Leave Your Worries Behind: How to Find a Reputable Travel Agent in Vietnam
Using a travel agent isn't something most people think of when going on a trip. After all, there are many travel sites out there already. What do you need to speak to a live human being for? Aren't travel agents expensive? Don't they charge fees, commissions, and aren't they too self-serving?

It's common to be weary of an agent, but that's because a few bad apples have soiled the barrel. There's still good agents out there, such as the Co-operative travel agents. What's more, a good agent is worth more than all of the travel sites on the Internet, combined. There are many dedicated travel agents that can help you arrange the perfect vacation, provide all the information and documentation like Vietnam visa you need, secure exclusive tickets to shows, obtain discounts on hotels in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh city or other cities you'd never get yourself, and even give you a few tips about must-see places while on your vacation in Vietnam. So, how do you find that perfect agent? Here's how:

1. Search for a CTC (Certified Travel Counsellor).
   Certified Travel Counsellors have five years' experience in the industry. They have earned the right to be professionals in the industry. This is the first thing you should look for. While this doesn't necessarily guarantee that you'll get a great trip adviser for your personal needs, it is the best starting point. Anything less is pretty much a gamble. One of the best places to search for a travel agent is by finding premier organisations that only allow the best agents in the industry to market their products and services to customers. These organisations are like a 5-star restaurant playing host to the best chefs in the industry.

2. Get a recommendation.
   Recommendations are always good if you know someone who travels a lot. If you can get a recommendation for a CTC, all the better. This is probably going to give you a really great travel experience.

3. Tell the agent about your personal values.
   Before you commit to an agency or agent, tell him about your personal values. See if you can make a connexion with your agent. This is one of the most important things you can do. It will set the "tone" for the business relationship. This is because a lot of what makes a great travel agent is his ability to create a vacation package that suits your personal style.
   Often, that means taking you to new and exciting places that you've never been to before, while still catering to your needs and preferences. For example, let's say you've always loved the idea of sipping a cocktail on a white, sandy, beach but you don't like crowds. A good agent will know how to put together a package that makes you think you're a VIP buying out an entire beach for a weekday or even a weekend if the location is remote enough.

4. Ask about personal experience and travel.
   What good is a travel agent if she doesn't have a lot of travel experience? An

important question to ask is: “what’s your travel experience?” Your agent shouldn’t flinch at a question like this. In fact, she should be able to tell you about some of her favourite spots. This is great – it means that her experience probably transfers over to your vacation. She knows the kinds of things that you’ll encounter on far-away places that you’ve never been to before. She has experience coping with the unknown and unfamiliar and can set up your trip so that you’re as comfortable as you would be if you just stayed home.

5. Who Will Be Booking Your Travel?
   It might seem obvious that you’d get a dedicated agent, but some agencies don’t provide personal travel planners. Stay away from these places. You’re probably not going to get the best rates on anything and, if something goes wrong, you’ll be on your own. Get a dedicated, personal, travel agent that you can call directly at any point during your trip.

6. Make a Decision.
   Once you’ve thoroughly interviewed the agency, and your planner, it’s time to make a decision. Even good agents might not be right for you. It’s important that you have a personal connection of some kind with your agent, and that your agency allow you free access to your planner. In a way, your travel agent will become a good friend for the duration of your trip.