



## Treasures of Vietnam and China Dossier

### Classic Tour | 26 Days | Physical Level 1

Saigon – Mekong Delta – Hoi An – Hue – Hanoi – Halong Bay – Chengdu – Guilin – Yangshuo – Xian – Beijing – Shanghai

This epic tour effortlessly blends the captivating charms of Vietnam with the fascinating history of China. Explore Saigon, cruise Halong Bay, view adorable pandas, marvel at the Terracotta Warriors and walk along the Great Wall on one memorable adventure.

- Drift on the Mekong Delta
- Be charmed by Hoi An
- Marvel at Hue's Imperial Citadel
- Practice Tai Chi on Halong Bay
- Watch Giant Pandas play
- Face the Terracotta Army
- Stand on the Great Wall



### Treasures of Vietnam and China tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- China visa fees for Australian passport holders (please see visa section below for further information on Vietnam visas)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

*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 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 South East 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:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

'Treasures of Vietnam and China' is rated as a **physical level 1** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- On several days, there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time.
- On the Great Wall of China in Beijing some of the walking will be at an incline.
- Throughout the tour you will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats without assistance.

Of course, our local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

### Country Profile: Vietnam

Vietnam is a country of breath-taking natural beauty with an incredible modern-day history that quickly becomes addictive. It has experienced war and a bloody revolution in the past 100 years, but the nation now reunified, Vietnam is peaceful and prosperous. The speed of the modern-day changes is making Vietnam the absorbing and gripping place that it is today.

Vietnam has something to offer everyone, so whether you are a culture vulture, thrill seeker or just looking to relax and take in the beaches, Vietnam will not disappoint.

China's civilization is the oldest in the world and has a history dating back over 5,000 years. With 56 ethnic groups, 22 provinces and eight major dialects, China has a rich and varied culture and way of life. It is home to a wealth of tourist sights and cultural relics which entice our guests to return again and again to this exciting destination.

### Joining Your Tour

The tour is 26 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 one in Saigon and end the tour on Day 25 in Shanghai. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your 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 maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- The Notre Dame Cathedral is currently undertaking restorations which will continue until 2023. During this time customers are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, they can view it from the outside.

## Itinerary – Treasures of Vietnam and China

### Day 1: Saigon

Fly to Saigon, Vietnam's most evocative and largest city. You will be met at Saigon airport in the Arrivals Hall by your Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time travel you will transfer 30 minutes to your hotel and check into your room.



#### **Destination Information**

**Saigon** - The exuberant city of Saigon is driving Vietnam forward into the modern world, but is also a treasure trove of fascinating heritage. During the 1960's and early 1970's, Saigon was the Pearl of the Orient, which flourished under the American occupation. In more recent times, it 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.

### Day 2: Saigon

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 1968 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 two hours on foot on uneven mud paths through the bush and, if you choose, crawling through some of the tunnels. Later, return to Saigon for a tour of the city, you'll pass the Notre Dame Cathedral, visit Central Post Office, Reunification Palace and the War Remnants Museum; sightseeing today in downtown Saigon involves approximately 3 hours on foot.



*Please note: The Notre Dame Cathedral will be under renovation until 2023. During this time, we are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, we can view it from the outside.*

#### **Destination Information**

**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.

**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.

**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 is the site where the Vietnam War ended during the Fall of Saigon on 30<sup>th</sup> 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 3: Mekong Delta

Rise early to drive 2 hours to the city of Ben Tre to take a cruise on the Mekong Delta. You will travel by motorised, wooden boats between the islands and then change to smaller, paddle boats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance. Later today, you will return to Saigon.



#### Destination Information

**Mekong Delta** - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life revolves 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 with a little extra.

### Day 4: Saigon – Hoi An

Today, fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to Danang and transfer to UNESCO listed Hoi An. This afternoon take a walking tour of Hoi An Old Town including visiting Hoi An Merchants House, the markets, Quan Cong Temple and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Stop to visit the Reaching Out Arts & Crafts Workshop and watch their skillful work.



