

The Cu Chi Tunnels

During the Vietnam War (fine: the "War of American Aggression"), the Viet Cong were hopelessly outmatched from a military standpoint. So, they had to level the playing field... or even better, dig tunnels and hide underneath the playing field. We went to Cu Chi to visit one of the most famous underground systems.



It's impossible to overstate the importance of tunnels to the Viet Cong's war effort. Entire battalions lived underground almost permanently, emerging only to replenish supplies or attack the enemy. The extensive Cu Chi network is estimated at a mind-boggling 75 miles, and included food halls, living quarters, and even hospitals, all semi-protected from American bombs.

Not that life underground was a breeze. Soldiers had to deal with spiders, scorpions and snakes, as well as disease and the litany of conditions which come with... uh... living in dirt tunnels. And space was tight; one of the great benefits to the Viet Cong was that the larger American troops weren't able to fit, especially since they tended to carry duffel bags full of weapons. And any enemy soldier who *did* try and find the tunnels would likely find themselves in a pit, impaled on bamboo spikes; the Viet Cong loved their booby-traps.