



Angkor to the Bay

Classic Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 1

SIEM REAP – PHNOM PENH – VICTORIA MEKONG CRUISE – SAIGON –
HOI AN – HALONG BAY - HANOI

Take a voyage of discovery from the breath-taking majesty of the temples of Angkor, through to the spectacular natural grandeur of Halong Bay, experiencing all manner of delights en route.

- Be inspired by spectacular Angkor temples
- Experience local life in Tonle Sap
- Explore the fascinating Cu Chi Tunnels
- Visit captivating Phnom Penh
- Try traditional farming techniques in Hoi An
- Marvel at Hue's Imperial Citadel
- Stroll through Hanoi's alleyways
- Cruise the magnificent Halong Bay

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

TOUR MAP



ANGKOR TO THE BAY TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals as specified
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Vietnam & Cambodia visa fees for New Zealand passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Southeast Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people.

The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

'Angkor to the Bay' falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rests. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches, trains, and boats. You'll be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

Please Consider:

- Sightseeing may often involve walking for a reasonable duration, sometimes over multiple steps, or uneven surfaces.
- Boarding and alighting from various boat sizes independently is part of the experience.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travelers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 18 days in duration including international flights. Please note that depending on flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour.

Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 2 in Siem Reap and end the tour on Day 17 in Hanoi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

We intend to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours, or as dictated by local conditions. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1-2: Arrive Siem Reap**

Meals: D

Fly to Siem Reap. You will be met at Siem Reap in the arrival's hall by your Local Guide or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time travel to your hotel.



Early check-in is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

Destination Information

Siem Reap - Siem Reap is a bustling tourist destination due to its proximity to both the ancient Khmer national capital city of Angkor as well as Tonle Sap Lake. Angkor Wat is one of the main attractions and is the world's largest religious monument, in addition to being the spiritual and cultural heart of Cambodia. This huge complex of palaces and temples were built on the sprawling alluvial plain to the north of Tonle Sap.

Day 3: Beng Mealea & The Villages of Tonle Sap

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, explore the less-visited Beng Mealea, a mysterious sandstone temple reclaimed by the Cambodian jungle. Dating back some nine centuries and built originally as a Hindu temple to Vishnu, its ruins are wreathed in vines and colossal tree roots now swallow its stones. Explore on foot via the wooden walkways and bridges around the site.



Continue on to Tonle Sap. This afternoon's excursions are seasonal. In the high-water season, you will travel to Kompong Khleang, a unique village on stilts, while in the low-water season you will visit Chong Kneas floating village.

Return to Siem Reap, with a visit to SATCHA, an organisation working alongside local craftsmen to create high-end and traditional Cambodian arts and crafts. This evening, enjoy a traditional Apsara dance performance at dinner.

Destination Information

Beng Mealea - Dating from the 11th - 12th century, this sprawling temple spans over a square kilometre. Largely overrun by jungle vegetation and constructed in a distinctly Angkorian style, Beng Mealea dates to approximately the same period as Angkor Wat, and may even have served as its 'prototype'.

The SATCHA Handicraft Centre - A social enterprise showcasing traditional and high-end Cambodian art. Local creators are supported with materials and training to produce their crafts such as silk weaving and wood carvings, with many of the handicrafts available to purchase.

Day 4: Angkor Wat & Angkor Thom

Meals: B, L, D

Spanning from the 9th to 15th century, the Angkor complex was the capital of the thriving Khmer Empire, and home to over 1,000 temples. Begin at the city of Angkor Thom, built by Jayavarman VII. Here, sights include the enigmatic Bayon, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King. One of the most evocative ruins here is to the temple of Ta Prohm, enveloped in a labyrinth of jungle.



This afternoon is devoted to the fascinating and awe-inspiring Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world and nationally considered to be Cambodia's spiritual heart. Later, relax on board a boat and view the sunset on Angkor Thom's moat.

Please note: Your group will drive approximately 6km out of town to the main entrance gate to get your entrance passes, which you must carry with you.

