



GEMS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Classic Tour | 20 Days | Physical Level 1

Bangkok – Chiang Mai – Hanoi – Halong Bay – Hoi An – Saigon – Siem Reap

Experience it all on one unforgettable journey through Southeast Asia. This tour brings together the region's most iconic highlights, from bustling cities and historic capitals to serene waterways, colourful markets, and majestic temples. Immerse yourself in local culture, enjoy hands-on experiences, and see the very best of Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

- Explore the energetic markets and temples of Bangkok
- Discover the ancient Thai capital of Ayutthaya and northern Chiang Mai
- Cruise the breathtaking waters of Halong Bay
- Wander the lantern-lit streets of Hoi An and savour local cuisine
- Soak up the energy and vibrant streets of Saigon
- Experience life along the lush Mekong Delta
- Uncover the wonders of Angkor's magisterial temples in Siem Reap

TOUR MAP


 CLASSIC TOUR 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 Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Vietnam and Cambodia visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Safe and secure with IATA

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:

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:

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.

‘Gems of Southeast Asia’ 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:

The tour is 20 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 1-2 in Bangkok and end the tour on Day 19 in Siem Reap. 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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1-2: Fly to Bangkok

Meals: D

Arrive in to Bangkok, Thailand's lively capital. On arrival, meet your local guide or national escort and transfer approximately one hour to your hotel.

After check-in, enjoy time at leisure to rest or explore the surroundings before this evening's welcome dinner and briefing.

Please note: Early check-in is not included and can be arranged at additional cost.



Destination Information

Bangkok – Bangkok has been Thailand's dominant city since the 18th century. It was established as the capital after the former one, Ayutthaya, was razed to the ground by the Burmese army. It was the centre point of the modernisation of Siam in the late 19th century, leading the introduction of rail transport, the printing press, healthcare and utilities infrastructure. With a population of over 10 million, the fast pace of the city can be intense; however, beneath the hustle and bustle there are many hidden gems waiting to be discovered.

Day 3: Bangkok

Meals: B, L, D

Bangkok's dazzling neon signs, charming architecture, Thai cuisine and lively markets make for an exciting introduction to this fascinating country.

Begin at the Grand Palace, the former royal residence and home of the sacred Emerald Buddha. Continue to Wat Pho, to see the impressive Reclining Buddha before exploring the lively streets of Chinatown.



In the late afternoon, board a long-tail boat for a scenic cruise along the Chao Phraya river, offering a different perspective of the city as the sun begins to set.

Destination Information

Wat Pho – Wat Pho is one of Bangkok's oldest and largest temples. Experience the monk's chant as you explore the grounds of the complex, spread over some 80,000 square metres. The largest reclining Buddha and the largest collection of Buddha images are housed here.

Grand Palace – The Grand Palace is the city's most famous landmark. From 1782 until 1925, it was the official residence of the Kings of Siam; it is still used for many royal ceremonies and state events. It Palace are several impressive buildings, including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

Temple of the Emerald Buddha – This royal chapel, found within the grounds of the Grand Palace, is one of the most sacred sites in Thailand. It houses a 26-inch-tall statue of the meditating Buddha; opinions differ as to whether it is made of jasper or jade, but it is believed to date to the 15th century. It is venerated as the palladium of Thailand; a protective figure which secures the country's safety.

Pak Khlong Talat Flower Market – The biggest wholesale and retail fresh flower market in Bangkok. Look out for the Phuang Malai garlands, often given as offerings or kept for good luck.

Day 4: Ayutthaya & Chiang Mai

Meals: B, L, D

Travel north to Ayutthaya, the former capital of Siam. Visit Wat Chaiwatthanaram, known for its Khmer-inspired architecture, and Wat Phra Sri Sanphet with its three signature stupas. Explore Bang Pa-In Summer Palace, once a retreat for Thai royalty. Sightseeing around Ayutthaya will involve approximately 3 hours on foot.

After lunch, transfer to Bangkok Airport for your afternoon flight to Chiang Mai.



Destination Information

Ayutthaya – A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ayutthaya flourished from the 14th to 18th centuries. Its temples and palace ruins showcase the artistic achievements and political power of the former Siamese kingdom.

Chiang Mai – Nestled among high mountains, Chiang Mai is the largest and most culturally significant city in northern Thailand. The city was founded in 1296 and was the capital of the Lanna Kingdom after Chang Rai. During the 20th century, Chiang Mai became a thriving centre for handicraft pottery, weaving, silverwork and woodcarving; however, tourism took over in the 1960s as the main source of income. Today, Chiang Mai is famous for its hilltribes, tea plantations and elephants.

Day 5: Chiang Mai – Doi Suthep

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Wat Pha Lat, a tranquil forest temple tucked between jungle foliage and small waterfalls. Continue up the mountain to Wat Phra That Doi Sutheo, the region's most sacred temple, offering excellent views over Chiang Mai.

This evening, enjoy a hosted dinner in a local home.



Destination Information

Hmong Hilltribe Lodge – Built in traditional Hmong style with an eye for Western comforts, the guest cottages overlook the lush fields and hills surrounding the valley.