### 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.

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

**Reaching Out** – Provides opportunities for people with disabilities to learn skills and gain meaningful employment. The arts and crafts workshop provides a platform for local people to showcase their talents.

### Day 5: Hoi An

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. Be rewarded with a herbal foot bath and massage. Join in with a short cooking demonstration, followed by lunch featuring the delicious vegetables straight from the farm to the plate.



### Destination Information

**Tra Que Village** - Located a few kilometres from Hoi An, this picturesque village is renowned for its agriculture. Witness local farming techniques and learn about different exotic Vietnamese produce.

### Day 6: Hoi An - Hue

This morning, 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 Royal Tomb of Minh Mang.



### 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.

**Royal Tomb of Minh Mang** - Emperor Minh Mang reigned in the Nguyen Dynasty, the last of the Vietnamese dynasties, from 1820-1840. The construction of his tomb was completed after his death and is said to have taken approximately 10,000 workers to complete. The complex comprises of almost 40 monuments and is surrounded by gardens and pools, making it one of the more beautiful tombs in Vietnam.

### Day 7: Hue

This morning visit the Imperial Citadel, after which, drive to the outskirts of Hue to visit An Hien House, which was the original residence of Emperor Tu Duc's 18<sup>th</sup> daughter. This afternoon, visit Thien Mu Pagoda, Hue's oldest and most beautiful pagoda, and enjoy a 1 hour cruise along the Perfume River. Boarding your cruise could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff.



### 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.

**An Hien House** - This house is an excellent example of traditional Vietnamese architecture. Massive pillars support a large tiled roof, with the family altar in the middle.

**Thien Mu Pagoda** - This 7-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 8: Hue - Hanoi

Fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to Hanoi and drive approximately 1 hour into the city. Enjoy a visit to the Fine Arts Museum and exhilarating cyclo ride through Hanoi's Old Quarter. Each cyclo takes one passenger and is operated by a cycle driver behind the carriage. Wrap up your cyclo 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 4 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 1930's, 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 13<sup>th</sup> century. Each street specialises in merchants and artisans selling their wares of silk, silver, wood and more.

### **Day 9: Hanoi – Halong Bay**

Drive 4 hours today from Hanoi to Halong, where you will take an overnight cruise to the far-most corners of the bay. 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.

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.



*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 10: Halong Bay – Hanoi

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 11: Hanoi

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



### Destination Information

**Ho Chi Minh Quarter** - Dedicated to the father of modern Vietnam and where Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum stands in Ba Dinh Square. Ho Chi Minh first declared independence from French rule in 1945.

**One Pillar Pagoda** - Rebuilt in 1955 after damage during the French evacuation, the pagoda is made of wood and sits on a single pillar. Designed to reflect the shape of a lotus flower emerging from the water, it has become a popular spot for locals to enjoy the tranquil surroundings.

**Humble House on Stilts** - In the grounds of the Presidential Palace sits the 2-storey wooden home of Ho Chi Minh who ruled Vietnam from here until his death in 1969.

**Temple of Literature** - Hanoi's first university dating back to 1070 and a historical centre of learning, now dedicated to Confucian worship.

## Day 12: Hanoi - Chengdu

Late this morning, transfer to the airport where we will farewell our Vietnam National Escort and board our flight to Chengdu, China. As the flight to Chengdu departs around lunch time and only a snack is served on board, a packed lunch will be provided when we depart our hotel in Hanoi. On arrival, check in to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

### Destination Information

**Chengdu** – China’s symbolic western capital and the residence of the country’s most lovable black and white bear, Chengdu has an abundance to offer. With a fast-paced economy that is dragging China’s west into the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it is no wonder that Chengdu’s appeal is growing year on year. As the gateway into Sichuan Provinces large collection of sights, as well as Chengdu being its own trove of historical and cultural treasures, Chengdu is a must-visit on any trip to China.

