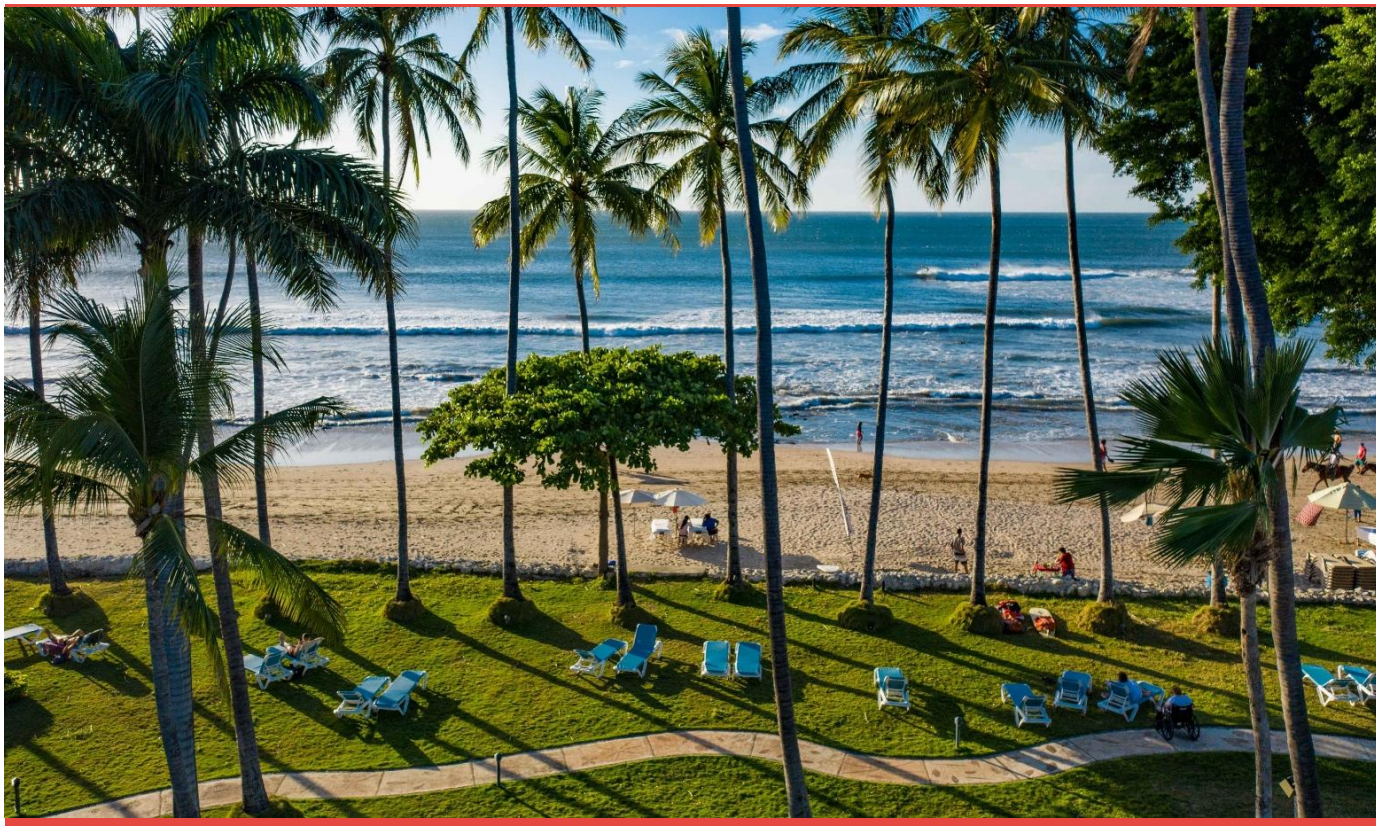


COLOURS OF COSTA RICA & TAMARINDO BEACH

Tour & Beach | 19 Days | Physical Level 1

One of the planet's most biodiverse destinations and a poster child for eco-tourism, Costa Rica is a colourful, peaceful and bountiful country. From the tropical beaches to lush rainforest, you will explore this natural paradise, spending time in breath-taking national parks, viewing volcanoes and meeting the friendly local people. Round off your journey with a relaxing beach stay in Tamarindo, where golden sands, warm Pacific waters and a laid-back atmosphere provide the perfect setting to unwind and soak up the sunshine.