Please be aware that the Central Tower of the Wat complex is closed on Buddhist holidays, and on all other days has a limited number of visitors allowed at any given time, under UNESCO regulations. If you wish to visit this tower, you will be required to wait in the queue alongside all other visitors. The ability to do this will be determined upon the groups' schedule. If you choose to climb at any site, you must be able to climb and descend without assistance.

Destination Information

Angkor Thom - This was the last capital of the Khmer empire, established by Buddhist King Jayavarman VII in the 12th century. This walled city, covering an area of 9 square kilometres, is flanked by a row of 54 stone figures on each side, which leads you through a 23-metre imposing stone entrance gate to the various temples inside.

Bayon - A rich, late 12th century state temple at the centre of Angkor Thom. Its beautifully crafted central towers are decorated with four opposing faces representing Jayavarman. Bayon's stone galleries display extraordinary bas-reliefs incorporating over 11,000 figures.

Elephant Terrace and Terrace of the Leper King - The Elephant Terrace is named for the carved elephant parade on its eastern side. Giant viewing platforms used for public ceremonies, served as a base for the King's grand audience hall. To the north is the Terrace of the Leper King, named for a statue found at the platform.

Ta Prohm - One of Angkor Thom's most atmospheric ruins, swallowed by the roots of the jungle, Ta Prohm has several towers, closed courtyards and narrow corridors to explore.

Originally dedicated to Sri Jayarajacudamani, the mother of the king who established Angkor Thom, it was made famous by the film Tomb Raider.

Angkor Wat - This 12th century temple complex is the largest religious monument in the world. Surrounded by a 190-metre moat and taking 30 years to build, Angkor Wat showcases the Khmer civilisation at its grandest, and was designed to represent Mt Meru, the Hindu equivalent of Mt Olympus. With its fascinating decorative flourishes, extensive bas-relief and multiple tiers, it is the best-preserved temple within the complex. Angkor temples were traditionally dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, but Angkor Wat broke tradition in that it was originally dedicated to Vishnu, and was later reworked as a Buddhist temple. The silhouette on the flag of Cambodia is that of Angkor Wat, and it is recognised as Cambodia's spiritual and cultural heart.

Day 5: Siem Reap – Phnom Penh

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Siem Reap and fly 1 hour to Phnom Penh, a city of attractive boulevards. Visit the Cambodian Royal Palace and the opulent Silver Pagoda before travelling to the National Museum with extensive artefacts on display, sightseeing today will involve approximately 3 hours on foot.

**Destination Information**

Phnom Penh - The capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia is built around four river arms formed by a sharp curve in the Mekong River near the junctions of the Bassac and the Tonle Sap tributaries. This charming city has a pleasant blend of oriental and colonial architecture, but reminders of a troubled past are also evident.

The Royal Palace - Built in 1866 by the French these ornate buildings are the official residence of the reigning Cambodian royal family and King Sihamoni. View the Throne Hall and Silver Pagoda.

Silver Pagoda - This concrete and marble structure includes a floor with over 5,000 silver tiles each weighing 1kg. Famous artefacts include a 90kg solid gold Buddha made in 1907 and an Emerald Buddha said to be made of baccarat crystal.

National Museum - Housing the world's finest collection of Khmer pottery, bronzes and sculptures dating from the 4th century.

Day 6: Phnom Penh - Saigon

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum for a harrowing insight into Cambodia's tumultuous past. This sombre museum was the site of the Khmer Rouge Security Prison 21, a torture and execution centre built within a former secondary school during the regime of Pol Pot. It now stands as a museum, commemorating the atrocities that occurred here. Many people find it quite confronting and emotional; you will be given time to explore on your own.



Later, continue to the hilltop temple of Wat Phnom at the heart of the city before your 1-hour flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), where you will meet your Vietnamese National Escort.

Destination Information

Tuol Sleng Museum - This former school was used by the Khmer Rouge as a detention and torture centre in the late 1970s. Today this building houses paintings and photographs of the victims. You can see the crude cells built in the classrooms and the torture devices used to extract confessions by the regime.

