

POSTCARD FROM

# Dong Khoi area

## HO CHI MINH CITY

— Historic cultural landmarks stand side-by-side with chic boutiques and hot restaurants in this colourful District 1 neighbourhood —

### 1 FINE ARTS MUSEUM

Housed in a massive colonial-era mansion, this is one of the country's most famous art museums. Spanning three floors, the gallery is chock-full of paintings, lacquer work and sculptures created by Vietnamese artists.

[fb.me/baotangmythuathcm](https://fb.me/baotangmythuathcm)

### 2 14 TON THAT DAM

From the outside, 14 Ton That Dam just looks like an ageing apartment block but hidden inside are cafés, restaurants and boutiques. On the weekends, local teens fill the maze-like building, snapping selfies in the derelict yet picturesque hallways. On weekdays, it's eerily quiet and prime for exploring. For excellent city and river views, head to the fourth floor and order a cocktail at Utakata Bar.

[fb.me/utakata00](https://fb.me/utakata00)

### 3 THE WORKSHOP

For a taste of the city's café culture, this industrial-chic space is the place to go. Here you'll find people working on their laptops, chatting with friends over lunch and sipping on cold brews.

[fb.me/the.workshop.coffee](https://fb.me/the.workshop.coffee)

### 4 L'APOTHIQUAIRE SPA

As the name suggests, this spa takes its cues from the French and offers a long, luscious list of pampering body scrubs, wraps and massages. Their soothing After Sun Remedy for Body treatment is perfect following a day in the city's scorching heat.

[laphothiquaire.vn](https://laphothiquaire.vn)

### 5 LAYLA EATERY & BAR

Hidden at the top of a dark and dodgy stairwell inside a run-down colonial building is one of the city's most stylish bars. Layla serves tasty tapas but their innovative cocktails are the reason young professionals and expats flock here after work. Expect topnotch renditions of all the classics but if you're feeling adventurous, you can always opt for a Nutella Negroni or wasabi-vodka oyster shooter.

[fb.me/LaylaEateryandBarHCM](https://fb.me/LaylaEateryandBarHCM)

### 6 SAIGON OPERA HOUSE

The area of Dong Khoi is known for its French-influenced architecture dating back to the colonial era. Built in 1898 by French architect Eugene Ferret, the magnificent opera house building is one of the city's most extraordinary but it isn't all about good looks, of course – you can also catch a show there during your visit.

[luneproduction.com/saigon-opera-house](https://luneproduction.com/saigon-opera-house)

### 7 QUAN BUI BISTRO

If you don't want to slurp your pho at a street-side food stall, Quan Bui Bistro is an upmarket alternative. The unique menu features authentic home-style dishes from northern Vietnam, including grilled fish with dill, tangy pork soup and fried spring rolls with crab and prawn, as well as plenty of southern Vietnamese classics to sample, too.

[quan-bui.com](https://quan-bui.com)

