

VIETNAMESE FOR SOCIAL LIFE

Out & About

Tiếng Việt Cửa Hàng · Quán
Ăn · Quán Bar

From the shop counter to buying someone a drink. Short, friendly phrases for shops, restaurants and bars — order, pay, and open a conversation.

LESSON 6 OF 7

1 At the Shop Cửa hàng tiện lợi

The shop counter is the lowest-stakes conversation in the country — a few set phrases and a smile do the whole thing. Nail these and you'll never freeze when the cashier rattles something off.

VIETNAMESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
Cái này bao nhiêu Cái này this one bao nhiêu how much	<i>kai nay bow nyew</i>	How much is this?	Point at the item
Cho cái này Cho give cái này this one	<i>chaw kai nay</i>	This one, please	Point and nod
Cho cái túi Cho give cái túi a bag	<i>chaw kai too-ee</i>	A bag, please	túi = bag
Trả thẻ được không Trả pay thẻ card được không is it possible?	<i>cha te duok khong</i>	Can I pay by card?	
Không cần túi Không no cần need túi bag	<i>khong kun too-ee</i>	No bag, thanks	
Hâm nóng giúp Hâm nóng heat up giúp (please) help	<i>hum nong zup</i>	Heat it up, please	For ready food

JUST POINT AND PAY

You almost never need a full sentence at a counter. Set your item down, say the short phrase, and let the cashier guide you — a nod handles everything you didn't catch.

2 Ordering Gọi món

Pointing plus one polite word gets you fed anywhere. You don't need the menu memorised — “this one, please” and a finger covers most of it, and asking what's good opens an actual chat.

VIETNAMESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
Hai người Hai two người people	<i>hai nguh-ee</i>	Table for two	Hold up two fingers
Cho món này Cho give món dish này this	<i>chow mon nay</i>	This one, please	Point at the menu
Có gì ngon không Có have gì what ngon tasty không (question)	<i>kaw zee ngon khong</i>	What's good?	Opens a chat
Cho giống vậy Cho give giống vậy the same	<i>chow zong vay</i>	The same, please	Order what they had
Không cay Không no cay spicy	<i>khong kai</i>	Not spicy	Handy to know
Cho xin nước Cho xin may I have nước water	<i>chow sin nuok</i>	Water, please	

A FINGER IS FLUENT

Point at the dish — on the menu, on the next table, on your phone — and add the polite word. Staff would much rather you point than stay silent.

3 Paying **Tính tiền**

Asking for the bill and paying cleanly is its own tiny social skill. Get it smooth and you walk out looking like you've done it a hundred times — and “it's on me” is a warm little offer.

VIETNAMESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
Tính tiền Tính tally up tiền money	<i>ting tien</i>	The bill, please	The standard call
Trả riêng được không Trả pay riêng separately được không can we?	<i>cha rieng duok khong</i>	Can we pay separately?	
Để tôi trả Để let tôi me trả pay	<i>deh toy cha</i>	It's on me	A warm offer
Trả thẻ được không Trả pay thẻ card được không is it possible?	<i>cha te duok khong</i>	Can I pay by card?	Cash still common
Ngon lắm Ngon tasty lắm very	<i>ngon lam</i>	It was delicious	Always appreciated
Cảm ơn	<i>kam un</i>	Thank you	On your way out

CARRY SMALL NOTES

Tipping isn't expected but is appreciated for good service. Cash is still king at smaller spots, so keep small notes handy.

4 At the Bar Quán bar

The bar is where a phrase becomes a moment. “What are you having?” and “may I buy you a drink?” are tiny lines that can open a whole evening — say them light, smile, and let the drink do the rest.

VIETNAMESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
Bạn uống gì Bạn you uống drink gì what	<i>ban uong zee</i>	What are you drinking?	Easy opener
Mời bạn một ly được không Mời invite/offer bạn you một one ly glass được không may I?	<i>muh-ee ban mot lee duok khong</i>	May I buy you a drink?	Light and warm
Thêm một ly nữa Thêm add một one ly glass nữa more	<i>tem mot lee nua</i>	One more?	
Dzô	<i>zoh</i>	Cheers!	The classic toast
Hay đến đây không Hay often đến come đây here không (question)	<i>hai den day khong</i>	Do you come here often?	Classic, and it works
Ở đây vui nhỉ Ở đây here vui fun nhỉ isn't it	<i>uh day vui nyee</i>	Nice vibe here	A shared observation

OFFER, DON'T PRESSURE

“May I buy you a drink?” lands as a light, easy offer — not a transaction. Ask, smile, and be just as happy with a no. The relaxedness is the attractive part, not the drink.

YOU

Bạn uống gì

ban uong zee

What are you drinking?

HER

Bia.

bia

Beer.

YOU

Mời bạn một ly nhé

muh-ee ban mot lee neh

Can I buy you one?

HER

Ừ, cảm ơn.

uh, kam un

Sure, thanks.

YOU

Dzô! Hay đến đây không

zoh! hai den day khong

Cheers! Do you come here often?

★ Pocket Lines Một câu

When your brain blanks, these are the words that still come out. One or two syllables each — impossible to fumble. Keep them on the tip of your tongue.

VIETNAMESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	WHEN TO USE IT
Cái này Cái (thing) này this	<i>kai nay</i>	This one	Point and you're understood
Giống vậy Giống alike vậy so / like that	<i>zong vay</i>	Same for me	Order what they had
Bao nhiêu Bao how nhiêu much	<i>bow nyew</i>	How much?	Works anywhere
Dzô	<i>zoh</i>	Cheers!	Glasses up
Ngon	<i>ngon</i>	Yum!	Say it mid-bite
Tính tiền Tính tally up tiền money	<i>ting tien</i>	Check, please	Flag the staff

SMALL WORDS, BIG EASE

One confident word with a smile beats a perfect sentence mumbled. These six get you through almost any counter, table or bar — lean on them when your mind goes blank.

Vietnamese for Social Life · Lesson 6 — Out & About · Point, pay, and offer a drink. The counter is the easiest conversation there is.