- Discover the jungle and waterways of Tortuguero
- Walk the trails of Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve
- Visit the symmetrical cone-shaped volcano of Arenal
- Enjoy magnificent views of Nicoya Gulf enroute to Manuel Antonio
- Unwind on Tamarindo's golden sands

TOUR MAP



COLOURS OF COSTA RICA & TAMARINDO BEACH INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

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 check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

TOUR & BEACH:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Costa Rica on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort and local guides throughout the tour section of the itinerary (Day 2 – 13), whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience. The beach segment of the itinerary (Day 14 – 17) will be on a bed and breakfast basis. Please note, there will be no escorted touring included during your time at Tamarindo Beach and you will be able to enjoy time at leisure. This perfectly balanced itinerary combines Costa Rica's rich wildlife and scenic landscapes with the relaxed atmosphere of the Pacific coast, offering the ideal mix of exploration and relaxation.

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. Colours of Costa Rica and Tamarindo Beach 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.

There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time

Of course, our National Escort and 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. If you require any more Information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 19 days in duration including international flights or 17 days in duration based on 'Land Only'.

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

Join the tour on Day 1 in San José and end the tour on Day 17 in Tamarindo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Travel to Costa Rica Meals: D

Fly to San José, Costa Rica's capital, where you will be met at the airport and transferred approximately 45 minutes to your hotel in Santa Ana. The rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture. Tonight, you will enjoy a welcome dinner.



Destination Information

San Jose – Located in the centre of the country, San Jose Is the most Important political, economic and social centre of the Costa Rica territory. It can be considered, almost in its entirety, to have a complete European cultural Influence.

Day 2: San Jose Meals: B, L

This morning, get to know San Jose by exploring the main streets, theatres, museums and downtown neighbourhoods for 2 hours. After this, head to the outskirts of the city (20 minute drive), to the town of Escazu where vestiges of the colonial lifestyle still can be found on every corner.



Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, visit a local artisan to learn about the traditional "mascaradas" and finish your visit at a sugar cane mill. The afternoon touring will last about 2 hours.

Day 3: San Jose to Tortuguero Meals: B, L, D



Today you travel for approximately 2 hours, through Braulio Carrillo National Park and across rural agriculture towns, made up of banana and cocoa plantations. You will embark on a boat, taking you across rivers to the beautiful jungle area of Tortuguero. This boat trip is 1.5 – 2 hours depending on the water level.

Lunch will be served at the hotel, and later that afternoon a local elder will meet you at the hotel, giving you an introduction about the history of the area and its change from a lumberjack town into one of the most important wildlife protection areas in the country. Approximately 1hr in duration.

The rest of the day is at leisure and dinner is served at the hotel.

Between January – April if the water levels are too low, the main dock cannot be used. You will then be transferred to a secondary dock, 45 – 60 minutes drive away.

Destination Information

Tortuguero – A village located on the vibrant Caribbean coast and one of the most unique areas of Costa Rica. The National Park Is home to a network of canals, dense rainforests, rivers, lagoons and beaches and both the town and Tortuguero National Park are named after marine turtles (Tortuguero means a lot of turtles in traditional slang).

Day 4: Tortuguero Meals: B, L, D



You will start the morning with a boat tour on the canals of Tortuguero National Park, exploring the flora and fauna that inhabits this area. Expect to see anything from small reptiles such as the Jesus Christ Lizard, multiple species of migratory and stationary birds, to the king of the Costa Rican jungles: the imposing jaguar.

On the return you will stop at the town of Tortuguero, walking around and learning more about their way of living.

Lunch will be at a floating restaurant while you enjoy a pleasant ride along the river. The rest of the day is at leisure to relax at the hotel before dinner.

Total sightseeing time is approximately 3 hours.

Destination Information

Boat Trip – Explore the canals of the Tortuguero National Park on a leisurely-paced canal boat. As you cruise along you can enjoy the lush biodiversity of the area, spotting monkeys (there are three different species) iguanas, crocodiles, alligators, turtles, manatees and 400 species of birds.

