



VIETNAM & RED RIVER UNCOVERED

Classic | 20 Days | Physical Level 1

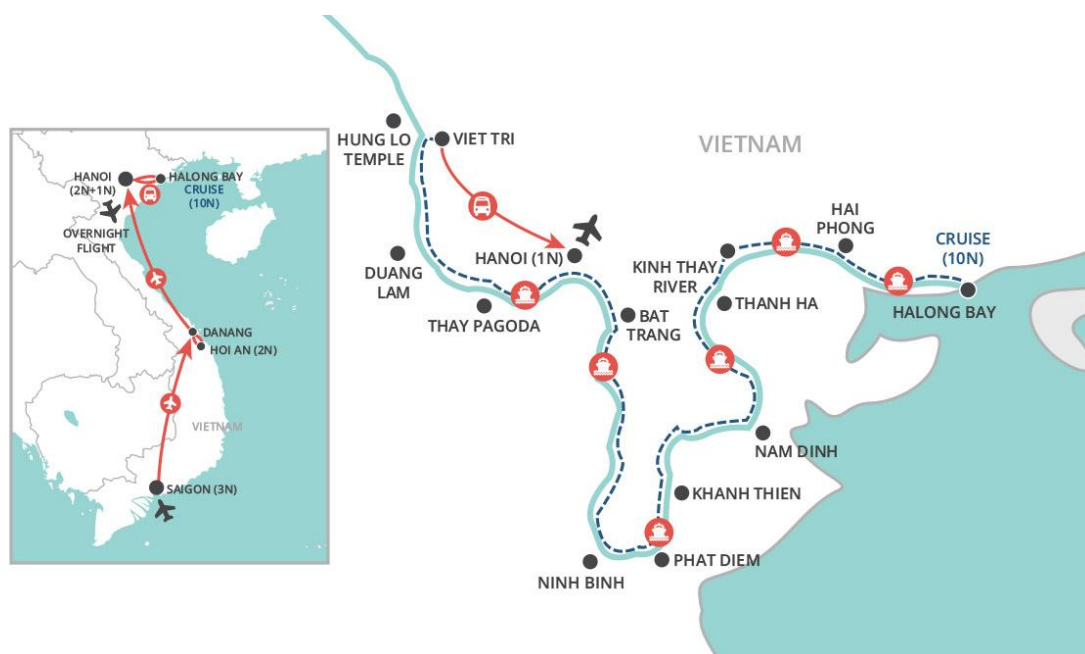
Saigon – Hoi An – Hanoi – Red River Cruise – Hanoi

See the highlights of Vietnam before delving into the long history and rich culture that has long flourished along the Red River.

- Float through the Mekong Delta
- Wander charming Hoi An
- Explore the sights of Hanoi
- Spend three days cruising Halong Bay
- Discover the culture of the Red River

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

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

TOUR MAP

VIETNAM & RED RIVER UNCOVERED TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- 10-night Red River & Halong Bay Cruise on board Pandaw's RV Angkor
- All meals
- Free flow drinks included at lunch and dinner whilst on board the cruise (excluding wine)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Vietnam 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

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures e.g., drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout 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.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 20 days in duration including international flights. Join the tour on Day 1 in Saigon and end the tour on Day 19 in Hanoi.

Travellers booked on a 'Land Only' package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight information to our reservations team.

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.

'Vietnam & Red River Uncovered' 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.

If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly to Saigon

Meals: D

On arrival in Tan Son Nhat International airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 30 minutes to your hotel. Any time before this evening's dinner and welcome briefing is at leisure to start your explorations



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

Destination Information

Saigon – Formerly known as Ho Chi Minh City, it was originally the capital of French Cochinchina and later South Vietnam until 1975. It retains colonial-era gems like the Saigon Central Post Office, designed by Gustave Eiffel, and the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Key historical sites include the Reunification Palace, symbolizing the Vietnam War's end, and the Cu Chi Tunnels, an intricate network used by the Viet Cong.

