

But there is one stop on the DMZ tour that most of the reviews/people agree on that is worth seeing – the Vinh Moc tunnels. And I knew that I wanted to visit those even before reading about the DMZ, ever since I've visited the Cu Chi tunnels last year when I was in Ho Chi Minh city with [Vietnam visa on arrival](#).

Vinh Moc tunnels – getting there from Hue

They are located in Vinh Moc (Quang Tri), around an hour further North from Dong Ha and it is easy to continue your journey to Dong Hoi directly from there after you've visited the tunnels. I've decided to go to Dong Ha from Hue first and arrange some kind of transport to the tunnels from there. After getting out of the taxi at the Hue bus station, it took exactly two minutes for the touts on the bus station to somehow get me into a minivan full of locals and I was on my way to Dong Ha. The ride took around one hour and thirty minutes and I paid 35.000 VND for it. All good.

When I arrived to Dong Ha station and started asking around who would take me to the Vinh Moc tunnels everybody was looking at me like I'm stupid and laughing. Nobody spoke a word of English and I was just pointing to the location on Google Maps, when two guys came by and wanted 500.000 VND to take me there on a motorbike. By writing the numbers down on my phone's calculator we came to a price of 250.000 VND, but since they spoke no English, I just showed them on the map to take me to (what looked like) the main street in Dong Ha. One of them took me there for 10.000 VND. While driving me and my two bags he started calling someone on his phone... and little did I know that he called another guy that met us on the main road just a few minutes later.

This guy could speak very good English and we quickly agreed on a price for the trip to the Vinh Moc tunnels. After the visit he would also take me to the road where I'd catch a ride to Dong Hoi. He offered that we also stop on other sights of the DMZ, but I said it won't be necessary and lowered the price a bit more on that note. We agreed on 150.000 VND. He put my big bag on his bike and we first went to his house for his wind jacket and some money... but first he invited me in, introduced me to his wife, gave me some tea and showed me that he can play guitar. Very kind. I've returned the kindness by buying a bottle of water also for him, when I asked him to stop at a small shop. The trip from Dong Ha to Vinh Moc on a motorbike took 55 minutes. I took all of my luggage with me (big backpack between the driver's legs, small backpack on my back). While in the tunnels I left the big backpack at one of the stalls at the entrance.

The driver seemed to know the lady there and said it was OK. All the valuables were on me anyway. Admission fee is 40.000 VND. The driver went with me to explain some things and the entrance for him was free. I have stayed at a room which I have booked online at [hotels in Dong Ha Vietnam](#), they offer very good price.

Vinh Moc tunnels

The Vinh Moc tunnels were built by the villagers of Vinh Moc as a shelter from the heavy bombings in the American War. This was one of the most heavily bombed areas in Vietnam, with 9.000 tons of bombs dropped in the area (that is 7 tons of bombs per person living there!). It's amazing on what the people are capable of doing to survive. The underground tunnels go three stories deep, to a depth of 30 meters. The total length is more than 2 km and they were built with simple, everyday tools. It took the villagers 13 months to build the Vinh Moc Tunnels (1965-1966) and more than 90 families lived there from 1966 to 1972. Babies were born underground, they ate, slept and had a school there. The gritty feeling, when going through the museum with many pictures of the life in the Vinh Moc tunnels, slowly creeps in and gets even stronger when you later enter them.

You are free to roam inside the tunnels for as long as you want. My driver asked me if I wanted him to go with me, but I said it's fine so he waited outside. But a little guy with a flashlight joined me (eventhough I had my own). He was already there when I was going around the small museum and was supposedly born in the tunnels. He was mentally disabled (Agent Orange... ?) and couldn't really speak, but when I was looking at the picture with the babies in the tunnels, he was pointing at it and himself. I knew he'll want a tip at the end for going with me, but I let him and gave him 20.000 VND. That and me taking pictures made his day. It was really funny ... he was constantly making sounds, laughing and screaming when the shutter went off and the pictures appeared on the screen. And when I pointed that we should take a picture together, he screamed, laughed, clapped his hands...

The Vinh Moc tunnels are one impressive and sad sight, the feeling that you get there is really hard to describe or show with the pictures... but no matter how gritty and dark it is, it's still impossible to really imagine how hard it must have been for the people living there. Especially now when the tunnels were widened/expanded, lights were added so they are friendlier to the visitor and the atmosphere is so peaceful... you exit them right at the beach, the sun is shining and there are no planes, gunshots and falling bombs to be heard.