

HỘI AN

15.8801° N, 108.3380° E

PRICE: FROM US\$180 PER NIGHT

A stay that delivers innovative dining, local art and plenty of tropical allure in Vietnam's most enchanting city, Hội An

Riverside beauty

WORDS: SARAH FREEMAN



They say location is everything, but so too is being cocooned from the hustle and bustle of the city. Striking this balance with aplomb is Anantara Hoi An Resort, a mini oasis nestled on the fringes of the Vietnamese city's ancient quarter.

Ninety-four rooms and suites are split between two terracotta-roofed buildings that wrap round a palm-shaded square pool.

Its hanging vines, fragrant herb garden and frangipani trees may transport you to some faraway tropical land, but local life and culture remain within arm's reach. A public promenade separates the resort from the Thu Bon River, where sampans (Chinese wooden boats) putter downstream and buffalo lazily graze on its banks. A sweet spot to watch this bucolic scene unfold is the terrace of the resort's Hoi An Riverside Restaurant, over a

plate of beef salad. The romance is taken up a notch at night, when clusters of glowing paper lanterns carrying wishes, float on by.

Local Vietnamese design elements combine with French and Japanese heritage in a cohesive mix, from exposed timber in the Lanterns restaurant to airy guestrooms with shuttered French windows and ceiling fans. An elegant balustrade divides the split-level living-bedroom area, flanked by a mosaic bathroom with rain shower, and luxurious house brand products.

Sealing the deal are the rooms' wide porches – Anantara's refined take on the street-side hammocks locals sling up for their daily siesta. Endowed with plaster-cast cushioned daybeds, they're the only place to spend a languid afternoon with a dog-eared book and lemon-grass iced tea, gazing out over the river.

ART MEETS TECH

Making its contribution to Hội An's thriving creative scene is the resort's new art and dining concept space, where you can dine on wood-fired oven pizza and grilled spiny lobster, with a side of local art. Its curator is acclaimed British artist Bridget March, who has brought candid Vietnamese street photography, Fauvist-style landscapes and portraits by acclaimed French photographer Réhahn Croquevielle to the venue's bare-brick walls. The dessert plates are equally creative, thanks to a 3D food printer (Vietnam's first and only one), which magic's up edible Japanese Bridges and Mondrian paintings.

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Aside from its Chinese Temples, colonial-styled houses and 18th-century Japanese Bridge, Hội An's old town is where you'll find some of the city's best art, traditional food and tailoring. Check out Réhahn's gallery-slash-museum to see fine art photography and traditional dress from the country's 54 minority tribes. Then try the city's signature dish, Cao lầu, made with water sourced from a local ancient well, at no-frills Cao lầu Không Gian Xanh. Ready to get measured up? At Kimmy Tailor's, you don't just come home with a new suit – you're assigned a personal style guide and get to visit its factory, located just one block away.



Hội An, known as the city of 1,000 lanterns



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