



## We asked Cecilia ...

### Where are you from? How and when did your family come to the USA?

I was born in Columbus, Georgia and moved to Savannah when I was eight years old. My parents met in the United States and didn't know each other while living in Vietnam. I am part of the first generation of our families born in the United States.

### What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is a noodle soup called phở. It is considered Vietnam's national dish.

### What is one of your favorite holidays or family traditions and why?

Growing up, one of my favorite cultural holidays was our Lunar New Year Festival or what we call "Tết." As kids, we learned how to say "Happy New

Year" in Vietnamese—"chúc mừng năm mới"—to our elders, and in return, we would receive lucky red envelopes filled with dollar bills to symbolize good wishes and luck for the new year ahead. There would always be a big party to celebrate the festival with games, dragon dancers, and the lighting of red firecrackers to signal the start of a prosperous new year.

### How do you bring your culture to the community you live in?

I try to maintain our culture by cooking the foods I grew up with and just recently learned to master my mom's phở recipe. I instill the cultural beliefs of the Lunar New Year in my children. In addition, I've volunteered to help with Asian festivals in Savannah.