## Day 13: Chengdu

Today we will visit China’s most famous resident, the Giant Panda. Visit the Panda Conservation Centre where you can learn about China’s celebrated bear. See these lovable creatures in surroundings that mirror their natural habitat. It is not guaranteed that you will be able to see the feeding of the younger pandas, as this only happens at the start and end of each day. Sightseeing involves approximately 1 and a half hours on foot and there are electric carts offered by private vendors that can be organised at your own cost. Later, visit Matchmaker’s Corner,



where you can watch parents search for suitable suitors for their children, in People’s Park and visit a traditional tea house (tea at your own expense). Tonight, dine on a delicious Sichuanese meal.

### Destination Information

**Panda Conservation Centre** – With over 80 pandas holding residence, the Chengdu Panda Research Base is equipped with the latest technology and research materials to gain a further understanding in how we can protect the panda and maintain, if not increase, its numbers. The park is set up to resemble the mountain and forest regions in north Sichuan, the original home of the Giant Panda, with extensive bamboo trees and large green spaces. Red Pandas, the Giant Panda’s lovable cousin, and flamboyant peacocks too roam the park, making for an interesting mix.

**People’s Park** – People’s Park is a pleasant respite from urban Chengdu. Here you can see beautiful golden koi, locals dancing and practicing Tai Chi, and most interesting of all, Matchmaker’s Corner, where parents search for suitable boyfriends or girlfriends for their children.

**Sichuanese Meal** – Sichuanese cuisine is famous for its use of Sichuan pepper and chillies. These spices from the area are known for their ‘mala’ (numb and spicy) flavours, which seem to cool and heat your mouth at the same time. Famous dishes include Kung Pao Chicken, twice-cooked pork and spicy Sichuanese hotpot.

## Day 14: Chengdu - Guilin

Fly 1 a half hour to the attractive city of Guilin and enjoy a leisurely walk around Ronghu Lake. Later, visit the Sun & Moon Pagodas for a spectacular view over downtown Guilin.



### Destination Information

**Guilin** – Guilin is one of China’s most stunning and panoramic cities and was founded during the reign of the first Chinese empire, the Qin Dynasty. It is renowned for the unique beauty of the mountains that fringe it. Guilin developed as a trading town due to the building of the Ling Canal which links the important Pearl and Yangtze River systems.

**Ronghu Lake** – One of two lakes originating from the Tang Dynasty when they made up part of the city moat. As Guilin expanded in all directions the moat became a lake within the city area.

**Sun and Moon Pagodas** – Known as the Gold and Silver Pagodas because of their colours at night, the sun and moon pagodas sit on top of the Chinese Fir Lake but are connected underwater by a glass tunnel.

## Day 15: Guilin - Yangshuo

Take a relaxed 4-hour cruise along the Li River to the charming village of Yangshuo where you will spend 2 nights. Around every river bend is a view to take your breath away as jagged peaks loom over rural scenes of lush greenery, grazing buffalos and local fishermen. These are small cruise boats usually holding approximately 100 passengers; with an enclosed dining area on the lower deck and an open viewing area on the upper deck. Usually the boats depart at 9am from the dock located a 1 hour drive from your 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, approximately a 15-minute walk from the river. There are electric carts offered by private vendors which can be organised at your own cost. In Yangshuo, visit the local markets.



### Destination Information

**Li River Cruise** – Pass tranquil farming and fishing scenes and picturesque villages as you cruise down the Li River. The main attraction is the stunning limestone karsts that tower above the river creating a magical landscape of mountains and water. The unique and natural beauty of this region has for centuries been an inspiration to Chinese artists and poets alike.

**Yangshuo** – Yangshuo is home to some of the best scenery in the world. This quaint town is renowned for its breathtaking vistas and peaceful country life. Surrounded by stark karst peaks and attractively located on the Li River, Yangshuo, alongside Guilin, prides itself in being the most sought-after beauty spots in China.

