

WHERE TO STAY

CNT EXCLUSIVE

ANANTARA QUY NHON VILLAS

Jyoti Kumari gets an exclusive sneak peek into the perfect secret getaway in Vietnam

Good things come to those who wait. Nowhere is this adage truer than in this quiet corner of Vietnam. After changing three flights and driving almost an hour through rice fields and sleepy towns, you get a glimpse of lush hills. But this was meant to be a beach property, you think. And then, as you continue driving up the winding road, you see it. The unbelievable blue of Quy Nhon Bay. Good things, you see.

Set on a hillside, stretching down to a private beach, Anantara Qui Nhon Villas is the group's third outing in the country. Over an hour's flight from Ho Chi Minh City, it is the perfect escape from hectic city life.

Designed to blend into its surroundings, with open areas in landscaped topography and lush foliage, the 26-villa property is spread across seven idyllic acres. Choose between Ocean View and Beachfront Pool Villas—all the rooms look out to the bay, which means you are guaranteed spectacular views from all corners, at all times. Watch dawn break from the comfort of your bed or catch the final rays of the sun spread over this quiet corner of the bay as you enjoy a dip in your cliff-edged in-villa pool. Insider tip: the oversized bath tubs have the best bay views in the house. Pick a bottle from your wine cellar, opt for a salt soak and allow that feeling of calm you've been craving

to wash over you. For more pampering, sign up for the in-villa bath ceremony. The herbal bath helps eliminate stress and balance the body, mind and spirit—and the view is just what you need to up your Insta game. What else can a girl ask for at the end of the day?

If you do decide to leave your villa at all, visit the Anantara Spa for a variety of nature-inspired therapies with equally therapeutic views. Those looking for a serious detox could sign up for the one-, three- and five-day wellness programmes that can be customised. While all Anantara wellness programmes include yoga, special meals and spa treatments, the Spiritual Tranquillity therapy is ideal for those who want the →

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whole package. It comes with chakra crystal-balancing and Tibetan singing bowls that work to calm those frazzled nerves. For a more intense session of detoxification, the Holistic Health Renewal programme, which is particularly focused on boosting metabolism and eliminating toxins, is highly recommended. However, if, like me, you want to get a taste of that acclaimed Anantara pampering without committing to a longer plan, sign up for a signature 90-minute massage and let one of the magic-fingered therapists do their job. And for a truly soul-nourishing experience, go for the Journey of Vietnam, a 3.5-hour treatment that includes a coconut milk bath in addition to the massage and facial. You can thank us later.

Once you're all scrubbed, relaxed and ready for more, there are multiple activities to choose from. Ask the concierge to plan a guided city tour, which includes a visit to centuries-old Buddhist pagodas and remains of the Champa kingdom. For me, though, the highlight of the tour was the chance to taste Vietnam's famous street food and local beer. What's more, you can actually learn to cook these delicacies with the chef back at the property—so the next time you're in need of some soupy comfort, you won't need to waste time hunting for the perfect pho joint. #DIY

If an intimate dinner is what you're looking for, you can ask for a grill to be set up in your villa. But if you're in the mood to experiment, visit the hotel's restaurant, Sea.Fire.Salt. With different menus for lunch and dinner, it serves a combination of Vietnamese dishes and international favourites. The Himalayan salt

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bricks, believed to be 2,000 years old, are at the centre of the experience. The salt library has more than 20 salts, infused with local flavours, that complement each dish on the menu. A selection of meats and vegetables is grilled on hot slabs of salt and served with a combination of these salts. The entire experience is a treat not only for the palate, but for all your senses. As you learn to notice and identify the faint notes of ginger, basil and other infusions, you slowly start to appreciate what's around you—be it a walk on the private beach or a view of the early morning sky.

Appreciation is also due to the gorgeous infinity pool. Spend some time in or by it, and make full use of the sunken bar and its endless supply of cocktails, and enjoy its uninterrupted view of the bay, speckled with tiny fishing boats with two islands in the background. This is the perfect spot for that #wanderlust post. Or switch off your phone and just let the slow life take over. Somewhere between the sound of the waves, twinkling of the stars and lights from the fishing boats, you will find your happy place. 📍

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Bai Dai, Ghenh Rang, Quy Nhon City, Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam (anantara.com;
doubles from VND11,597,750 or ₹35,200)