Day 5: Tortuguero to Arenal Meals: B, L, D



Today you leave the Caribbean as your exploration continues crossing mountains, rivers and different kinds of forests. Cross back to the mainland and travel to one of the landmarks of Costa Rica, the Arenal Volcano. Again the transfer times is between

1.5 – 2 hours depending on water levels.

With a stop for lunch at a local restaurant, you will drive 1 hour to the town of Sarapiqui where you will visit the house of a local farmer and get to taste the local delicacy of fresh cut heart of palm.

Continue the 1.5 hour journey to Arenal Volcano, where the rest of the day is at leisure, before dinner at the hotel.

Destination Information

Heart of Palm – This vegetable Is harvested from the Inner core and growing bud of certain palm trees, most notable the coconut palm. They are cut into cylinders or sliced Into rings, and then packed In brine or water. While looking like smooth, thick white asparagus spears, they are said to taste like artichokes.

Day 6: Arenal Volcano Meals: B, L, D



This morning you visit Eco Centro Danaus, one of the most important projects for wildlife protection and preservation in the area. The Reserve protects roughly three hectares of secondary forest. Enjoy a 1 hour walk exploring, before heading to La Fortuna village for lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon you will visit the Arenal 1968 Park, where the hill hiking trails were formed by lava during the Arenal Volcano 1968 eruption. The 2 hour hike offers you great panoramic views of Arenal Volcano and Arenal Lake.

There is no better way to unwind after a long day than a visit to the hot springs. These family-owned natural hot springs, 15 minutes drive away, are heated from the heart of the Arenal Volcano. Enjoy the peace and beautiful scenery for about 2, hours before dinner.

Please note that the terrain is mostly gravel with loose rocks. The lowest point is 600m above sea level, and the highest is 900m. An moderate fitness level is required for this trail, however easier trails are available and your guide will choose the best trail for all.

Destination Information

Arenal Volcano – Costa Rica's best-known volcano Is an active stratovolcano, measuring atleast 1633 metres high, with the cone shaped crate 140 metres in diameter. Dominating the landscape, this volcano has been in a resting phase since 2010, though Its slopes and the forest around It still show the effects of Its most active periods.

Day 7: Arenal Volcano

Meals: B, L, D



Just 5 minutes from the hotel you will enjoy a trip in an inflatable boat through the scenic Río Peñas Blancas. As you paddle or float downstream, your naturalist guides will point out a wide variety of trees, birds, monkeys and other wildlife.

This 1 hour 30 minute eco-tour, without the noise of a motorboat, is the perfect way to relax and enjoy the nature that usually coexists on the banks of rivers in San Carlos. During the tour, you will stop to share a mug of coffee with a farmer living isolated from the town.

Lunch will be at the hotel before you head off to a local farm to learn about the history and cultivation of cocoa. Explore the significance it held for indigenous communities during the precolonial era, and discover the process it undergoes to transform into the chocolate we all love before delighting in some tasting.

Destination Information

Río Peñas Blancas – This river runs through the Tilaran Mountain Range where a good portion of It Is calm waters, offering you the easiest and best way to see the wildlife.

Day 8: Arenal to Monteverde

Meals: B, L, D



Today you leave the imposing Arenal Volcano and its' rainforest behind as you move to the cloud forest area of Monteverde.

Drive 2 hours to the town of Tilaran, where you will stop for lunch.

It will take a further 2hours to reach Monteverde, as part of this drive will be on gravel road. You will have time to rest before meeting your guide and fellow travelers in the late afternoon to take on a 1,5 hour cloud forest night walk. Walking in the forest at night is a magical experience, as you learn more about the various species that rule the forest at nightfall. It is possible to spot some mammals, snakes, tarantulas, active and sleeping birds while enjoying the nightly symphony of frogs and insects.

Dinner is included tonight at a local restaurant after the tour.

Destination Information

Monteverde – One of the most famous conservation area In Central America, Monteverde consists of 26,000 acres of cloud forest, 90% of which Is virgin. At 1,440 metres above sea level, the area Is cloud forest rather than rainforest and within the reserve there are 2,500 plant species, 100 mammal species, 400 bird species and 120 reptilian and amphibian species. This Is the best place to try and spot the resplendent quetzal, a beautiful bird native to Central America.

Day 9: Monteverde

Meals: B, D



This morning you will take one of the most emblematic walks of this area on the Monteverde Hanging Bridges, that combine natural trails and amazing hanging bridges. Enjoy this 2 hour walk where you get to see the flora and fauna at every level of these magical tropical forests.

