



# CHRISTMAS ON THE MEKONG

Classic Tour | 20 Days | Physical Level 1

Siem Reap – Mekong Cruise – Saigon – Hoi An – Hanoi – Halong Bay – Hanoi

Embark on a magical trip through the highlights of two of Southeast Asia's most captivating countries, made all the more special by unforgettable Christmas and New Year's celebrations. Begin your adventure at Angkor Wat, one of the world's greatest temple complexes, before setting sail on a seven-night cruise along the scenic Mekong River. Cross into Vietnam to soak up the buzz of Saigon and the charm of Hoi An, before concluding with a serene overnight cruise through Halong Bay.

- Wake up to a magical Christmas on the Mekong
- Wander through the wonders of Angkor's temple complex
- Ring in the New Year in the lively streets of Saigon
- Sail through the limestone peaks of Halong Bay

## TOUR MAP

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## CLASSIC TOUR INCLUSIONS:

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- 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
- Cambodia & Vietnam visa fees for New Zealand passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)

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

## CLASSIC TOURS:

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These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Southeast Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

### PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

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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.

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

Please Consider:

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

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

### JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 20 days in duration including international flights.

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 times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Siem Reap and end the tour on Day 19 in Hanoi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### ITINERARY CHANGES:

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

## DETAILED ITINERARY

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### Day 1-2: Fly overnight to Siem Reap

Meals: D

You will be met at Siem Reap in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, travel to your hotel for check in. Any time before this evening's dinner and welcome briefing is at leisure to start your explorations.



### Destination Information

**Siem Reap** - Siem Reap translates to 'the defeat of Siam', in reference to the centuries-old conflict between Cambodia and Thailand. Since the French purchase of Angkor from Siam, Siem Reap has grown from a small village to a popular tourist destination, thanks to its proximity to the World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat.

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### Day 3: Explore Angkor

Meals: B, L, D

The UNESCO-managed Angkor complex boasts over 1,000 temples, and was the seat of the colossal Khmer Empire from the 9th to the 14th centuries. We spend the morning at the city of Angkor Thom, built by Jayavarman VII during his restoration of the Angkorian Empire in the late 12th century. Here, sights include the enigmatic Bayon, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King. One of the most evocative ruins here is the monastery temple of Ta Prohm, enveloped in a labyrinth of jungle just outside Angkor Thom. Enjoy lunch before devoting the afternoon to the fascinating and awe-inspiring temple complex of Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world. It predates the city of Angkor Thom and is considered to be Cambodia's spiritual heart. Later, return to Angkor Thom to enjoy the sunset from its moat, with a refreshing drink in hand.



### Destination Information

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

**Angkor Thom** – (lit. ‘Great City’) This was the last capital of the Khmer empire, established by Buddhist King Jayavarman VII in the 12th century. This walled city covers an area of 9 square kilometres and encompasses many temples.

**The Bayon** – A late 12th century state temple at the centre of Angkor Thom. Its beautifully-crafted central towers are decorated with four opposing faces representing the Buddha, and probably modelled after the founder, King Jayavarman. Bayon’s stone galleries display extraordinary basreliefs incorporating over 11,000 figures.

**Elephant Terrace and Terrace of the Leper King** – These giant viewing platforms were used for public ceremonies, which served as a base for the King's grand audience hall. The Elephant Terrace is named for the carved elephant parade on its eastern side. To the north is the Terrace of the Leper King, named for a statue found there.

**Ta Prohm** – One of Angkor Thom’s most atmospheric ruins, swallowed by the roots of the jungle, Ta Prohm has several towers, closed courtyards and narrow corridors to explore. Originally dedicated to Sri Jayarajadhamani, the mother of the king who established Angkor Thom, it was made famous by the film Tomb Raider.

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**Day 4:                    The Victoria Mekong**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to Kampong Cham to embark on your next adventure - a seven-night cruise on our premium small ship, the Victoria Mekong. Begin your cruise with a complimentary cocktail on deck, watching the sun set.



