



WENDY WU TOURS

Tour Dossier

VIETNAM HIGHLIGHTS WITH SAPA EXTENSION, 21 DAYS

This document was designed to be read in conjunction with our other pre-departure information provided after you have made a booking with Wendy Wu Tours. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour. All passengers should read this dossier to confirm their ability to complete the tour. This is not your final Itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

Tour grade – Active Paced Tour

This is defined in our brochure as the following: “Refers to programmes where personal involvement is necessary, which can travel to remote areas and that may contain areas of high altitude, reaching up to 5,000ms. These tours may involve some hiking. Accommodation may be in simple hostels or camps in remote areas. These programmes also require a good level of fitness.”

Sightseeing may involve driving over rough roads for extended periods. These tours are not recommended for those unable to walk for extended periods without assistance. Of course, our local guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

It is essential that all passengers recognise the demands of factors such as basic facilities and cultural differences they are likely to encounter in some areas. The more difficult aspects of this itinerary are the basic accommodation during the Mekong Delta home stay and the necessity of being able to get on/off different types and sizes of boats. You will need to be able to do this regularly and unaided.

Group Size

In most cases, the group size will operate with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 18 passengers. This is the absolute maximum due to the number of beds aboard the Halong Bay junk boat.

Itinerary Changes

1. Vietnam Airlines’ domestic flights are subject to frequent changes. For this reason we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights

only in the section below. Your Local guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them.

2. Order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Rail Journeys

This trip involves 2 overnight train journeys. Please refer to Your Travel Guide’s TRANSPORT section for details

Tipping

If there are less than 10 passengers on your tour, then please allow a total of US\$80 each for tipping, made up in the following way; US\$20 each for Saigon, \$10 each for Nha Trang, \$20 each for Hoi An to Hue and \$30 each for Hanoi to Sapa. If there are more than 10, please allow US\$55 each for the entire tour.

The amounts listed above do not include hotel portage so if you would like your luggage to be carried to your hotel room this will be at your discretion.

Basic Accommodation

On Day 3 you will be staying overnight at a farmer’s house in the Mekong Delta. Please refer to Your Travel Guide’s HOTELS section for details.

Traffic / Road Construction

Roads in this region have generally been improved over recent years, but road or weather conditions may still lengthen driving times. Road construction work in Vietnam usually encompasses an enormous section of road - not a couple of kilometres as you would be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the section below are approximations only.

NB: Times and distances listed in this section are approximations only.

Day 1: New Zealand/Saigon.

You will be met at Saigon airport in the arrivals 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 (¾ hr drive) to your hotel and check-in to your rooms. There is no sightseeing today. At some point, when the whole group has arrived, a tour introduction will be held in the hotel. There will not be food or drinks served at this meeting; it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in Vietnam.

Day 2: Saigon.

Sightseeing in downtown Saigon and the Cholon district involves approx 4hrs walking over the whole day. Watch your valuables while in market area. There are some graphic images in the War Remnants Museum, which some people may find confronting.

Day 3: Mekong Delta Home Stay.

Remember to take insect repellent and sun protection for your overnight stay in the Mekong, as it is hot and humid here throughout the year. Drive 3-4 hrs (136kms) to Vinh Long, where we will pick up the local Mekong Guide (it is a government regulation that every foreign group be accompanied by a Mekong Guide). You will travel by motorised, wooden boat between the islands and perhaps smaller, paddle boats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off the boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance, and up to 2hrs walking to see sights on different islands. The cruise will finish at the farmer’s house where you will be staying tonight. You

will have time at leisure and may like to assist the family to prepare tonight's dinner.

[N.B: The home stay includes dormitory style accommodation, with each passenger provided with a fold-up/camp bed, linen and mosquito net. Basic shower and western style toilet are available outside the house. The itinerary of this section is subject to change based on the location of the actual farmers' house used for the overnight accommodation.]

Day 4: Vinh Long/Saigon.

Continue sightseeing around the canals and then return to Vinh Long and drive back to Saigon by coach.

Day 5: Cu Chi Tunnels/Tay Ninh day trip.

Remember to take insect repellent today as mosquitoes are more common in the Cu Chi district. Transfer 2hrs (75 kms) to Cu Chi; an outer suburb of Ho Chi Minh City. Sightseeing here involves 2 hrs walking on uneven mud paths through the bush and, if you choose, crawling through some of the tunnels. It is important to follow your Guide's directions to leave on time as to arrive at Tay Ninh in time to see the midday service. Transfer 1 hr (60kms) to Tay Ninh to the 'Holy See' and see the ½ hr Cao Dai service. Then transfer (10mins drive) to have lunch - the meal is simple but this is the only suitable restaurant in the area. Transfer 3hrs (100kms) back to Saigon.

Day 6: Saigon/Nha Trang.

Transfer to the airport for the morning flight to Nha Trang (flight duration 1hr 10mins). Drive 25mins from the airport to your hotel and check-in. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

Day 7: Nha Trang – cruise.

You will need to be able to board your group's boat without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff. This could involve climbing over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock. These 'cruise boats' are old fishing boats which have had benches and seats fitted for tourist groups. They are quite basic but have ample room for our group to sit, relax while cruising and eat lunch. The deck has a

roof providing shade. We will return to the hotel in the mid afternoon.

Day 8: Nha Trang/Hoi An.