Wat Phnom - A hilltop temple, rebuilt on multiple occasions since its original version in the late fourth century. The walls within the sanctuaries are covered in murals, chiefly telling the stories of the Buddha. Locals flock here to pray for good luck and success.

Day 7: Saigon & The Cu Chi Tunnels

Meals: B, L, D

Confront the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels. The cramped tunnels were central to a few of the war's strategic operations, including the famous Tet Offensive, and they did not escape damage. American B52 bombers dropped hundreds of missiles leaving huge tell-tale craters behind.



The Cu Chi experience can be emotional for some visitors, but it offers a fascinating window into the hardship and traumas of war. Sightseeing here involves 2 hours on foot on uneven mud paths through the bush and, if you choose, crawling through some of the tunnels.

Continue the day with further sightseeing at the Reunification Palace and the chilling War Remnants Museum, before finishing at the Ben Thanh Markets.

Destination Information

Saigon – Formally renamed Ho Chi Minh City, but still locally known by its older name of Saigon, this exuberant city is driving Vietnam forward into the modern world, but is also a treasure trove of fascinating heritage.

It was a major base of the American military during the Vietnam War and was the seat of the South Vietnam government until the events that led to the country's reunification. Today, the old mixes seamlessly with the new and you can wander through timeless alleys to incense-infused temples before catching up with the present in designer malls beneath sleek skyscrapers.

Cu Chi - The tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Cu Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War and were the Viet Cong's base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong soldiers as hiding spots during combat, as well as serving as communication and supply routes, hospitals, food and weapon caches and living quarters for numerous North Vietnamese fighters. The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces and helped to counter the growing American military effort.

Reunification Palace - Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was designed by architect Ngô Viết Thụ and was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It was the site of the end of the Vietnam War during the Fall of Saigon on 30th April 1975, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its gates.

War Remnants Museum - Comprised of numerous buildings displaying military equipment, photographs and artefacts relating to the Vietnam War from 1961-1975. This museum illustrates a harrowing period in this nation's history.

Day 8: Mekong Delta

Meals: B, L, D

Drive two and a half hours down to the picturesque province of Ben Tre situated along the mighty Mekong. This area is known as the 'Rice Basket of Vietnam', because its rich and fertile lands produce huge amounts of rice, coconuts, vegetables and tropical fruit.



Spend the day exploring, travelling by motorboat between the islands and changing to smaller paddleboats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance. Return to Saigon this afternoon.

Destination Information

Mekong Delta - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life progresses around its fertile banks. The Mekong Delta is the 12th longest river in the world, and people live, trade, travel and go to school on the riverbanks.

Day 9: Saigon – Hoi An

Meals: B, L, D

Explore modern-day Saigon, with its heady mix of local culture and colonial influences. See the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Central Post Office and the beautiful Thien Hau Pagoda.



Transfer to the airport for your 1 hour 20 minute flight to Da Nang Airport. From here, transfer 45 minutes to your hotel in Hoi An and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Please note: The Notre Dame Cathedral will be under renovation until further notice. During this time we are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, it can be viewed from the outside.

Destination Information

Notre Dame Cathedral - Influenced by French design and built between 1863 and 1880, the red brick exterior and 60-metre bell towers overlook downtown Saigon.

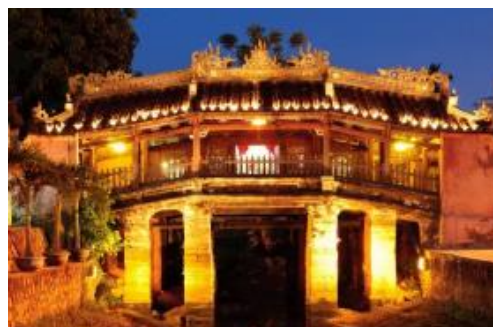
Central Post Office - Located next to the Notre-Dame Cathedral. The Central Post Office building was constructed in the late 19th century. It counts Gothic, Renaissance and French influences and was designed by Auguste Henri Vildieu and Alfred Foulhoux but is often erroneously credited as being the work of Gustave Eiffel.

Thien Hau Pagoda - Located in Cholon, the Chinatown of Saigon this beautiful 19th Century Pagoda is dedicated to the Goddess of the sea.