Crossing hanging bridges is a unique experience, offering you complete views of the forest canopy and access to a completely different ecosystem that can only be discovered at the highest points of trees.

Your afternoon is at leisure with the option to stay in the park. Make sure you return on time, as a local host will be sharing the history of the Quaker foundations of Monteverde with you later. This will last 1 hour.

Day 10: Monteverde to Manuel Antonio

Meals: B, L



Today you leave the cloud forest behind as you head to the last destination of the trip, the area of Manuel Antonio located on the Central Pacific Coast of the country. Completing the forest cycle of the country, this area hosts a large variety of flora and fauna in a relatively small area of land, but also a significant patch of protected sea.

It will be a 2 hour drive to your lunch stop and then a further 2 hour drive to your destination.

Enjoy amazing views of the Nicoya Gulf as you head down from Monteverde and the Tilaran Mountain Range and then cross famous coastal areas such as the Tarcoles, Carara and Jaco Beach on the way to Manuel Antonio.

The rest of the day is at leisure after arrival at the hotel.

Destination Information

Manuel Antonio – Providing shelter to many of Costa Rica's endangered species, Manuel Antonio may be Costa Rica's smallest park but It Is considered as one of the best. Internationally It Is one of the most biodiverse In the world and covers a range of eco-systems, from tropical forest to lagoons, mangroves and beaches. 109 species of mammal prowl the park and 184 species of bird living here.

Day 11: Manuel Antonio Meals: B



This morning explore the pristine natural beauty of Manuel Antonio National Park filled with exotic wildlife such as monkeys, sloths, birds, reptiles and butterflies. This picturesque walk will take you to one of the beaches named the most beautiful in the world, by Forbes magazine.

Experience the lush rainforest behind you, white sandy beaches below, and crystalline blue waters. Have your camera ready, as your knowledgeable guide sets his trained eyes on diverse flora and fauna for you to capture along the way. You have approximately 3 hours to experience the natural beauty around you.

At the end of the tour, you can either stay at the park, head out to explore the town or go back to the hotel with your guide.Sightseeing today will involve around 3-4 hours of walking, including wooden and stone steps.

Day 12: Manuel Antonio Meals: B, D



Today's morning is at leisure to relax before exploring the local flavors of the area this afternoon.

The first stop allows you about an hour at the local farmers' market in Quepos, where you have the opportunity to browse the stands and pick out ingredients for your dinner.

Continue towards the small town of Londres, to a private ranch and dining area where you will start with a walk through an organic garden to pick out some finishing flavors, colors and textures for your meal. Then for the 3 hours preparation, guided by the expert local cooks.

Participate in making corn tortillas by hand, exotic "ceviches" with plantain or banana, rice cooked the old-fashioned way, chicken in a hearty tomato sauce, "picadillos" (minced meats and veggies and spices combined), and more.

Please note: Bid farewell to your guide and companions from your group tour as the remainder of your stay is at leisure, with no scheduled sightseeing, touring or guide services included. You will be free to enjoy the resort and surrounding area independently.

Day 13: Transfer to Tamarindo Meals: B



Journey from Manuel Antonio to Tamarindo, travelling through ever-changing landscapes of lush rainforest, rural villages and Pacific coastline. Arrive in this laidback beach town, known for its golden sands, clear turquoise waters, and lush green surroundings. The rest of the day is yours to settle in, perhaps enjoying a gentle stroll along the shore or watching the sunset over the Pacific.

Please note, all guided touring ends on this day. On arrival into Tamarindo, you will be met by a representative who will escort you to your transfer. The remainder of your time in Tamarindo Beach will be at leisure with no escorted touring included. Should you need any further assistance, an English-speaking representative will be contactable.

Please note, not all customers travelling on the group tour will be travelling onwards to the beach.

Destination Information

Tamarindo – Located on Costa Rica's Pacific coast, Tamarindo is a lively beach town known for its long stretches of golden sand, warm ocean waters and relaxed atmosphere. Popular for surfing and outdoor activities, the area also offers access to nearby national parks, mangroves and wildlife. With a vibrant mix of restaurants, shops and beachside bars, Tamarindo combines natural beauty with a laid-back coastal lifestyle.