**Destination Information**

**Mekong River** - The Mekong River is one of Asia’s great waterways, flowing over 4,000 kilometres from the Tibetan Plateau through six countries before emptying into the South China Sea. It supports diverse ecosystems and millions of people, and has long been central to trade, agriculture, and daily life in mainland Southeast Asia.

**Day 5: Angkor Ban & Silk Island**

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the laid-back village of Angkor Ban with its wooden stilt houses. This afternoon, take a tuk-tuk to Silk Island to learn about the process of silk weaving from worm to loom.

**Destination Information**

**Angkor Ban** – Angkor Ban is a traditional riverside village on the Mekong, known for its well-preserved wooden stilt houses that survived the Khmer Rouge era. Life here remains largely unchanged for generations, offering a rare glimpse into rural Cambodian culture and community.

**Silk Island** – Silk Island, or Koh Dach, sits on the Mekong River just outside Phnom Penh and is renowned for its traditional silk weaving. Visitors can observe the full process of silk production, from mulberry cultivation to hand-loomed textiles, supporting a craft passed down through generations.

**Day 6: Christmas Eve on the Mekong**

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a walking tour of Koh Chen village, where you'll meet a local copper and silversmith, before continuing to the country's former capital, Oudong. Arrive in Phnom Penh and end your Christmas day celebrations in style with a signature cocktail at Raffles Hotel Le Royal before returning to the ship to enjoy a Christmas feast with a Cambodian twist.

**Destination Information**

**Oudong** – Oudong served as the royal capital of Cambodia for over 250 years until the late 19th century. Set atop a scenic ridge, its hilltop stupas house the remains of past kings and offer sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Today, it remains a site of pilgrimage and historical significance to the Cambodian people.

**Day 7: Christmas on the Mekong & Phnom Penh**

Meals: B, L, D

Wake to Christmas on the Mekong. Begin the day exploring Phnom Penh's Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda, before visiting the National Museum to admire Khmer treasures. After lunch, learn about Cambodia's tragic past under the Khmer Rouge regime with a visit to the Killing Fields. Return to the ship and end your Christmas day celebrations with a captivating Apsara dance performance.

**Destination Information**

**Phnom Penh** – Phnom Penh became Cambodia's capital in 1865 under King Norodom and lies at the confluence of the Mekong, Tonlé Sap, and Bassac rivers. Once a small riverside settlement, it developed rapidly during the country's French colonial rule and has grown to become Cambodia's political, economic, and cultural centre.

**Day 8: Tan Chau**

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy onboard activities such as relaxing in the swimming pool or a minigolf tournament as the ship crosses the border into Vietnam. Enjoy lunch on board as you cruise toward Tan Chau, then take a tender to explore a floating village and see how locals farm freshwater fish beneath their stilt houses. This evening, enjoy a riotous Vietnamese lion dance on the sky deck!

**Day 9: Phu Tan & Tiger Island**

Meals: B, L, D

Head ashore in Phu Tan and visit a craft village famous for its handmade clay stoves. Return to the ship for lunch before visiting Tiger Island for a scenic walk through rice fields, meet local artisans, and learn about Mr. Tiger's Temple.

**Destination Information**

**Phu Tan** – Vast, flat floodplains and canal networks largely make up the Phu Tan district of Vietnam, home to diverse ethnic communities that play a key part in regional agriculture.

**Tiger Island** – Named after the local legend of a tiger once roaming the area, Tiger Island is known for its peaceful pace of life, fruit orchards, and colourful incense-making community.

**Day 10: Long Xuyen**

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast as you cruise to Long Xuyen. Take a tender to explore the floating market and meet locals living in floating houses. After lunch, visit Dinh Yen village to see traditional straw mat weaving. Continue cruising to Can Tho and enjoy a Southern Vietnamese folk music performance along with dinner.