### Day 16: Yangshuo

Yangshuo sits in an exquisite rural location, surrounded by landscapes of jewel-green paddy fields and dramatic limestone karsts. Spend the morning exploring the country side before having an afternoon at leisure. There are many optional activities available, including cycling, rafting and walking (arranged locally and at extra cost). Meet a genuine cormorant fisherman on the banks of the Li River and have the opportunity to take a photo.

#### Destination Information

**Cormorant Fishing** – A traditional fishing method used for centuries in both China and Japan, skilled fishermen have trained their cormorants to catch fish for them by diving into the water and returning with their prize.

### Day 17: Yangshuo – Guilin

Drive 1 hour back to Guilin and visit the Reed Flute Caves to admire the stunning colours of the stalagmites and stalactites. It usually takes 1 hour to complete the route and it is very cool inside. Later, take a tour of the South China Pearl Museum where you will have the opportunity to buy these precious stones.



#### Destination Information

**Reed Flute Cave** – Named so because of the clumps of slender reed once commonly found at the entrance to the caves which was also used to make flutes, the Reed Flute Caves house a grotto of multi-coloured stalactites and stalagmites.

**South China Pearl Museum** – Gain a fascinating insight into the pearling industry of southern China at the South China Pearl Museum, where you also have the opportunity to purchase some of these elegant silver jewels.

### Day 18: Guilin - Xian

Fly 1 hour and 45 minutes to Xian and stroll on the beautifully preserved 14<sup>th</sup> century city walls that enclose Xian's old town. The local guide will give you time to explore the ancient city walls at your own pace. There are options here to hire a bicycle or an electric cart to drive along the length of the wall, these are offered by private vendors and can be organised at your own expense. This evening, enjoy a delicious feast of traditional Shui Jiao dumplings and a performance of Tang dynasty dancing.



### Destination Information

**Xian** – Xian has long played a pivotal role in China’s extensive history and has been a thriving hub for cultural exchange, economic trade as well as national politics for centuries. Home to some of China’s most ancient sights, diverse architecture and delicious fares, Xian is a must-see destination.

**Ancient city walls** – Dating back to the Ming Dynasty in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Xian ancient city wall is one of the best preserved urban fortifications in China. The wall’s ideal spot and layout gives visitors a bird’s eye view over this fantastic city. Follow the locals’ example and hire a bike to get an ever more spectacular experience.

**Tang Dynasty Dancing Show** – Xian, previously known as Chang’an, was an important cultural and historical centre in not only China but in the known-world. The Tang Dynasty dancing show is an exciting exponent of this prosperous society and keeps alive the splendour of this period.

### Day 19: Xian

Spend the morning viewing the enigmatic ranks of the life-sized Terracotta Warriors. The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses is located more than 1 hour drive outside of Xian. From the bus park to the museum entrance is a 15-minute walk. 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 the museum exit to the bus park. Within the museum area the warriors can be seen in three different ‘pits’, which are active archaeological digs. The site is large and will take about 2 and a half hours to explore. After this, visit the Xian Art Ceramics and Lacquer Exhibition centre to see smaller models of the warriors being made. Later, visit the lovely Little Wild Goose Pagoda, involving approximately 1 and a half hours on foot.



### Destination Information

**Terracotta Warriors** – One of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this unearthed terracotta army is comprised of over 7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots. The army was built in life-sized form by thousands of workers and designed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang to defend himself in the afterlife.

**Little Wild Goose Pagoda** – Dating back to the Tang Dynasty, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda is one of two prominent pagodas in Xian. A former centre for translating Buddhist scriptures from India, the Little Wild Goose Pagoda was said to have survived one of the strongest earthquakes in world history.

## Day 20: Xian - Beijing

Today, board your bullet train to Beijing, China's capital. Your train journey will be in a second-class soft seat and takes 4 to 5 hours. On arrival, drive 1 hour to your hotel. Spend your evening soaking up the atmosphere of this fascinating city.