Days 14 - 16: Tamarindo at Leisure Meals: B



Enjoy time at leisure in Tamarindo, where days unfold at your own pace. Relax on the wide sandy beach, ideal for swimming, easy walks and soaking up the sunshine, or explore the town's inviting cafés, shops and local markets.

Those wishing to venture further might discover nearby beaches such as Playa Conchal, visit nature reserves rich in birdlife, monkeys and other wildlife, or take a scenic boat trip along the coast. Alternatively, simply unwind and soak up the warm "pura vida" atmosphere, embracing the slower pace of life.

Days 17 - 19: Fly to New Zealand Meals: B

Transfer to the airport for your flight to New Zealand, arriving two days later.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



COLOURS OF COSTA RICA & TAMARINDO BEACH TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders are currently permitted entry to Costa Rica without a visa for stays of up to 180 days.

Please note that flights to Costa Rica may transit via the United States, in which case an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) may be required.

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.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. On our Tour & Beach Tours, there will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu Tours groups while you are travelling. Dedicated Solo Departures have a maximum group size of 18 passengers.

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

Please note: Your time in Tamarindo Beach will be on a private basis, as not all customers travelling on the group tour will be travelling onwards to the beach.

EATING IN COSTA RICA:

Costa Rican cuisine is a combination of influences of both the colonial Spanish and Afro-Caribbeans. The food is mild, and has a high reliance on fresh fruit and vegetables – which isn't much of a surprise when you consider Costa Rica's huge biodiversity. Staple foods include rice and black beans, which are served at most meals, alongside plantain and grilled or sautéed meat or fish.

A typical breakfast is Gallo Pinto – rice and beans stir-fried together and served with eggs and sour cream or cheese, whilst a typical lunch, casado, is rice and beans (not mixed) with meat and a salad. Both are delicious and seasoned beautifully with local herbs and vegetables. The indigenous people of the Central American region ate corn as a large part of their diet, and it still features today. Tamales, for example, were introduced by the Aztecs and are still eaten at celebrations, especially Christmas. These are a dough of cornmeal, lard and spices stuffed with meat, rice and vegetables and steamed in a leaf. Another food not too miss are empanadas, a delicious snack. Similar to a Cornish pasty but with a corn-based dough, these are filled with beef, chicken, cheese or fruit.

Whilst we strongly recommend trying as many local dishes as possible, Costa Rica also has a wide range of international foods available – Mexican, steakhouses, Chinese and Italian are particularly popular.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to rainforest lodges. 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 may exist between New Zealand and Costa Rica.

All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. Rest assure that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

TAMARINDO DIRIA BEACH RESORT INFORMATION:

Located directly on Tamarindo Beach, Tamarindo Diria Beach Resort offers a relaxed beachfront stay in one of Costa Rica's most vibrant coastal towns. The resort features comfortable rooms set within tropical gardens, many with views of the ocean or pool areas, creating a laid-back and welcoming atmosphere. Facilities include multiple swimming pools, restaurants and bars, as well as direct access to the beach. Liberia International Airport is approximately 1 hour away, while Tamarindo's shops, cafés and restaurants are just a short walk from the hotel.

Tamarindo is known for its lively yet easy-going atmosphere, long sandy beach and excellent surfing conditions. Enjoy a warm tropical climate year-round, with plenty of sunshine making it ideal for beach days and outdoor activities. From here, you can explore nearby national parks, take boat trips through mangroves to spot wildlife, or simply enjoy the town's vibrant dining and nightlife scene. With its prime beachfront location and convenient setting, Tamarindo Diria Beach Resort is an ideal choice for those looking to combine relaxation with easy access to Costa Rica's natural beauty and coastal charm.

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. This is a requirement on internal trains and flights. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. In general, we recommend packing only as much as you can lift as you will need to carry your own luggage on and off trains.

TRANSPORT:

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 Costa Rica have generally been 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 sections above are approximations only.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Costa Rica 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 amongst your main service providers (for example 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. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

By law, there is a 10% fee on any restaurant bill that is designated to the servers. Keeping this in mind, you are more than welcome to add some more tip upon your discretion, to a server of an specific place if you consider your service was exceptional.

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.

INSURANCE:

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

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

SOUVENIRS:

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

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's 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'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available. Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Updated November 2026