet) welcomes the Lunar New Year and spring's arrival. It is Vietnam's most important festival and public holiday. The lunar and solar calendars are linked in Vietnam. The former dictates the observance of festivals and rituals according to cycles of the moon. Hence, Tet dates are not fixed. The New Year starts on the first night of the first moon of the first month of the lunar calendar.

Also known as The 'Feast of the First Morning of the First Day', it is when the new and good replace old and bad elements. People turn one year older as traditionally the New Year determines one's age. Custom dictates actions and thoughts at the start of the lunar New Year influence one's fate and prosperity for the coming 12 months. Also high on the agenda are family reunions and paying respect to the ancestors.

Preparations start early. People honor their ancestors and make offerings at family altars. Homes are cleaned and decorated with colorful flowers. Huge family feasts are prepared. Debts settled. New clothes purchased. Streets adorned with lights, flowers and festive red 'Chuc Mung Nam Moi' happy New Year banners. Legend says each home has three kitchen gods overseeing the household's affairs. On the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month, each kitchen god (Ong Tao) returns to the Jade Emperor on a carp fish. He delivers his annual report on the family, returning on New Year's Eve. People clean their houses and offer sacrifices in order to aid the god's journey and ensure a good report.

The Tet spirit permeates the entire country but Hoi An is one of the most endearing places to soak up the atmosphere. While other areas may 'close down' as locals take their big annual holiday and enjoy family reunions, Hoi An does more to entertain both international visitors and the local community. Many Hoi An families participate in homestay tours allowing visitors to experience Tet at first hand. Activities include learning how to decorate a family house with flowers and kumquat and bamboo pole trees and a lesson in preparing traditional Tet foods. Listen to the family elders recounting Tet legends and customs. Wander the flower market to choose appropriate flowers or visit temples and pagodas to observe the meaning of ancestor worship. On New Year's Day, visitors can even dress for the occasion donning traditional costumes.



Visiting Hoi An during Tet is a gastronome's dream, a chance to indulge in some of the most traditional Tet foods. An Tet literally means "to eat Tet" and food plays a central role in the celebrations. Dishes synonymous with Tet include Banh Chung and Banh Day. Compact savory "cakes" of sticky rice filled with beans and meat, wrapped in dong or banana leaves. A famous Vietnamese legend honors a son of King Hung Vuong VI who conjured up these square and round sticky rice "cakes". The King, overwhelmed by these humble but meaningful creations that honored the ancestors, appointed his son as his successor. Other creations enjoyed during Tet include Gio Cha (a type of sausage), Xoi Gac (sticky rice dyed red from Gac fruit), Thit ga (boiled chicken - a favorite dish of Hoi An), Bong (dried pigskin) and Hanh muoi (pickled onions).

One in important Tet tradition that Hoi An follows is decorating doors with red parallel sentences. The locals say this is an indispensable part of Tet and the town is awash with pieces of red paper bearing written wishes in this sentence style, asking for good luck, a long life, wealth, happiness and so on.

Bridges are decorated with dragons and lanterns and Hoi An's Tet charm is accentuated at New Year's Eve. Lion dances entertain, lantern parades light up the night, paper boats with candles float along the river while flowered cars process through the streets. Bells ring out from temples and pagodas, drums and gongs beat to time, signaling the Lunar New Year's arrival, ancient music fills the air as townspeople parade in ceremonial dress carrying the Five Fruits Tray.

Many of the town's regular performances and activities continue throughout Tet. These include Bai Choi, Hoi An's iconic folk singing that is a nightly spectacle in the ancient streets, together with traditional games such as pot breaking, Chinese chess, tug of war and martial arts competitions.

Celebrating Tet in Hoi An means you will experience the holiday period as a local.

#### **Tet 2018 calendar**

7 days statutory holiday

15 February - Vietnamese New Year's Eve

16 February - Vietnamese New Year's Day

17-21 February inclusive - Tet holiday

PLACE OF INTEREST

# TEMPLE RESTAURANT – a delight of

One of the most important features of La Siesta Resort & Spa is the pride taken in service and quality, achieving international standards and making the guests' experience as memorable and comfortable as possible.

This is seen in the attention to detail and deliciousness found at one of the newest additions to La Siesta Resort & Spa, the Temple Restaurant.