### Destination Information

**Beijing** – Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. With its unequalled wealth of history, Beijing served as the centre for the many different empires and cultures that ruled China, and has been the heart of politics and society throughout its long history. The ancient monuments, the stories of days gone by as well as the dynamic and modern city Beijing has become today, make it a destination not to be missed.

## Day 21: Beijing

Head into Beijing's symbolic heart, Tiananmen Square, and into the magnificent Forbidden City – a complex full of imperial treasures. Afterwards, soak up the harmonious ambience of the Temple of Heaven, an orderly oasis in a bustling urban landscape, where you will also take part in a relaxing 45-minute Tai Chi class.

*The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. If this day of touring falls on a Monday, your touring in Beijing will be switched around so that the Forbidden City is visited on an alternative day. You will also need to bring your passport for a security check.*



### Destination Information

**Tiananmen Square** – Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

**Forbidden City** – The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings.

**Temple of Heaven** – Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, The Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture. The Temple of Heaven was created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people. Walking through the park we will see the many groups of local people that gather here every day to sing folk songs, practice Tai-Chi and sword dancing, play chess or just come to sit and chat.

## Day 22: Beijing

You will rise early this morning and drive approximately 2 hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass. Here you can take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Your visit here involves walking 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 at your own pace. Later, wander around the Summer Palace before a panoramic evening cruise on the Huangpu River.



### Destination Information

**Great Wall of China** – Originally built under the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, The Great Wall of China is the country's most iconic sight. Snaking through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west into the Bohai Sea in the east, the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world and was used as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

**Summer Palace** – The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the Fengshui notion of 'Mountain' and 'Water', seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

**Huangpu River Cruise** – There is no better way to see the juxtaposition of eras in Shanghai than taking a cruise on the Huangpu River. At night, the dazzling colours and lights from Pudong shine bright onto the more modest twilight of the Bund.

## Day 23: Beijing - Shanghai

Fly 2 hours and 10 minutes to the vibrant city of Shanghai. Enjoy some delicious Shanghainese cuisine and in the evening, enjoy the exciting ERA acrobatic show.



### Destination Information

**Shanghai** – Once known as the 'Paris of the East', Shanghai is now one of Asia's most influential cities. Prior to communist arrival in 1949, Shanghai was a city with European-style mansions and was the most important trading port in Asia. Today it presents a blend of cultures; the modern and the traditional, along with the European and oriental. Modern skyscrapers intermingle with 1920s 'shikumen' buildings. This combination is what attracts millions of visitors each year.

**Shanghainese Cuisine** – Influenced by neighbouring provinces and known for its sweeter taste, Shanghai cuisine is a plethora of delicious treats.

**ERA Show** – One of Shanghai’s most famous shows, the “ERA – Intersection of Time” is a multi-million-dollar acrobatics extravaganza that redefines Chinese acrobatics. It is a meditation on time and a love story told through a spectacular sequence of acrobatic performances guaranteed to leave you enthralled and amazed.

## Day 24: Shanghai

Today’s explorations include the peaceful Yu Garden and the atmospheric alleys of the old town. Visit the Silk museum before admiring the magnificent colonial architecture of Shanghai with a stroll along the Bund.



### Destination Information

**Old Town and Yu Gardens** – The old town of Shanghai, where cobbled streets are lined with traditional shops selling herbal medicines, handicrafts, Chinese tea and a variety of tantalising snacks is the original centre of Shanghai and for decades was the seat of Chinese authority in Shanghai. The Yu Gardens is seen as one of the most perfect examples of Chinese garden style. Built by the Ming-era governor, Pan Yunduan, as a retirement gift for his father, the Yu Gardens is home to exquisite jade rock, goldfish-filled ponds and stunning, tranquil pavilions.

**Silk Museum** – The Silk Museum is an educational journey through the production of silk, one of China’s most famous and luxurious materials. Learn about the use of silkworms and silk moths in its production; the manufacturing process; as well as silk’s journey along the Silk Road which brought this product across Asia and Europe.