Day 10: Hoi An & Tra Que Village

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit a local community farming project just outside of Hoi An - Tra Que village where the community has come together to create a large vegetable farm. Learn the traditional methods the farmers use to plant, fertilise and harvest the crop, then try your hand at raking the ground and sowing seeds.



This afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of the narrow and ancient streets of this charming town. We will visit one of Hoi An's oldest homes, built over 200 years ago and still occupied by the descendants of the merchant family that originally built it.

We will also visit the traditional Hoi An Market, the Quan Cong Chinese Temple and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Stop at the Reaching Out Tea House to experience the social enterprise work happening here.

Destination Information

Hoi An – Perhaps more than any other place in Vietnam, Hoi An retains the feel of centuries past. Once known as Faifo, Hoi An was an influential port along the Silk Road. For over 500 years, merchants from China, Japan, France and Portugal settled in the prosperous town, resulting in a distinctive blend of culture.

Japanese Covered Bridge - First constructed in the 1590s to link the Japanese and Chinese quarters of the town. This iconic pink hued bridge has been restored to its former splendour.

Reaching Out Tea House – Provides opportunities and meaningful employment for people with disabilities to learn new skills. In the Tea House, you will experience a peaceful atmosphere allowing you to embrace the traditional Vietnamese service from the staff with speech and hearing impairments. Try the locally grown products and sip on tea and coffee as you enjoy the calm and quiet atmosphere of the Tea House.

Day 11: Hoi An - Hue

Meals: B, L, D

Today, drive approximately 4 hours to Hue, this journey will take you over the scenic Hai Van Pass. Hue is the epitome of Vietnam's dynamic past and considered a scholarly city. Upon arrival, visit the Thien Mu Pagoda and take a cruise on the Perfume River.



Destination Information

Hue - Having been the imperial capital from 1802 until 1945 after the last emperor abdicated; Hue is still regarded as the centre of Vietnam's culture and religion. The city is dominated by the Imperial Citadel that is modelled on the Forbidden City in China. There are many wonderful pagodas and temples of high significance, and it contains the Grand Tombs of the Nguyen Emperors.

Thien Mu Pagoda - This seven-storey octagonal tower built on a hillock, overlooking the Perfume River is Hue's oldest and most beautiful pagoda. Wander the grounds where bonsai, ponds and the smell of incense set a peaceful backdrop.

Day 12: Hue

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to the tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh. Admire the unusual combination of architecture that blends a traditional Chinese past with a modern Western future. Then continue to Minh Mang Tomb to explore the opulent and exotic resting place laid out in formal Chinese style.



Afterwards, move on to a beautiful old maison that has been transformed to Truc Chi - an art space and workshop

by a team of enthusiastic young artists. Learn more about Truc Chi and have the chance to buy their hand-made products (passport covers, fans or candle boxes made from bamboo pulp) to bring back home as gifts for your friends and family if you like.

After lunch, visit the imposing Imperial Citadel and Forbidden Purple City.

Destination Information

Imperial Citadel - A walled fortress accompanied by cannons, artilleries and surrounded by a moat for protection. Inside the Citadel are numerous gates, courtyards and the Forbidden Purple City.

Forbidden Purple City - Constructed for personal use by the Imperial family, their concubines and eunuchs. This royal structure is still being restored many years after the destruction caused by street fighting and bombing during the American war in Vietnam. Wander the grounds and foundations whilst viewing the remaining woodwork and architecture.

Day 13: Hue - Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to the charming city of Hanoi where you will check into your hotel.

This afternoon, take a cyclo tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter. Each cyclo takes one passenger and is operated by a cycle driver behind the carriage. Wrap up your ride with a strong Vietnamese coffee at a café overlooking Hoan Kiem Lake - an important symbol of Vietnamese folklore.

**Destination Information**

Hanoi - With a population of approximately four million, Hanoi is a charming and richly historic city of lakes, shaded boulevards and leafy open parks. The centre is an architectural museum piece housing groups of ochre-coloured buildings holding the air of provincial French towns of the 1930s, a "Paris of the Orient" as people have called it.