**Destination Information**

**Long Xuyen** - The capital of An Giang province in Vietnam's Mekong Delta, Long Xuyen is located on the banks of the Hau River. It is a regional hub for trade, education, and agriculture, with a growing economy centred around rice, fish farming, and cross-border commerce with neighbouring Cambodia.

**Day 11: Disembark and journey to Saigon**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, disembark and drive to Saigon, stopping en route for a local lunch. Upon your arrival in Saigon, explore some of the highlights of the city including the Reunification Palace, the Notre-Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office. Tonight, place your trust in your other senses as you dine in the dark at Noir, a unique restaurant that works with local people who are blind or visually-impaired.

**Destination Information**

**Saigon** – Still widely known by its former name, Saigon is Vietnam's largest and most dynamic city. Once the capital of French Indochina and later South Vietnam, it has grown into a vibrant metropolis where colonial boulevards, modern skyscrapers, and street-side markets coexist, reflecting the city's layered history and rapid development.

**Reunification Palace** – Reunification Palace, formerly the Presidential Palace of South Vietnam, served as the seat of government during the Vietnam War. It became a symbol of the war's end when a North Vietnamese tank crashed through its gates in 1975, marking the fall of Saigon and the reunification of the country.

**Notre-Dame Cathedral** – The 60-metre bell towers of Saigon's Notre-Dame Cathedral overlook downtown Saigon. It was consecrated 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.

**Central Post Office** – Designed by Gustave Eiffel and completed in the late 19th century, Saigon’s Central Post Office combines Gothic, Renaissance, and French colonial architectural styles.

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**Day 12: Cu Chi Tunnels**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, drive around 1 hour and 30 minutes to the fascinating Cu Chi Tunnels to learn the history of the Viet Cong and their guerilla tactics during the Vietnam War. See examples of bamboo traps hidden beneath dry foliage, reconstructed Viet Cong kitchens, and tunnel entrances. Should you choose, you will also have the opportunity to spend a few minutes underground in an example section of the tunnel network. Stop for lunch at an organic farm en route back to Saigon, before visiting the poignant War Remnants Museum.

**Destination Information**

**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.

**War Remnants Museum** – Comprised of numerous buildings displaying military equipment, photographs and artefacts relating to the Vietnam War from 1961-1975.

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**Day 13: New Year’s Eve in Hoi An**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, take a 1 hour and 20-minute flight from Saigon to Danang and transfer 45-minutes through countryside to the magical lantern-lined streets of Hoi An. Enjoy a walking tour of the Old Town, visiting the Chua Ong Chinese Pagoda, a 200-year old merchant house, and the newly-reopened Japanese Covered Bridge and a local arts and crafts social enterprise before enjoying some free time. Later, celebrate New Year’s Eve with a festive Vietnamese feast and ring in the new year in style.

**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.

**Chua Ong Chinese Pagoda** – Chua Ong Pagoda, located in Hoi An, dates back to the 17th century and is dedicated to the Taoist god Quan Cong. It reflects the spiritual and cultural influences of the local Chinese Vietnamese community with its intricate carvings and traditional architecture.

**Japanese Covered Bridge** – The Japanese Covered Bridge in Hoi An was built in the early 1600s by the local Japanese community as a link to the Chinese quarter. Its unique design blends Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese architectural elements, making it one of the town's most iconic landmarks.

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**Day 14: New Year's Day in Tra Que Village**

Meals: B, L, D

Start New Year with a peaceful escape into Hoi An's lush countryside to visit an organic farming community. Stroll through vibrant gardens, watch local farmers at work, and even try your hand at traditional techniques. Afterwards, take part in a hands-on cooking demonstration and savour authentic local specialities. Return to Hoi An for an afternoon at leisure, perfect for relaxing on the beach or browsing the charming shops and boutiques of the Old Town as the new year begins.



**Destination Information**

**Tra Que Vegetable Village** – Located just outside Hoi An, this co-operative project is a first-choice supplier for most local restaurants, growing delicious herbs and vegetables using traditional techniques. Their secret is in the fertiliser: natural seaweed from a local lagoon.