**The Bund** – Recognised as Shanghai's former 'Wall Street', the Bund is home to an impressive collection of buildings from the early trade houses of the 1850s to the glamorous Art Deco modernism of the 1920s. Originally the home of the foreign population of Shanghai, the Bund’s architecture has inherited much western influence and is a stark contrast to the Pudong skyline, sitting across the Huangpu River.

## Days 25-26: Depart Shanghai

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

Late check-out is not included in our 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.



## Treasures of Vietnam and China Travel Information

### Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam & China and Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf.

**Vietnam** - Visas for Vietnam are issued with specific start and expiry dates which are based on the dates stated on the visa application form. Travel must be completed within those dates.

**China** - Visas for China are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days.

*Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.*

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15.00 courier fee will apply.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hours before your tour commences or intend to stay in Vietnam & China after your tour has ended and you are NOT staying in a hotel you will need to register with the local police station. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

### Insurance

We strongly 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 originals.

### Eating in Vietnam and China

Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Vietnam and China. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure. Please read your travel guides which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Vietnam and China. We recommend that when it comes to Vietnamese and Chinese food, you stay open minded, try to be adventurous and always have a go with the chopsticks!

**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 most 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, 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.

**China:** Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often, you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Traditionally, Chinese people cook with a lot of vegetables because meat used to be hard to come by. Dishes often come pre-seasoned with soy sauce or other sauces. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. Most meals are served with plain rice on the side which is intended as an accompaniment to your meal. Unlike the western world, Chinese people do not normally pre-heat their plates and food can be presented at a variety of temperatures, which is a typically Chinese way of doing things.

When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style' on a Lazy Susan; meaning that various dishes will be laid out on a spinning turntable in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group - there is always more than enough to feed everybody. 'Family style' means that there are a pair of serving chopsticks for each dish which are used specifically to serve the food (please ask your server if you require a fork or spoon) and everybody will help themselves to all the dishes on the Lazy Susan. You will have an individual bowl, chopsticks and cup for your own use. Please be courteous and consider your fellow diners; if your favourite dish is on the other side of the table, it will make its way round to you soon! We find our customers really enjoy this sociable style of eating.

## 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 Australia and 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.

## Porterage

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

## 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, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).**

Roads in South East 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 seatbelts are utilised where available and that customers 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 international and internal flight sectors.

**Day Trains:** On this tour, you will take a bullet train journey. You will travel in second-class soft seat class with air conditioning. *On high speed trains, the train companies have implemented a policy which does not allow travellers to carry inflammable liquids including aerosols, styling gel, compressed air or insecticides; any explosives, magnetised material, knives, scissors or sharp items (medication is fine). Bag checks are conducted randomly and any of these items may be confiscated before boarding the train (in hand luggage or main luggage).*

## Development in Southeast Asia and China

Though parts of Southeast Asia and China match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that they are still developing countries and as such, many aspects of tourism do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

## Public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese or Chinese 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.

**Vietnam:** Tet Holiday is between 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Reunification Day is on 30<sup>th</sup> April every year, International Labour Day is on 1<sup>st</sup> May every year and National Independence Day is on 2<sup>nd</sup> September every year.

**China:** Chinese New Year is on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019. Golden Week public holidays fall annually between 1-3 May and 1-7 October.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so, in many of the cities, we will visit a museum or exhibition which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest; for example, in Shanghai you will be able to see how silk is created all the way from the silk worm to beautiful garments; and in Xian we will take you to a workshop which creates replicas of the Terracotta Warriors, from tiny little warriors to seven foot behemoths! We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

## 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 each 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.

## 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.

## Packing list and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

## 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 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

### Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside of major cities. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and Vietnam, as well as other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. 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 & Optional Tours

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. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$250AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional tours may be offered in each city you visit during your tour at an additional cost. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide.

### 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 defense 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.

### Cultural Difference

Vietnam and China have many religions, cultures and histories. Please be considerate of the local beliefs and customs and dress with consideration.

### 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 South East 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 GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian 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 followed by deposit documentation, which includes 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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