The spacious venue had its grand opening in July. Accented with dark wood and warm yellow lighting, it's a great place to enjoy a leisurely cocktail or an exquisite five course meal. Located beside the serene saltwater pool, the patio features lounging swings so that guests can come from the water to enjoy the restaurant fare.

Whereas the resort's Red Bean restaurant focuses on traditional Vietnamese favourites, making it possible for the guest to enjoy the best of local cuisine, Temple Restaurant offers delicious Western fare with a Vietnamese twist.

The head chef, a native of Hoi An, has a passion for seafood and a background in French and Italian cooking. He ensures that the freshest and highest quality ingredients are used in his creations by choosing the goods himself every day at the market.



## PROFESSIONALISM AND SERVICE

The restaurant manager, Mukhlisin Jaenuri, who recently joined the resort, said that professionalism and service are paramount for his staff.

Working with La Siesta Resort for a few months, Mr. Mukhlisin Jaenuri tries to instil pride in the EHG family in each of his staff members, so that they endeavour to devote the best service not just because they have to, but because they want to.

*"We want to build up staff that love their work, and strive to improve the guest's experience. We want to leave them smiling from the bottom of their heart."*

Each of the serving staff is trained in pairing food and drink and providing incomparable and attentive service. Team spirit is very important, and each staff member is encouraged to do their best for the brand.

*"People come for the food, but they return because of the professionalism and warm reception of the staff,"* Mr. Mukhlisin Jaenuri said.

## UNPARALLELED DINING

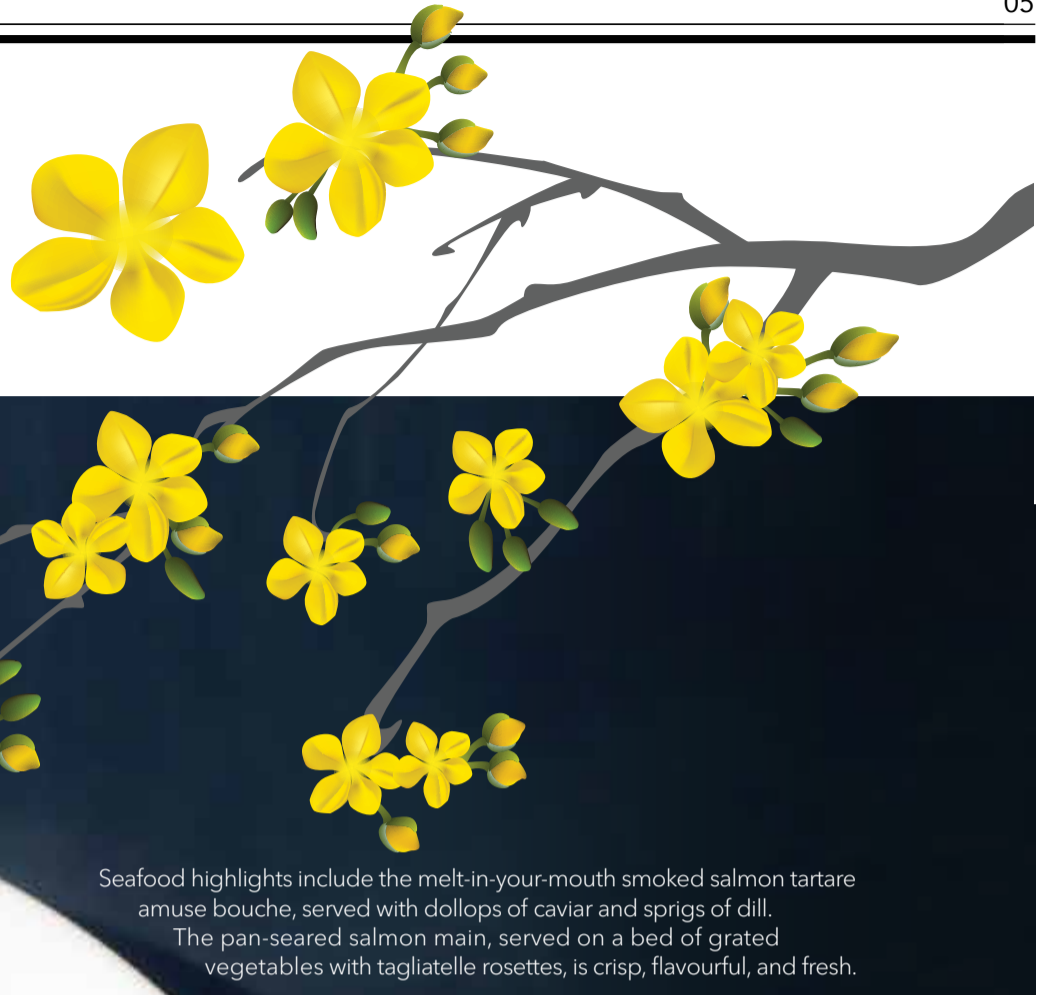
One of the goals for the restaurant is to gain acclaim outside of the hotel, and encourage visits from foodies from outside of the hotel.