Each guest room has an en-suite bathroom. The cottages include electric fans (but no air con), a mosquito net, a power outlet, hot water for showers, toiletries and slippers, towels and a shower cap.

Day 6: Elephant Sanctuary

Meals: B, L, D

Drive to Chiang Chill Elephant Sanctuary, an ethical refuge where elephants live free from exploitation. Walk through the forest with a local guide to observe elephants grazing and socializing in their natural habitat, learn about their diet, and help prepare their food.

Enjoy a Thai vegetarian lunch on the observation deck and visit the nearby Karen Cultural Centre to explore local heritage.



Later, transfer to your hilltribe lodge.

Destination Information

Mae Taeng Valley - Mae Taeng valley is known for its forested landscapes, gentle rivers and traditional hilltribe villages, offering a glimpse of rural life in northern Thailand.

Day 7: Fly to Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Hanoi. Upon arrival, meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. The remainder of the day is free for you to relax or start exploring your surroundings.



Destination Information

Hanoi – With a population of approximately eight 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 French towns of the 1930s; a “Paris of the Orient”, as people have called it.

Day 8: Hanoi by Cyclo

Meals: B, L, D

Visit the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first university, before exploring the UNESCO-listed Thang Long Imperial Citadel. Drive past the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum en route to Ngoc Son Temple on Hoan Kiem Lake.

After lunch, enjoy a cyclo ride through the Old Quarter and relax with a Vietnamese coffee overlooking the lake. Conclude the day with a traditional water puppet performance.



Please note: Each cyclo takes one passenger and is operated by a cycle driver behind the carriage.

Destination Information

Hanoi Old Quarter – A maze of streets weaving through Hanoi and dating back to the 13th century. Each street specialises in merchants and artisans selling their wares of silk, silver, wood and more.

Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – Built in the 11th century, this UNESCO World Heritage Site, it was constructed on the remains of a Chinese fortress dating from the 7th century, and marks the independence of the Dai Viet.

Day 9: Hanoi Handicraft Villages

Meals: B, L, D

Travel to Chuong Village, famed for its traditional Nón Lá craftsmanship. Explore the village and join local artisans for a hands-on introduction to conical hat making, learning the key techniques behind this enduring Vietnamese symbol.



After lunch, continue to Bat Trang Ceramic Village, celebrated for over 500 years of pottery-making. Explore the streets to watch artisans at work, then join a hands-on session at the potter's wheel to create your own piece under the guidance of a local master.

Destination Information

Chuong Village & Bat Trang – Chuong Village is a traditional Vietnamese village renowned for crafting the iconic Nón Lá, or conical hat. Bat Trang is Vietnam's leading ceramic village, producing pottery for more than five centuries.

Day 10: Halong Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Drive approximately two and a half hours to Halong Bay to board your overnight cruise. Enjoy lunch as you sail into the bay's striking limestone landscape. Activities may include cave visits, island viewpoints or kayaking, depending on weather and cruise selection. Enjoy sunset on deck before dinner on board.

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 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 11: Halong Bay & Hoi An

Meals: B, L, D

Join a Tai Chi session at sunrise before cruising back to port. Enjoy brunch on board before returning to Hanoi for your flight to Danang. Transfer from the airport to Hoi An via coach and upon arrival, enjoy free time before dinner.



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.

Day 12: Hoi An

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, explore Hoi An's ancient streets and hidden alleys. Admire the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge and visit one of the town's oldest homes, built by a merchant family over 200 years ago, which is still occupied by their descendants.



Explore smaller, lesser-known temples and the Hoi An Folklore Museum to learn about local culture. In the afternoon, take part in a hands-on silk lantern workshop.

Begin with a traditional tea as a local expert explains the history and cultural importance of the town's iconic lanterns. Learn the lantern-making process step by step, from shaping bamboo frames to selecting and fitting colourful silk and create your own handcrafted souvenir to take home.

Destination Information

Japanese Covered Bridge – First constructed in the 1590s to link the Japanese and Chinese quarters of the town, this iconic pink hued bridge has been restored to its former splendour.

Day 13: Tra Que Village & Cooking Demonstration

Meals: B, L, D

Head out into Hoi An's peaceful countryside to visit an organic farming community. Here you can enjoy the lush green landscapes and stroll through the gardens to see the farmers at work. You'll even have the opportunity to try the techniques for yourself! Afterwards, learn to prepare regional dishes and enjoy some of your creations for lunch. The afternoon is free to explore or relax.


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.

Day 14: Saigon

Meals: B, L, D

Fly to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's energetic southern metropolis.

Begin your city tour on arrival, visiting Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Central Post Office, the Reunification Palace and the War Remnants Museum.



Destination Information

Saigon – Officially renamed Ho Chi Minh City, but still locally known by its older name of Saigon, this exuberant city is driving Vietnam forward into the modern world while preserving a wealth of fascinating heritage and French colonial architecture. It was a major base of the American military during the Vietnam War, and was the seat of the South Vietnam government until the city was captured by North Vietnamese forces in April 1975.

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 – This colonial-era landmark, constructed in the late 19th century, stands beside the Notre-Dame Cathedral. Its Gothic and neoclassical design is strongly reminiscent of 20th century European train stations.

