



**WENDY WU TOURS**

# Tour Dossier

## TREASURES OF VIETNAM AND CHINA, 28 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 – Medium paced tour

This is defined in our brochure as the following: “These tours are not strenuous but do include several days where walking and climbing of steps will be necessary. These tours are not recommended for those who are not able to walk for prolonged periods without assistance. These tours are generally longer in length and could involve long days of driving”.

Anyone with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. 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.

### Group size

In most cases, the group size will operate with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 17 passengers.

### Tipping

If there are less than 10 people in your group, please allow a total of NZD\$235 each for tipping (i.e. \$35 for Saigon, \$25 Hoi An/Hue, \$35 Hanoi, \$140 China).

If there are more than 10, please allow a total of NZD\$195 each (i.e. \$65 for Vietnam, \$130 China).

This 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.

### 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 China and Vietnam usually encompasses a large 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 suggestions only.

### Itinerary changes

1. Order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.
2. The Hall of Supreme Harmony within the Forbidden City complex in Beijing has recently undergone comprehensive

restoration work and the majority of work has now been completed.

3. 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.

### Rail Journeys

This trip involves 1 overnight train journey. Please refer to Your Travel Guide's TRANSPORT section for details.

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

### Day 1-2: New Zealand/Saigon

You will be met at Saigon airport in the arrivals hall by your National Escort and/or Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 30 mins to your hotel and check in to your rooms. There is no sightseeing today.

### Day 3: Saigon

Sightseeing in downtown Saigon and the Cholon district involves approx 4 hrs on foot 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 4: Mekong Delta day trip

We have an early rise this morning to drive 2 hrs (75kms) to the city of My Tho. You will travel by motorised, wooden boat between the islands and perhaps smaller, paddle boats in the canals. Sightseeing involves crossing from one small boat to another to embark/disembark and 1 hr on foot across the islands. Approx 2 hrs later, return to docks, have lunch and drive back to Saigon.

### 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. With this evening's flight departure this is a full day of sightseeing;

leaving the hotel this morning at about 7am. Transfer 2 hrs (75km) to Cu Chi; an outer suburb of Ho Chi Minh City. Sightseeing here involves 2 hrs walking on uneven 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 midday service. Transfer 1 hr 30 mins (60km) to Tay Ninh to the 'Holy See' and watch most of the 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 3 hrs (100km) back to Saigon.

### Day 6: Saigon/Hoi An

Transfer to the airport for your morning flight to Danang (flight duration 1 hr); the closest airport to Hoi An. There will be easy sightseeing in Danang at the Cham Museum and China Beach. Whilst at Marble Mountains there are many uneven stone steps to the top. If you choose not to participate in this activity, you will need to remain with the coach. Afterwards transfer (¾hr drive) to the hotel in Hoi An.

### Day 7: Hoi An

At least 2 hrs of sightseeing on foot in Hoi An Old Town, then afternoon at leisure.

### Day 8: Hoi An

The whole day is at leisure.

### Day 9: Hoi An/Hue

Drive 3 hrs (approx 110km) over the Hai Van (*Cloudy*) Pass north to Hue. This is a winding, 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 here and sometimes rains in the afternoon, so you may need sun and/or rain protection. There are steps that need to be navigated at Tu Duc Tomb, some without handrails. If you choose to not complete this activity– 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. Afterwards, drive (5mins) to the hotel and check in.

### Day 10: Hue/Hanoi

This morning is easy sightseeing around Hue, involving at least 2 hrs sightseeing on

foot. There are steps that need to be navigated at the Thien Mu Pagoda, some without handrails. If you choose to not complete this activity– 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). Upon arrival in Hanoi, transfer (1 hr drive) to the hotel and check-in.

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

#### **Day 11: Halong Bay day trip**

We have an early rise this morning to drive 3 ½ hrs (170km) 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 navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock – sometimes without handrails 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 take a 4hr cruise including lunch onboard, return to the dock and drive back to Hanoi.

#### **Day 12: Hanoi**

Both men and women must dress respectfully for the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, with covered shoulders and knees. Sightseeing in central Hanoi involves approx 4 hrs sightseeing. 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 13: Hanoi/Kunming**

Transfer to the airport for a late morning flight to Kunming (flight duration 3 hrs 50mins). On arrival in Kunming, transfer (1/2 hr drive) to the hotel and check in.

#### **Day 14: Kunming**

Drive 1½ hrs (120km) to Stone Forest. Sightseeing here involves up to 3 ½ hrs sightseeing on foot, through the various paths to view the maze of rock pinnacles, lake and ponds. After lunch, return Kunming.