The more relaxed atmosphere of Hoi An allows a dining experience like no other, Mr. Mukhlisin Jaenuri said

Featuring a la carte and set menus, the restaurant is not only marked by its service but by the delicious and conscientiously prepared and presented food.

Choice cuts of meat like the beef tenderloin, cooked to perfection and served with a savoury and distinctive au jus, are accompanied with creamy mashed potatoes and local vegetables such as the garlic-infused morning glory. Crowned with a crispy potato wheel, the presentation is as beautiful as the flavour.

# taste and service



Seafood highlights include the melt-in-your-mouth smoked salmon tartare amuse bouche, served with dollops of caviar and sprigs of dill. The pan-seared salmon main, served on a bed of grated vegetables with tagliatelle rosettes, is crisp, flavourful, and fresh.

The dessert course caps off the meal with a sweet flourish. Try the passion fruit cheesecake, a whipped confection garnished with caramelized sugar strips, whipped cream and strawberries. Another favourite is the lime tart, finished with a delicate burnt sugar crust and a decadent scoop of vanilla ice cream, topped with a chocolate orange blossom.

With your meal, you can enjoy a distinctive cocktail from the restaurant's well-stocked bar, or a glass from its expansive wine list

## RISING TO THE TOP

Mr. Mukhlisin Jaenuri said that the ambitious nature of the chain's founder has encouraged the restaurant to dream big, as well. He said they aim to be the No. 1 restaurant in Hoi An - no easy feat in a town filled with restaurants.

But he thinks that EHG's special combination of quality, friendly service, and professionalism will help the Temple Restaurant rise above the rest.

*"We uphold the highest standard of food and service, and provide the best value for the customer,"* he said.



# ROYAL DINNER BBQ

## at La Siesta Hoi An Resort & Spa Every Saturday Night

Savor the delights of Red Bean's authentic Vietnamese BBQ dinner. This special culinary highlight, held every Saturday evening in our beautiful courtyard, is a delicious dining experience for all our guests.

Mouthwatering fresh items feature the very best ingredients carefully selected from local markets and farms. Enjoy many of Vietnam's signature recipes, Hoi An specialties and national dishes - steamed, wok fried, deep-fried to sautéed, barbecued or pan-fried. An extensive array of seafood and shellfish, succulent cuts of meat, fresh vegetables, salads and herbs, create flavorful dishes, bursting with delicious aromas and intense colors. A choice of international wines, signature cocktails, beers, spirits and non-alcoholic beverages complement the menu.

Red Bean's evening BBQ is exquisitely designed, dishes impeccably presented in traditional style while the evening is accompanied by traditional Vietnamese music. Warm soft illumination from table lamps, ground lighting and glows from surrounding trees and the garden enhance the romantic atmosphere. Delight in the occasion even further by dressing for dinner in your very own áo dài. This is Vietnam's traditional royal costume, which still takes pride of place in formal and traditional occasions.

### Unlimited Red Bean BBQ

Every Saturday evening from 19:00hrs

Red Bean Courtyard, West Wing

**\$39 USD/ guest** (including traditional music, Áo Dài costume, excluding beverages)





# Cycling Tour around Hoi An

The countryside of Vietnam is a delight best explored on two wheels. In Hoi An, you can see the mountains near Danang in the distance on a clear day, hazed with blue. Water buffalo snort contentedly in the rice paddies and pastures, while ducks quack and shake their tail feathers as they cross your path on their way to water.

Many notable sites around Hoi An are accessible by bicycle. From the beaches to rural areas just outside of the old town, it can be an enjoyable way to see the countryside, exercise, and get some sun.