Transfer to the airport for the morning or midday flight to Danang (flight duration 1¼ hr); the closest airport to Hoi An. Sightseeing at China Beach is leisurely, but more difficult at Marble Mountains. There are over 500 uneven stone steps up and it can get extremely hot here. If you are unable to complete this activity, or choose not to go with the group – you will need to remain with the driver/coach because the group will descend on the other side of Marble Mtn and reboard the coach there. Watch your step inside dark and damp caves. Drive ½ hr to our hotel in Hoi An and check-in.

Day 9: Hoi An.

At least 2hrs walking around Hoi An Old Town, then your afternoon is at leisure.

Day 10: My Son day trip.

Remember to take insect repellent and sun protection this morning, as it can get very hot and humid in the My Son Valley. Drive 45 mins – 1 hr to the entrance of the UNESCO site; the My Son Sanctuary. From here you will drive a further 10mins by jeep to the Cham ruins. Sightseeing here involves 2 hrs walking on uneven mud paths through the bush. Return to Hoi An, then your afternoon is at leisure.

Day 11: Hoi An/Hue.

Drive 3.5hrs (approx 135kms) over the Hai Van (Cloudy) Pass north to Hue. This is a winding and sometimes steep, scenic road along the coast. In Hue, sightseeing at the Citadel involves 1 ½ hrs walking through the palace complex – it can get very hot and often rains in the afternoon, so you may need sun and/or rain protection. There are steep and uneven steps without handrails at the Tomb of Tu Duc. Afterwards transfer to the hotel and check-in.

Day 12: Hue/Hanoi.

This morning is easy sightseeing around Hue, involving at least 3hrs of walking. There are steep and uneven steps without handrails at the Thien Mu Pagoda and Khai Dinh Tomb. If you

are unable to complete this activity, or choose not to go with the group – you will be able to wait with the driver/coach, or explore as far as you are able then return to the parked coach on your own. Transfer (½ hr drive) to the airport for an afternoon flight to Hanoi (flight duration 1hr). Transfer (1hr drive) to the hotel and check-in.

Day 13: Hanoi – Ho Chi Minh Quarter

Both men and women must dress respectfully for the HCM Mausoleum, with covered shoulders and knees. Sightseeing this morning involves approx 2hrs walking at the Ho Chi Minh 'quarter' and driving past the Hoan Kiem Lake. When visiting the Mausoleum you must be quiet, show respect and will not be allowed to carry cameras, mobile phones, etc (usually your Local Guide will offer to hold these for you).

Day 14: Hanoi.

Sightseeing in central Hanoi involves at least 2hrs walking. Watch your valuables while in the market areas.

[NB: Your Local Guide will confirm the menu for tomorrow's seafood lunch on board the junk boat tonight, so please mention any food allergies or dislikes to them again before the end of today.]

Day 15: Halong Bay O/N Junk Boat.

This morning, drive 3 ½ hrs (170kms) to Halong City and port, including a 20min rest stop. As it is so popular, there are usually a crowd of boats at the docks – please be reassured that the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing. Boarding your junk boat could involve climbing over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock – sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff. The junk boats have been recently built and modelled on the traditional 'junk' which was both home and working vessel for fishermen in the Orient for centuries. They usually hold about 20 dining (or 18 max for overnight) passengers, have an enclosed dining area and open deck on the upper deck. We have lunch and dinner onboard and cruise around the bay. We anchor the night in Halong Bay.

[N.B: The itinerary in Halong Bay is subject to change due to local conditions.]

Day 16: Halong Bay/Hanoi to Lao Cai

After breakfast continue cruising the bay before an early lunch. Then return to the docks before midday. Drive back to Hanoi, from where you will transfer to the station to board your overnight train from Hanoi to Lao Cai station. This journey usually takes 8 hours (over 340kms). Wear comfortable clothes onboard to sleep in on the train and take snacks as none are readily available. The trip can be quite bumpy.

[NB: You will most probably find your self carrying your luggage over numerous train tracks to reach your platform and carriage because of the layout of Hanoi station.]

Day 17-18: Sapa

Drive 45mins (34kms) on a winding, mountainous road up to Sapa to our hotel.

[NB: Check-out time in Vietnam is midday so your group's rooms may not be ready when you arrive. This morning you may commence sightseeing and check-in at the hotel later.]

This morning you will most likely have time at leisure to explore the local market and town of Sapa. This afternoon and tomorrow, you will have the opportunity to visit some of the small villages around Sapa to see different ethnic hill tribes. Your guide and/or National Escort will adjust your itinerary and length of the hikes according to your group's fitness, interest and physical abilities. The sightseeing involves hiking in occasionally muddy, slippery and steep terrain and driving over rough, unsealed and winding roads.

Here is an example of a full hike available on this itinerary:

Cat Cat Village – 3hr (7km) hike to meet some of the H'mong hill tribe –

this is one of the shortest hikes around Sapa. Return to Sapa by coach/jeep.

Day 19: Sapa/train to Hanoi.

Refer to notes above for today's sightseeing. Late this afternoon, transfer back down to Lao Cai to board your overnight train to Hanoi.

Day 20: Hanoi.

You will arrive at Hanoi station early this morning and transfer to your hotel to have breakfast & freshen up.

Anytime before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Day 21: New Zealand.

Arrive home.