Day 2: Explore Saigon

Meals: B, L, D

See the sights of the city this morning, admiring the colonial architecture of the Central Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral, visiting the fascinating Reunification Palace, and viewing the exhibits of the War Remnants Museum.



Later, discover the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels, which were central to the Viet Cong's military operations, including the Tet Offensive. For a truly authentic insight into the war, meet a Vietnamese veteran and hear his story.

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

Central Post Office – This colonial-era landmark, constructed in the late 19th century, stands beside the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Its Gothic and neoclassical design is strongly reminiscent of 20th century European train stations.

Notre Dame Cathedral – The 60-metre bell towers of Saigon's Notre-Dame Cathedral overlook downtown Saigon. It was blessed in 1880 by the Roman Catholic Church to provide religious services for French colonialists. All the building materials were imported from France, including the red bricks, which came from Toulouse and have retained their vivid colour.

Reunification Palace – Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, it was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam, and 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.

Cu Chi Tunnels – The tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground passages and rooms, 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 fighters.

Day 3: Discover the Mekong Delta

Meals: B, L, D

Travel to the Mekong Delta, taking to the canals and palm-lined waterways by boat, to admire its verdant and bountiful beauty and catch a glimpse of daily life.

Return to Saigon, stopping en route at a chocolate factory, where you'll learn about the bean to bar production process. Learn about the rich, handcrafted flavours, made from premium Vietnamese cacao offering some of the best chocolate in Vietnam.



Please note: sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance.

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 13th longest, and the 10th largest, by volume alone and people live, trade, travel and even go to school on the riverbanks. The rice which is cultivated in the many farming lands is said to be enough to supply the entire country

Day 4: Fly to Danang

Meals: B, L, D

Take a 1h20min flight from Saigon to Danang and transfer 45 minutes through the countryside to the enchanting town of Hoi An, where the rest of the afternoon is free for you to spend as you wish.



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, cuisine, religion and architecture.

Day 5: Hoi An on Foot

Meals: B, L, D

Head out early at 830am on a walking tour of Hoi An, a wonderfully atmospheric, laidback and traditional city, wandering the cobbled streets of the old town to spot hidden temples, historic merchant houses and to visit the famous Japanese Bridge.



At Phuoc Kien Assembly Hall, a special experience awaits in the form of personalised blessings presented in symbolic red envelopes. Upon arrival, the group will be welcomed into an exclusive space. At a private table, a local representative eagerly awaits to present your tailored messages, ensuring an unforgettable cultural exchange.

Destination Information

Japanese Bridge – This iconic pink-hued bridge was constructed in the 1590s to link the Japanese and Chinese quarters of the merchant town.

Phuoc Kien Assembly Hall – A Chinese pagoda built in 1690 by Fujian Chinese merchants in Hoi An, Vietnam, served as a gathering place for the Fujian community. It features elaborate dragon motifs, a grand gate, and a main altar dedicated to Thien Hau, the goddess of the sea. The hall reflects Hoi An's multicultural trade history and enduring Chinese influence.

Day 6: Fly to Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the airport taking approximately 45 minutes and fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to Hanoi, Vietnam's capital city. On arrival, visiting the fascinating Museum of Ethnology before hopping into cyclos for a ride through the streets of the city's vibrant Old Quarter.



Destination Information

Hanoi - The history of this fascinating Vietnamese capital is visible at every turn; a blend of French neoclassical architecture, imperial temples, and post-war apartment complexes, interspersed with green parks and leafy boulevards. At its heart is the picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake, where locals come to meet, play sports, or enjoy a stroll and an ice cream.

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

Museum of Ethnology – Built in 1997, it is widely acknowledged as the best in Vietnam, with an extensive display dedicated to Vietnam's 54 ethnic minority people including traditional clothing, tools, and ceremonial items.