From La Siesta Resort & Spa, tranquil rice paddies are only moments away. After requesting one of the hotel's sleek red Japanese Postman bicycles, complimentary from the reception desk, you can visit many amazing sites.



## THANH HA TERRA COTTA PARK

From La Siesta Resort, turn right and go west on Hung Vuong. Make sure to take caution on the sometimes hectic roads. Turning slightly left and following Duy Tan road next to the river, you can reach the Thanh Ha Terracotta Park. It is famous for its centuries-old tradition of turning out pottery, bricks, and tiles - many of which are featured on buildings in Hoi An. The village of Thanh Ha surrounds a museum and a workshop area. It also houses an exhibition of miniature pottery models of famous buildings, such as the Coliseum and the Sydney Opera House, at 1/10th of the size.

## TRA QUE VILLAGE

Heading east on Hung Vuong, you can turn left onto one of Hoi An's main streets, Hai Ba Trung. This busy road leads to Tra Que Vegetable Village (just over Hai Ba Trung bridge), which features many organic vegetable gardens, and ends at the picture-perfect An Bang Beach. You can cycle along fishing ponds and amongst tidy rows of colourful vegetables, observing workers tending the produce carefully.





## SELF-GUIDED TOUR

### AN BANG BEACH

You can park at the sun-warmed sands of An Bang Beach for 5,000 - 10,000 VND, and pull up a lounge or a towel to soak up the rays on the golden sand before going for a dip in the blue. On the beach, you can see some of the traditional round fishing boats still used today by Vietnamese fisherman. At 5 am and 5 pm, many local Vietnamese families come to the beach for a swim and some food.



### CAM KIM ISLAND – THIEN TRAY VILLAGE

If you head east on Hung Vuong and turn right onto 18 Thang 8, crossing An Hoi island and travelling further across the Cau Kim bridge, you will arrive at the impossibly quiet and picturesque Triem Tay village. Small leafy laneways lead to sleepy temples, and breezy bamboo restaurants overlook the river, perfect for a beer and a plate of spicy food.

### SILK VILLAGE

Heading down the narrow laneway to the right of the hotel and heading north, you can travel to the Hoi An silk village, travelling through the rice paddies. Take your first left on the laneway, and shortly you will come upon the distinctive Chua Long Tuyen Buddhist temple, featuring many-tiered pagodas and a lovely garden with winding paths. At the end of the paddy path, you will come out on Nguyen Tat Thanh road, and see the elegant silk village located across the road.

Visitors can witness the work of a dozen artisans, who manufacture and weave silk into garments and wall hangings using traditional looms. You can also enjoy the mulberry gardens and visit the restaurant and showroom, featuring finished creations.



## GUIDED TOURS

Feel like a guided tour with one of our talented English speaking staff? La Siesta Resort & Spa offers morning and afternoon cycling trips to Thanh Ha village, during which customers can learn how to make traditional pottery, eat lunch with a local family, and learn to sail and fish from the round basket boat.

No. of people	1 pax	2 pax	3-5 pax	6-10 pax
Price/ Person (with lunch)	1,175,000	900,000	820,000	680,000

No. of people	1 pax	2 pax	3-5 pax	6-10 pax
Price/ Person (without lunch/boat ride)	950,000	630,000	510,000	420,000

# Chicken & rice and all things nice

A dish of rice and chicken may seem a simple combination of common ingredients, but without a doubt Com Ga is one of Hoi An's most authentic, deceptively intricate and most delicious of dishes. It is a favorite delicacy of central and southern Vietnam, existing for two or even three centuries. This simple dish calls to mind an era when food was plainer than nowadays.

The dish consists of small pieces of meat torn from a medium-sized local chicken. The meat is boiled and once cooled, it is mixed with chopped herbs, Vietnamese mint, sliced onions and raw vegetables. The resulting 'salad' is served with saffron rice, which has been cooked in chicken stock. The rice should have a light yellow color with a slightly dry texture. Some of the chicken stock broth is poured over the dish, which is accompanied with bowls of fresh chili, Vietnamese pickles and a fish dipping sauce (nuoc mam cham).

This rice and chicken dish became a popular specialty due to Hoi An's development. The town flourished in the early 17th century as an important East Sea trading port. A century later, it rose to prominence as Chinese and Japanese merchants considered it the best destination to conduct business. A large cosmopolitan population grew and the town became home to thousands of Chinese, Arabs, Japanese and Dutch, who all brought their cuisine with them.