#### **Day 15: Kunming/Guilin**

Check out from hotel before midday. You will have time at leisure before your

transfer to the airport for an early evening flight to Guilin (flight duration 1hr). Transfer to hotel and check in for overnight stay.

#### **Day 16: Li River Cruise/Yangshuo**

*[NB: You will be staying in Yangshuo for a single night before returning to Guilin. We recommend you leave your main luggage in safe storage at our hotel in Guilin; taking only a small, overnight style bag with you for Days 15 and 16.]*

We take a 3 hr cruise from Guilin to the small town of Yangshuo. A simple meal will be served onboard (usually before midday at "Chinese lunch time"). These are small cruise boats, usually holding approx 100 passengers; with an enclosed dining area on lower deck and an open viewing area on upper deck. As it is so popular, there are usually many boats at the docks – please be reassured that the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing as the boats cruise past unspoilt countryside. Usually the boats depart at 9am, from a dock one hour's drive from our hotel. However when the river level is low they depart from further downstream which would mean a longer drive and an earlier check out from your hotel. Disembarking from the cruise, your Local Guide will walk with you to your hotel, approx 15 mins walk from the river. Private vendors offer electric carts which can be organised at your own cost.

#### **Day 17: Yangshuo/Guilin**

Check out from hotel before midday. You will have time at leisure before travelling back to Guilin. Drive ½ hr (22km) to small town of Daxu – sightseeing here involves walking leisurely for 1hr. Drive a further ½ hr back to Guilin and check in at hotel.

#### **Day 18: Guilin/Xian**

This morning is at leisure before check out from the hotel before midday. Transfer (15mins drive) to the Reed Flute Caves – take short walk through the caves. It usually takes about an hour to complete the route, and is very cool inside. Transfer short distance to Mt Diecai; a low, karst mountain with steps. We usually spend 1 ½ hrs here. Continue to the airport for an evening flight to Xian (flight duration 1¾ hrs). Drive (1 hr) to the hotel and check in.

#### **Day 19: Xian**

The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors is located more than 1 hrs drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the Museum entrance is a 15 minute walk, usually without any shade. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. There is no electric cart available for the return from Museum exit to Bus Park. Within the Museum area the warriors can be seen in 3 different "pits", which are active

archaeological digs. The site is large and, towards the summer months, can be hot outside. Sightseeing here involves 2½ hrs on foot. When visiting the City Walls this afternoon you will need to walk up the stairs onto the wall, then the Local Guide will give you time to explore at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the walls. These are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own cost.

#### **Day 20: Xian/Beijing**

Morning at leisure before checking out of hotel before midday. Sightseeing this afternoon involves at least 2 ½ hrs walking. Beware of your valuables while in the Muslim Quarter's alley market stalls. Your overnight train departs from Xian Station in the evening. This journey usually takes 12 hrs (over 1,200 kms).

#### **Day 21: Beijing**

You will arrive at Beijing West Train Station and transfer (45mins drive) to your hotel, where you can have breakfast and freshen up. Sightseeing is at the Summer Palace in the north of the city. The palace is set over an extensive park and man-made lake complex and there is 2 to 3 hrs sightseeing on foot involved here.

*[NB: Check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms are unlikely to be available. This morning you will start sightseeing and return to hotel later to check in.]*

#### **Day 22: Beijing**

Sightseeing in central Beijing involves 3 to 4 hrs on foot during the morning to see Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. Visiting Mao's Mausoleum is subject to the length of the queue, as so many domestic tourists visit every day.

#### **Day 23: Beijing**

We have an early rise this morning to drive 1½ hrs (50 km) northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass section of the Great Wall. The aim of this is to avoid the crowds of tourists who will arrive later in the morning, and the heat of the day. Visiting the Wall involves walking a steep path of 200ms from the bus to the first section. After your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history you will have free time to explore the rest at your own pace. This afternoon, visit the Temple of Heaven – at least 2 hrs sightseeing on foot involved here.

#### **Day 24: Beijing/Shanghai**

Transfer to the airport for a morning flight to Shanghai (flight duration 1hr 40mins). Transfer (50mins drive) to the hotel and check in.

*[NB: Check-out time in China is midday so your group's rooms may not be ready when you first arrive. In this case you can commence sightseeing around the central city and return to hotel later to check-in.]*

**Day 25: Shanghai**

A very full day of sightseeing around the central city involves 3 to 4 hrs on foot. Beware of your valuables while in the Old Town (Yuan Bazaar) as it is very crowded.

**Day 26: Shanghai**

More sightseeing around the central city, involving approx 3 hrs on foot.

**Day 27: Depart Shanghai**

Any time 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 28: New Zealand**

Arrive home.

**Updated 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009.**