Reunification Palace – Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam, and was the site of the end of the Vietnam War during the Fall of Saigon on 30th 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.

Day 15: Mekong Delta

Meals: B, L, D

Drive two and a half hours for a day exploring the Mekong Delta, known as the 'Rice Basket of Vietnam'. Cruise along wide waterways, visit local workshops, paddle through narrow canals and ride by electric cart through lush orchards. Enjoy a traditional lunch before returning to Saigon this afternoon.

Sightseeing involves hopping on and off boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails.


Destination Information

Mekong Delta - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life progresses 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.

Day 16: Fly to Siem Reap

Enjoy free time in Saigon before transferring to the airport for your flight to Siem Reap. On arrival, meet your guide and transfer to your hotel before enjoying dinner.


Destination Information

Siem Reap – Siem Reap is a bustling tourist destination due to its proximity to both Tonle Sap Lake and the ancient Khmer capital, Angkor. Angkor is home to Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious monument, and the spiritual and cultural heart of Cambodia. This huge complex of palaces and temples was built on the sprawling alluvial plain to the north of Tonle Sap.

Day 17: Angkor Wat & Angkor Thom

Meals: B, L, D

Spanning from the 19th to the 15th century, the Angkor complex served as the capital of the powerful Khmer Empire and once encompassed more than 1,000 temples.



Start at Angkor Thom, including Bayon Temple with its serene stone faces, and the Elephant Terrace. Continue to Ta Phrom, where trees intertwine with ancient stone.

After lunch, visit Angkor Wat, the largest and most famous temple in the complex, the world's largest religious monument and nationally considered to be Cambodia's spiritual heart. End with a peaceful boat ride on the Angkor moat at sunset.

Please note: Your group will drive approximately 6km out of town to the main entrance gate to get your entrance passes, which you must carry with you.

Please be aware that the Central Tower of the Wat complex is closed on Buddhist holidays, and on all other days has a limited number of visitors allowed at any given time, under UNESCO regulations. If you wish to visit this tower, you will be required to wait in the queue alongside all other visitors. The ability to do this will be determined upon the groups' schedule. If you choose to climb at any site, you must be able to climb and descend without assistance.

Destination Information

Angkor Thom – This was the last capital of the Khmer empire, established by Buddhist King Jayavarman VII in the 12th century. This walled city, covering an area of 9 square kilometres, is flanked by a row of 54 stone figures on each side, which leads you through a 23-metre imposing stone entrance gate to the various temples inside.

The Bayon – A rich, late 12th century state temple at the centre of Angkor Thom. Its beautifully crafted central towers are decorated with four opposing faces representing Jayavarman. Bayon's stone galleries display extraordinary bas-reliefs incorporating over 11,000 figures.

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

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 Jayarajacudamani, the mother of the king who established Angkor Thom, it was made famous by the film Tomb Raider.

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. The silhouette on the flag of Cambodia is that of Angkor Wat, and it is recognised as Cambodia's spiritual and cultural heart.

Day 18: Cambodian Village Experience & Dining Under the Stars

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning at leisure before visiting Trei Nohar, a traditional rural Cambodian village. On arrival, meet local villagers and the Village Head for an introduction to community life and customs. Explore the village on foot, with visits to local homes and a community development project and learn about the traditional craft of basket weaving from a local resident.

As the afternoon fades, enjoy a village-style farewell dinner prepared using fresh local ingredients, accompanied by traditional music.



Days 19-20: Return to New Zealand

Meals: B

Transfer from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Any time before your flight is at leisure.

Please note: Late check-out or additional night stays can be arranged at additional cost.

Please note: Only breakfast is provided on the group's day of departure.

GEMS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA: TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Thailand – New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa for Thailand if they are travelling for less than 30 days for tourist purposes. However, you must complete a mandatory Digital Arrival card within the three days before you enter Thailand. Please see this website for further details: <https://tdac.immigration.go.th/arrival-card/>

Vietnam and Cambodia – New Zealand Passport holders - 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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, basil 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.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Southeast Asian cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

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!

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 a Classic Tour 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

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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 of 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.

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 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 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.

PORTEAGE:

Please be aware that portage 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:

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.

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.

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, minibuses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers). In parts of Northern Thailand – where roads are often narrow, steep, or poorly maintained – smaller vans or minibuses are frequently required. Depending on group size, in areas where large coaches cannot operate, the group may be split into separate vehicles. When this happens, your local guide will work closely with the drivers to ensure the group feels supported throughout the journey, maintaining regular communication across all vehicles.

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.

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 where seatbelts are available customers must use them and 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 internal flight sectors.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Thailand 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. Chakri Memorial Day - 6th April (if 6th April falls on a weekend, Chakri is observed on the following Monday); Songkran Festival usually 12th – 16th April; Labour Day - 1st May; Coronation Day – 6th May; the King's Birthday – 29th July; the Queen's Birthday - 12th August; Chulalongkorn Day – 23rd October.

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.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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 www.safetravel.govt.nz

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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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 prior to departure.

Updated: January 2026