

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2022 | Anhtuan Nguyen

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AAPI
Asian American and Pacific Islander
HERITAGE MONTH



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Q: To what Asian or Pacific Island country(s)/region are you connected?
A: Vietnam

Q: When you think of Vietnam, what feeling does it evoke?
A: A familial or humble small-town pride. Vietnam's people do not have a long history of mass migration. In fact, Vietnamese-Americans make up about half of all Vietnamese people overseas. When we encounter others with Vietnamese surnames, there is usually an immediate sense of family (at least for the first generation or older). A majority of the Vietnamese diaspora have similar stories of why and how they left their place of origin.

Q: What are some of Vietnam's cultural traditions? Which of any of these does your family celebrate?
A: Many Vietnamese people still honor the traditions of ancestral worship during the Lunar New Year or death anniversaries despite their religious background. For example: some will light incense with food offerings or during prayer. My family may have converted to Catholicism many generations ago but our ancestors did not.

Q: What is Vietnam known for?
A: Unfortunately, Vietnam is known for her most recent wars but the country has healed much since then. In mainstream western culture, Vietnam is known for its tropical landscape, French, and Chinese-influenced architecture, friendly citizens, but mostly its food. There are generations of cultures and regions represented in the fusion that make up the Vietnamese cuisine.

Q: Is there a particular food dish that reminds you of Vietnam?
A: There are so many but the most ubiquitous is Pho (beef noodle soup), Vermicelli (rice noodle with lemongrass pork) and Banh Mi (French baguette with cold cuts).

Q: What is one major misconception Vietnam?
A: One major misconception is Vietnam's people are very homogenous in ethnicity, lifestyle, and outlook. A more critical study of the country's history and anthropology will reveal that it is quite diverse.

Q: What major holiday is celebrated in Vietnam?
A: Tết Nguyên Đán or "Tet" for short. It is also known as Lunar New Year.

Q: Is there anything else about Vietnam that you would like to share?
A: Approximately 40% of the Vietnamese population have the surname Nguyen (pronounced "win"). The history of the surname is complex and reveals much about Vietnam's political history and how the country was shaped.