Day 7: Explore Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

Head out on foot to explore Hanoi's rich history and culture. Starting at the 11th-century northern gate, the entry point of the imperial citadel of Thang Long, continue to Cua Bac Church and along Phan Dinh Phung, considered Hanoi's most beautiful street. Pause to discover Quan Thang Temple, walk along the West Lake and browse the stalls of Chau Long market.



Later, meet with a local master for a workshop with traditional zo paper, using brush pens and ink stones to learn the art of calligraphy. This creative experience provides a profound appreciation for traditional craftsmanship while inspiring modern artistic expression. Pay a visit to a Yen Thai community.

Destination Information

Northern Gate – A gargantuan fortress in the heart of the city, a historic remnant of the 19th-century Thang Long Citadel. Built during the Nguyen Dynasty, it bears marks of French cannon fire from the 1882 invasion.

Quan Thanh Temple – The 11th-century Taoist temple is one of the oldest and most culturally significant in the city and is dedicated to Tran Vu, a deity of war and protection. The temple's architecture features traditional Vietnamese design, with intricate carvings and a large bronze statue of Tran Vu.

Zo Paper - A traditional paper-making technique that originated in Vietnam in the 3rd century. Zo paper, crafted from the bark of the mulberry tree is celebrated for its exceptional durability, resilience, and subtly textured surface, with some records suggesting it can last up to 700 years.

Yen Thai Community - A village that was once celebrated for its Zo paper-making. Today, it stands as a living museum where ancient traditions and craftsmanship continue to flourish.

Day 8: Board your Red River cruise

Meals: B, L, D

Travel to Halong Bay taking approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes and board your river cruise vessel, RV Angkor Pandaw, enjoying lunch before setting sail into the beauty of this UNESCO-listed bay. This evening, enjoy a welcome cocktail on deck surrounded by spectacular scenery, anchoring in a sheltered bay.

**Destination Information**

Halong Bay – A UNESCO World Heritage site since 1994, has long been a strategic location in Vietnam’s history. Known for its 1,600 limestone islands, the bay was used by ancient civilizations for trade and defence. It also contains archaeological sites, such as caves with prehistoric human remains.

Day 9: Explore Halong Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning sailing on turquoise waters among limestone islands and rock formations. Stop at Viet Hai Village, boarding an electric buggy to explore the vegetable gardens and typical rural houses. Back on the water, cruise towards Lan Ha Bay to visit a floating fishing house then, if the weather is good, sip a cocktail on a beautiful beach.

**Destination Information**

Viet Hai Village – Located in Cat Ba National Park, the village has a history dating back centuries, traditionally inhabited by fishing and farming communities. The village played a key role during the Vietnam War, providing refuge to locals. Today, it retains its rustic charm with wooden houses and offers insight into Vietnam's rural heritage and resilience.

Lan Ha Bay - Located south of Halong Bay, is historically significant for its strategic location along ancient trade routes. The bay is home to floating fish houses built on wooden platforms, act as a traditional livelihood for local families.

Day 10: More Halong Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Take to the waters yourself in a kayak or board a local basket boat rowed by a fisherman to visit 'Dark and Bright Cave', entering it by water to admire the massive stalagmites hanging from the ceiling. This afternoon, bid farewell to Halong Bay and enter the Kinh Thay River, dropping anchor near Hai Phong.

**Destination Information**

Dark and Bright Cave – The Dark Cave, once a refuge during wartime, is known for its labyrinthine tunnels and unique rock formations. The Bright Cave, surrounded by towering limestone cliffs, has been a site for fishing.

Kinh Thay River – A tributary of the Thai Binh River system in northern Vietnam, flows through provinces like Hai Duong and Quang Ninh. It has historically supported rice cultivation and trade in the Red River Delta. Its waters also served as strategic transport routes during Vietnam's resistance wars.

Hai Phong - Established as a major port by the Nguyen Dynasty and expanded during French colonization in 1888, has long been a strategic maritime and industrial center in northern Vietnam. It played a vital role in Vietnam's resistance wars, serving as a logistics hub and enduring significant bombardment during the conflicts.