The original version of Com Ga emanated from Hainan Island, China's most southerly province and one of the first variations to appear in Quang Nam Province was Com Ga Tam Ky.

Tam Ky (meaning three flags) was founded in 1906 by the Nguyen Dynasty and it is capital city of Quang Nam Province.

As well as settling in Hoi An, the Chinese also populated nearby Tam Ky. Hainanese chicken rice would have been popular at the time and one assumption is that the Chinese brought this dish with them to the Quang Nam region. However, some locals argue that Com Ga, as enjoyed in Hoi An, is 100% Hoi An and not influenced by Chinese ancestors.

Irrespective of who is right or wrong about the origins, there is no doubt Hoi An is packed with numerous Com Ga eateries, each with its own variations and secret recipes.

Each chicken rice restaurant is called 'Com Ga' followed by the owner's name or location, which distinguishes one from the other. For example, Com Ga Ba Ty, Com Ga Hoang, Com Ga Ba Nga ... and so on.

The modern day dish can be best enjoyed at a small restaurant uniquely located in an old house at 22 Phan Cu Trinh Street in the old town. The sign above proudly reads 'Com Ga Ba Buo'. Many consider this one of the most famous places in Hoi An to enjoy Com Ga. Three generations of the same family have been running this restaurant since the 1950s. Originally, the dish was sold in the market place and then the grandmother opened the restaurant, which is now run by her grandchildren. The establishment is small and extremely popular so one must be prepared for quite a long wait due to limited space. However, the resulting experience is worth it. Once inside one can observe the Com Ca Ba Buo being cooked incorporating a variety of fresh local ingredients. The restaurant also specializes in a soup (a secret family recipe) enjoyed with the rice and a spicy chili dipping sauce. It is highly likely you will ask for a second helping!

22 Phan Chu Trinh Street  
Hoi An ancient town  
11:00-21:00 open daily





# Speaking Vietnamese

1. Hello! - Xin chao! (sin chow!)
2. Goodbye - Tam Biet
3. How are you? - Ban co khoe khong? (ban co kwe khome?) also, Ban the nao?
4. I'm fine, thank you! - Cam on ban toi khoe (gahm un ban thoy kwe)
5. And you? - Ban thi sao? (ban ty sao?)
6. What's your name? - Ban ten gi? (ban thane zee)
7. My name is... - Toi la (thoy la...)
8. Thank you - Xin Cam on (sin gahm un)
9. You're welcome - Khong co' gi (khom go zee)
10. Yes - Vang (vung)
11. No - Khong (khome)
12. Excuse me/Sorry... - Xin loi (seen loy)
13. Can you help me? - Ban giup toi duoc khong? (ban zoop thoy duc khom?)
14. I'd like to eat - Toi muon an (thoy moowan un)
15. I'd like a drink - Toi muon uong (thoy moowan oowanh)
16. Good - Tot (thote)
17. Bad - Khong tot (khome thote)
18. What is this? - Cai nay la gi (guy nai la zee)
19. How much? - Bao nhieu? (bow nyew)
20. Too expensive - Mac qua (mahk qwa)
21. Where is the nearest internet shop? - Cho internet o dau? (choh internet uh doh)
22. Where is the nearest bank? - Nha bang o dau? (nya bung uh doh)
23. Hotel - Khach San (khack san)
24. Hot - Nong (nom)
25. Cold - Lanh (lang)
26. Coffee - Ca phe (cah feh)
27. Hot black coffee - Ca phe nong (cah feh nom)
28. Hot Coffee with milk - Ca phe sua nong (cah feh sua nom)
29. Tea - Tra (chah)
30. I like - Toi thich (thoy tick)
31. I am happy - Toi vui (thoy vuoy)
32. I am tired - Toi met (thoy mate)
33. Where is an ATM - Cay ATM o dau? ( kei a te mo uh doh)



## ABOUT EHG

Elegance Hospitality is a group of hotels renowned for our well-equipped facilities and sophisticated service. Founded in the early 2000s, we have developed from our first hotel in Hanoi to the current chain of 5 boutique hotels in Hanoi's Old Quarter and one outstanding resort in Hoi An Town. Our distinctive collection of properties redefines the very concept of boutique and luxury hospitality.

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