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English I

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“Saigon, a piece of delightful steak.”

Welcome to an old but modern Saigon. With the population of 7.5 million people, ranked the 25th of the world, Saigon’s population is as crowded as a colony of ants. The narrow streets and alleys are always bursting with people and motorbikes. The luminous sun is dancing in the sky, from January to December, non-stop. The classical design of the sacred cathedral at the center of the city, the Notre Dame, is always on the itinerary of tourists visiting Saigon. The delicious cuisine of Saigon streets vendors are social attractions for Vietnamese teens and young adults. Saigon in my eyes is a piece of steak, there’s a piece of everything in this modern yet antique city, and that’s what makes Saigon.

Notre Dame is a glorious site, the holy grail of Saigon Christians. It was modeled after the Notre Dame in Paris by the French colonists, during the 1800s. The windows structure, the brick colors, as well as many European decorations exterior of the basilica, all of those, has reminded Saigon citizens of a hard time in the past, when the French were still here. Around the outside of the basilica is the statue of Virgin Mary. She is holding an apple, the forbidden fruit in the Bible, and looking up towards the vast sky above her. The expressions on Virgin Mary’s face is somehow sad-looking. Around the statue of Virgin Mary are small, vivid pots of flowers. Daffodils, lilies, sunflowers, roses, orchids and thousands of others, together they spread a charming scent, which will fascinated everyone’s senses. Going inside the basilica, the unique ceiling with classical decorations has pop into the eyes of visitors. Its European patterns as well as its orthodox looking are some of the characteristics that made them stand out from the others. The wooden poles with European patterns, intersecting and overlapping each other on the ceiling has created a very European feel of the basilica. On the two sides of the basilica are dome shape windows frame with curtains hanging, created a feeling as if you are in cartoon castles, where the princess sits at the windows frame brushing their hair, waiting for Prince Charming. Wooden rows of chairs for prayers are lying on the striped-pattern floor tiles of the basilica. It offers a comfortable feeling for the prayers when they sit down and pray. Far inside the basilica are statues of Jesus Christ, blessing for those faithful prayers. Statues sizes are varies, from tiny to enormous. The Notre Dame of Saigon, stays there through years and years, has brought to visitors an unique feeling that nowhere can offered them.

Outside the Notre Dame’s sacred precinct, is another distinguish world. Unlike the quiet of the basilica, the busy traffic and the sound of horns are always considered as a specialty, a must-have of Saigon. Ding-ding and beep-beep are always heard on every corners of the streets, from small alleys to intersections. Cars, from budget series, such as the Toyotas, to luxury series, such as the Mercedes-Benz or BMW, are surfing the streets along with the motorbikes. Besides cars and motorbikes, cyclos, scooters and skateboards also join the busy streets. On the sidewalks, ladies around the middle-aged ages are selling Vietnamese street snacks, such as the rice papers, fried pancakes, spring rolls, lemon tea, etc. Even though these foods ingredients may varies, however, it all shares the same taste, a combination of sweet and spicy, which is a special taste of the Southern Vietnamese foods. Plastic chairs lied everywhere on the sidewalks, reflecting the gleaming sunlight. Vietnamese teenagers come here with their friends and chat all day long while enjoying the snack. The whispers, the “1-2-3-Yo” shout are some significant sounds that you can hear besides the vehicles’ horns. These factors has turned Saigon into a lively city.

In conclusion, under my pair of eyes, Saigon is a piece of steak. It is a mixture of everything. Depends on who you are and what you’re looking for, Saigon, will always be an interesting destination to pop by. To me, the burning sun of Saigon, the gorgeous Notre Dame Cathedral, the mouth-watering street cuisine, along with the heavy traffic of this city will be those remarkable memories of my childhood about this place that I will brought with me throughout my life.

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