Day 11: Kinh Thay River

Meals: B, L, D

Observe life on the Kinh Thay River, a key commercial waterway, as you cruise. This afternoon, visit the Thanh Ha Commune, the place considered to be the birthplace of Vietnam's famous water puppets. Take a stroll through the village before settling under a shady tree by a pond full of lotus and lilies to enjoy a private water puppet show.

**Destination Information**

Vietnam's Water Puppets – Vietnamese water puppetry dates back to the 11th century in the Red River Delta, where farmers used flooded rice paddies as stages. Rooted in rural life and spirituality, performances often honored deities and celebrated harvests. Performed in shallow water, puppets are controlled with bamboo rods hidden beneath the surface.

Day 12: Day River

Meals: B, L, D

Sail along the Lower Red and Day rivers this morning. Get better acquainted with your cruise vessel with a ship tour before lunch onboard. Head ashore to explore Co Chat silk village, where you can meet local craftspeople and watch them make silk by hand and visit the local markets to browse the wares.

**Destination Information**

Day River – Spanning 240 kilometers, originates from the Red River in Ha Nam, Vietnam, flowing through Ninh Binh and Ha Tay before reaching the Gulf of Tonkin. Historically crucial for irrigation and transportation, it sustained ancient communities.

Co Chat Silk Village – Renowned for high-quality silk, the village thrived during the Nguyen dynasty, supplying royal courts. Still today, it boasts a centuries-old tradition of silk weaving combining traditional techniques and modern machinery.

Day 13: Red River Delta

Meals: B, L, D

Sail towards Ninh Binh, mooring at Khanh Thien Village. Disembarking to visit Phat Diem and its cathedral which blends Vietnamese and European architectural styles. Explore Khanh Thien Village and discover some lovely local handicrafts, like water hyacinth weaving, rice paper and cakes.

This evening, enjoy a performance of ‘Chau Van’ singing by the locals, an ancient artform of the area.

**Destination Information**

Phat Diem Cathedral – Built between 1875 and 1899 under Father Tran Luc. Combining Gothic and traditional Vietnamese styles, it features grand stone structures, wood carvings, and pagoda-like roofs. Constructed from locally sourced materials, it symbolizes the 19th-century Catholic community’s resilience under French colonial rule.

‘Chau Van’ singing - Originating in northern Vietnam during the 16th century, is deeply tied to Dao Mau, the worship of mother goddesses. Initially performed in temples and at rituals, it blends chanting, instrumental music, and dramatic improvisation to invoke spirits.

Day 14: Ninh Binh

Meals: B, L, D

Experience 'Halong Bay on Land' at Ninh Binh, boarding small bamboo rowing boats to pass through a river landscapes of lush paddy fields, limestone peaks and caves.

Return to the ship and sail upstream on the Red River, towards Hanoi.

**Destination Information**

Ninh Binh - Situated in northern Vietnam, is known for its dramatic karst landscapes and fertile plains. The province lies at the convergence of the Hoang Long and Day rivers and is surrounded by limestone mountains. Rich in history, it was the capital of the Dinh and Early Le dynasties.

Day 15: Historic Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

Arrive back in Hanoi and experience the city from a different angle. Tour what remains of the notorious 'Hanoi Hilton' prison before soaking up the tranquillity of the Temple of Literature and learning at the life of revolutionary leader and president Ho Chi Minh at his mausoleum.

Then walk through the bustling streets of Hanoi's Old Quarter, stopping to enjoy the delights of a Vietnamese delicacy, egg coffee, seeing how it is made and how good it tastes. Return to the ship for a relaxed evening and dinner.

**Destination Information**

Hanoi Hilton Prison - Officially known as the Hoa Lo Prison and originally built by the French in the late 19th century to imprison political prisoners. During the Vietnam War, it became infamous for detaining American POWs, including Senator John McCain.