Hanoi Old Quarter - A maze of streets weaving through Hanoi and dating back to the 13th century. Each street specialises in merchants and artisans selling their wares of silk, silver, wood and more.

Day 14: Hanoi – Halong Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Drive around 2 and a half hours today from Hanoi to Halong, where you will take an overnight cruise to the farthest corners of the bay by boat. There is usually a crowd of boats at the docks; however, the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing.



Boarding your boat could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff.

The boat has an enclosed dining area and an open area on the upper deck. Enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities (which are subject to change due to cruise selection and weather conditions). Sightseeing includes visiting underground caves on the islands, which require climbing up and down steps inside and outside of the caves. End the day on deck with a drink in hand to watch the sunset over the bay followed by a freshly prepared dinner, before retiring to your cabin for the night.

Please note - You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Halong Bay. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Hanoi and picked up your return.

Please note: Weather conditions such as mist, fog, wind, rain and storms may delay the departure time of your cruise, or in some cases your cruise may be cancelled. Notifications of any delays or cancellations may not be known until your group's arrival in Halong Bay. If your cruise is cancelled after your arrival in Halong Bay, you will have lunch in Halong City and return to Hanoi. If notification of the cruise cancellation is given prior to your departure for Halong Bay an alternative day trip will be arranged to Hoa Lu and Tam Coc or 'Halong Bay on Land', an area located approximately 2 hours from Hanoi. Our guides will make every effort to inform the group at the earliest possible moment should there be any itinerary changes

Destination Information

Halong Bay - Compared to the landscape of the limestone islets of Guilin in China and Krabi in southern Thailand, Halong Bay shares a common border with China in the north and harbours some of the most stunning scenery in Vietnam. Unique rock sculptures jut out dramatically from the clear emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin and numerous grottoes have created an enchanting, timeless world, looking out onto the horizon with the sails of the junks and sampans completing the picture.

Day 15: Halong Bay - Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning sailing through Halong Bay. After an early lunch (or brunch meal) disembark your cruise and return to Hanoi. This evening, attend The Quintessence of Tonkin show, an artistic open-air performance celebrating the rich history of northern Vietnam.

**Day 16: Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

Discover the sights of Hanoi today. First stop will be Ba Dinh Square, then the Ho Chi Minh Quarter and pass Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, followed by the Humble House on Stilts and the One Pillar Pagoda. Next, drive to the serene Temple of Literature, Hanoi's first university.

**Day 17-18: Depart Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

Any time before your flight is free at your leisure today. You will be transferred from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Fly to New Zealand, arriving home the same or following day.

Late check-out is not included in our Southeast Asia group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

ANGKOR TO THE BAY TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Vietnam and Cambodia - Entry visas are required by all visitors. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork if applicable and submit the visa application on your behalf. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Currently a visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

Cambodia Entry Requirement - Effective 01 July 2024, all guests travelling to Cambodia must complete a mandatory online e-immigration application within 7 days prior to their arrival. You may complete the form via the mobile phone app called Cambodia e-Arrival (CeA), or the form can be completed online at <https://arrival.gov.kh/>. The app and the registration process are free of charge.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN VIETNAM & CAMBODIA:

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in many local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In some countries in Southeast Asia, fork and spoons are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually, chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Southeast Asia. We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

Please inform us of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in New Zealand. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in New Zealand; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday, so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

TIPPING POLICY:

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in US Dollars and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in a Classic Tour group, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and Southeast Asia.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

EXCHANGING CASH:

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Vietnam & Cambodia. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Vietnam & Cambodia however other currencies such as New Zealand Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are undamaged. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange.

We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps.

These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques.

Religious sites and homes throughout Southeast Asia – for Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory, so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off and carry a pair of thick socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces. The following itinerary will indicate when you need to consider this.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. However, minibuses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).

Roads in Southeast Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Seatbelts: Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Southeast Asia and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason, some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts, or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

Air: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-flight seat allocation is not available on internal flight sectors.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your doctor or local Health Centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safe Travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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