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**Day 15: Historical Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to Danang airport for your 1 hour and 20 minute flight to Vietnam's lively capital, Hanoi. In the afternoon, enjoy some light sightseeing, including Hanoi's first university, the Temple of Literature, and a cyclo tour of the city's Old Quarter. Your cyclo rider will drop you off at a local café, giving you the opportunity to try a local specialty: Cà phê trứng – egg coffee.



**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.

**Temple of Literature** – Founded in 1070, the Temple of Literature in Hanoi is Vietnam's first national university. Dedicated to Confucius, it served as a centre for learning and civil service examinations, symbolising the country's long-standing respect for education and scholarship.

**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.

**Day 16: Explore Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

Today, explore the Ho Chi Minh Quarter for a deeper understanding of the Vietnam War. Visit the Humble House on Stilts, where the former leader once lived within the Presidential Palace grounds, and view his imposing mausoleum in Ba Dinh Square. This evening, sit back and enjoy the Quintessence of Tonkin show, a cultural celebration of northern Vietnamese history.



*Please note: The performance schedule is subject to change; if the Quintessence of Tonkin is not operating, you will enjoy a similar artistic performance in Saigon or Hoi An.*

**Destination Information**

**Ba Dinh Square** – Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi is the political heart of Vietnam, where President Ho Chi Minh declared the country's independence in 1945. The expansive public space is surrounded by important government buildings and serves as a venue for national ceremonies and gatherings.

**Presidential Palace** – The Presidential Palace in Hanoi was built between 1900 and 1906 to house the French Governor-General of Indochina. Combining French colonial architecture with Vietnamese decorative elements, it now serves as a historic site adjacent to Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum.

**Humble House on Stilts** – The Humble House on Stilts was the simple wooden home of Ho Chi Minh from 1958 to 1969. Elevated above a small pond in Hanoi's Presidential Palace compound, it reflects the leader's modest lifestyle despite his political prominence.

**Day 17: Halong Bay**

Meals: B, L, D

Drive 2 and half hours from Hanoi to Halong Bay, where you will take an overnight cruise to the far-most corners of this famously beautiful bay. Enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities such as kayaking, swimming, or relaxing on an island beach (determined by the local weather conditions).



Sightseeing may include 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, followed by a freshly prepared dinner, before retiring to your cabin for the night.

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

*Please also note: Weather conditions 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.*

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**Day 18: Ha Long Bay – Hanoi**

Meals: B,L,D

After a night anchored out on the bay, rise early to enjoy a Tai Chi lesson on deck as the sun rises.

Cruise back to port, stopping en route to visit one of the bay's impressive caves. After brunch onboard, return to Hanoi, where your afternoon is at leisure ahead of this evening's farewell dinner.



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**Days 19-20: Depart Hanoi to New Zealand**

Meals: B

Fly home to New Zealand, arriving home the same or the following day.



## CHRISTMAS ON THE MEKONG: TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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

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

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

### INSURANCE:

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

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

### EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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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 has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – influenced heavily by flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, coriander and dill.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes, and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your group's arrival until breakfast on your day of departure. 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 bowls. In Thailand and some other countries in Southeast Asia, fork and spoon are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually, chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your 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.

Those with dietary requirements - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. 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**

#### **GROUP SIZE:**

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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 24 travellers in a Victoria Mekong group, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

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

#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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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 on our tours 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.

#### PORTERAGE:

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Please be aware that porterage 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.

#### LUGGAGE:

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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. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

#### TRANSPORT:

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**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.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

#### TIPPING POLICY:

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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. 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 at 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 recognise 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.

Please note that for the Victoria Mekong portion of your journey, all tipping is included in your holiday cost and does not need to be provided separately.

#### **DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:**

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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 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.

#### **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:**

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If you are travelling within the below Cambodian and 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.

#### **SOUVENIRS:**

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We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate 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. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

#### **PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:**

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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:

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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.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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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 <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>.

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://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:

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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 before departure.

Updated: April 2026