

## Con Dao Islands

In this island, you can not only get beautiful view of the beaches for your Vietnam tours, but also the chance to glance the precious wildlife. One of the stellar attractions in this region, the Con Dao Archipelago is slowly gaining attention for its startling natural beauty. Con Son, the largest of this chain of 15 islands and islets, is ringed with lovely beaches, coral reefs and scenic bays, and remains partially covered in thick forests. In addition, hiking, diving and exploring empty coastal roads and deserted beaches, there are some excellent wildlife-watching opportunities and many [hotels in Con Dao island](#).

Con Son Island (with a total land area of 20sq km) is also known by its Europeanized Malay name, Iles Poulo Condore (Paulau Kundur), which means 'Island of the Squashes'. The mains sights on this island are a Revolutionary museum, several prisons—Phu Hai Prison and Phu Son Prison, and Hang Duong Cemetery.

## Con Dao National Park

Con Dao National Park is center on an archipelago of 14 islands, the largest of which is Con Son. The topography of Con Son island is mountainous, and dominated by a granite ridge, which runs from south-west to north-east, sheltering the bays on both sides of the island from strong winds. The highest points on the island are the summits of Mount Thanh Gia and Mount Chua, at 577 and 515 m respectively. The smaller islands reach a maximum elevation of 200 m. The French wardens forced prisoners to collect live coral and turn it into lime. The coral reefs survived, but only to face further damage from uncontrolled and destructive fishing.

The National Park was established in 1977, but protection extended only to the flora and fauna on land. The park now covers fourteen of the sixteen islands and their surrounding marine areas. The forest cover on the islands is dense: a sizable proportion is in pristine condition, particularly the humid hill forest growing above 500m above sea level. Even though control over the exploitative use of the sea was established as late as 1993, and despite the damage wreaked by the French, over a thousand hectares of Con Dao National Park's coral reefs survive in the shallow waters - a stark contrast to other areas of Vietnam that have low coral cover as a result of overexploitation, destructive fishing, and sedimentation. The entire marine area is rich in biodiversity: over 1,300 species of sea animals have already been identified. The ecosystems on Con Dao are favorable habitats for rare species such as the Hawksbill and Green Turtles, and Dugong, the strange creatures popularly known as 'sea cows' and believed to be the source of the 'mermaid' legends from their habit of sunbathing on rocks.

## Revolutionary Museum

The Revolutionary Museum is next to Saigon Con Dao Hotel and has exhibits on Vietnamese resistance to the French, communist opposition to

Republic of Vietnam, and the treatment of political prisoners (including some gruesome photos of torture). There is also a mock-up of the islands and some curiously embalmed animals including a monkey smoking a pipe. Anyway, it is not a bad idea to know more about Vietnam in your Vietnam tours. So, make it part of your plan for your Vietnam holiday.

#### Phu Binh Camp

Phu Binh Camp is also part of the main tour, so don't miss it in your Vietnam tours. Though it's outside of town, it's funny to visit it. Built in 1971 by the American this one has 384 chambers and was known as Camp 7 until 1973, when it closed following evidence of torture. After the Paris Agreements in 1973, the name was changed to Phu Binh Camp. Now you have the opportunity to experience it since you have planned your Vietnam holiday.

#### Con Son Beaches

On Con Son, there are several good beaches worth finding. so, if you feel tired during your Vietnam tours in Con Son Island, find them. Bai Dat Doc is one nice beach with long stretch of sand. Keep an eye out for dugongs frolicking in the water, Bai Nhat is small and very nice, though it's exposed only during low tide. Bai An Hai looks nice, but there are a good number of fishing boats moored nearby, and a few too many sandflies. Perhaps the best all-round island to visit is Bay Canh, which has lovely beaches, old-growth forest, mangroves, coral reefs and sea turtles(seasonal). There is a fantastic two-hour walk to functioning French-built lighthouse, which will enrich your memories in this Vietnam holiday.

#### Mekong River Islands

What makes your Vietnam tours in Vinh Long worthwhile is not the town but the beautiful small islands in the river. The islands are given over to agriculture, especially the growing of tropical fruit, which are shipped to markets in Ho Chi Minh City. To visit the islands, you can charter a boat through TUN Travel if you have already [Vietnam visa](#). You can take the public ferry to one of the islands and then walk around on your own; however, this isn't as interesting as a boat tour, since you won't cruise the narrow canals. Anyway, it's not bad to travel in different ways in your Vietnam holiday.