Temple of Literature – Established in 1070 by Emperor Ly Thanh Tong, was Vietnam's first national university, dedicated to Confucius and scholars. It served as a center for higher learning and royal exams during the Ly, Tran, and subsequent dynasties. Today, it stands as a symbol of Vietnam's educational heritage.

Vietnamese Egg Coffee - Originating in Hanoi in the 1940s, it combines strong Vietnamese coffee with a creamy, whipped mixture of egg yolks, sugar, and condensed milk.

Day 16: Bat Trang Village

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Bat Trang ceramic village which has produced ceramics famous throughout Vietnam for generations. Returning to the ship, a local dance troupe will perform a lion dance on the pier.

Set sail for the upper reaches of the Red River, a less explored area, stopping at a village dedicated to the production of 'non la', Vietnam's famous conical hat.

Then, stop at the lakeside 11th-century Thay Pagoda to explore its exquisite temples and the surrounding village.

**Destination Information**

Bat Trang Village – It has been a hub for traditional ceramics since the 14th century. Renowned for its high-quality pottery, the village blends ancestral techniques with modern designs.

Upper Red River – Beginning in Yunnan, China, and flowing southeast into Vietnam, carving through rugged mountains before reaching the Red River Delta the river supports diverse ecosystems, agriculture and livelihoods.

'Non La' conical hats - Dating back over 3,000 years and is both a practical and cultural symbol. Made from palm leaves, bamboo, and bark, it protects against sun and rain.

Thay Pagoda - Dating back to the 11th century under the Ly dynasty. Dedicated to Buddhist monk Tu Dao Hanh, it's renowned for its serene setting by Sai Son Mountain and historical water puppet performances.

Day 17: Upper Red River

Meals: B, L, D

Among the industrial architecture of the Upper Red River, there are still wonderful pockets of a Vietnam of the past, including the UNESCO-recognised Duang Lam. At this beautifully preserved example of a traditional village you can admire intricate architecture and fascinating culture.

This afternoon, visit the smithing village of Ly Nhan to see traditional production methods. Sail upstream while enjoying a farewell dinner this evening.

**Destination Information**

Duang Lam - An ancient village near Hanoi, is over 1,200 years old and known for its well-preserved traditional architecture. Famous for its laterite brick houses, communal temples, and pagodas, it's the birthplace of two kings.

Day 18: Viet Tri

Meals: B, L, D

Bid farewell to your river cruise vessel and begin the journey back to Hanoi.

En route, visit Hung Lo Temple where you can enjoy a performance of traditional folk music and a stroll through this traditional town. Sit down for lunch at a local restaurant.

This evening in Hanoi is at leisure.

**Destination Information**

Hung Lo Temple –The temple can be found in Viet Tri, the capital of Phu Tho Province in northern Vietnam and is historically significant as the cradle of the Hung Kings era, Vietnam's ancient rulers. Hung Lo Temple is a UNESCO world Heritage site and honours the first king, Hung Vuong.

Day 19-20: Fly to New Zealand

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. Transfer to the airport and fly home to New Zealand, arriving home the same or the following day.

Late check out is not included. Please contact reservations to book if required.



VIETNAM & RED RIVER UNCOVERED TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Vietnam visa for New Zealand passport holders is required to enter Vietnam for a stays up to 30 days. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. 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.

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.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will be no more than 24 travellers in this group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our 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. Please note that a National Escort will not accompany you on board the cruise – there will be guides, pursers, ship managers and other staff to help and guide during the 10-night cruise.

EATING IN VIETNAM:

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 Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl.

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 fairly 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 VIETNAM:

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.

VIETNAMESE PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese Public Holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Tet Holiday is between 29th January – 3rd February 2025, International Labour Day is on 1st May every year, Reunification Day is on 30th April every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time.

In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

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.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portering is not included on our tours in Southeast Asia. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

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.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

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.

EXCHANGING CASH:

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Vietnam.

US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Vietnam 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 religious sites, 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 some religious sites.

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.

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.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention 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 local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Updated: Jan 2025