



Jewels of Vietnam

Exclusive Tour | Physical Level 1

Saigon – Hoi An – Hue – Hanoi – Halong Bay

Offering a more luxurious look at the wonders of Vietnam including Saigon, Hoi An, Hanoi and Halong Bay, a series of exclusive experiences will give you insights into the rich history and natural beauty of this compelling country.

- Enjoy a deluxe Mekong cruise
- Explore Chinatown by Cyclo
- Marvel at the A O show
- Be charmed by Hoian
- Learn of grand dynasties past in Hue
- Meet a water puppeteer in Hanoi
- Practice Tai Chi on Halong Bay



Jewels of Vietnam inclusions:

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

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Exclusive Tours:

These tours have been meticulously designed with the more discerning traveller in mind. Our deluxe journeys through Asia feature distinctive and exclusive experiences which bring the region to life. Our exclusive collection tours include:

- Spa treatment
- Afternoon Tea Experience
- 2 soft drinks during lunch; soft drinks/local wine/beer during dinner
- Unique experiences
- Small group sizes
- NZ chauffeur transfers (within a radius of 60 driven kilometres from the nearest Airport)
- Porter service to and from your hotel rooms
- A mid tour laundry service

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.

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

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time often on an incline or on uneven surfaces.
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats often without assistance.

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.

Itinerary – Jewels of Vietnam

Day 1: Arrive in Saigon

Meals included: Nil

Arrive at the airport by chauffeured transfer. On arrival, you will be met and taken to your hotel by your National Escort or Local Guide 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.

Please note: 2 soft drinks during lunch; soft drinks/local wine/beer during dinner will be provided throughout the tour.



Destination Information

Saigon - The exuberant city of Saigon is driving Vietnam forward into the modern world, but is also a treasure trove of fascinating heritage. During the 1960s and early 1970s, Saigon was the Pearl of the Orient, which flourished under the American occupation. In more recent times, it was the seat of the South Vietnam government until the events that led to the country's reunification. Today, the old mixes seamlessly with the new and you can wander through timeless alleys to incense-infused temples before catching up with the present in designer malls beneath sleek skyscrapers.

Day 2: Saigon

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today explore Saigon city with its heady mix of local culture and colonial influences. Start at the central Post Office and the Opera house then continue on to Reunification Palace and the chilling War Remnants Museum. Visit Ben Thanh Market the city's bustling commercial heart before taking off on your cyclo tour of fascinating Chinatown arriving at Cha Tam Church and Chua Ong Pagoda, a stunning example of Chinese-inspired architecture. Later head down a traditional herbal medicine street where your tour guide will share with you how locals use their herbal remedies. Continue to head onward to Bitexco Building - a glittering example of modern architecture in the city to enjoy sunset views and a cocktail. Tonight, transfer to the Nha Rong port and step aboard the Bonsai Legacy to wine and dine against the backdrop of Saigon's city lights. This beautiful vessel is a re-creation of a classic river vessel once found all over Indochina and is tastefully updated with modern amenities.



Destination Information

Central Post Office - Located next to the Notre-Dame Cathedral. The Central Post Office building was constructed in the late 19th century. It counts Gothic, Renaissance and French influences and was designed by Auguste Henri Vildieu and Alfred Foulhoux, but is often erroneously credited as being the work of Gustave Eiffel.

Reunification Palace - Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was designed by architect Ngô Viết Thụ and was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It 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. This museum illustrates a harrowing period in this nation's history.

Day 3: Saigon

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Depart from your hotel and drive to the township of Cai Be to board the Cai Be Princess, a traditional riverboat made from native bamboo, wood and rattan. During Vietnam's French colonial period, boats like this were an essential means of transport in a swampy areas and poor roads. On the river, boat traffic is endless and the activity never ceases, observe the local life from the comfort of your sampan as it plays out on the riverbanks, making stops along the way to provide glimpses of local industries: including coconut candy and puffed rice (the local equivalent of popcorn). Your cruise



ends at Le Longanier Restaurant where lunch is served in an exquisite colonial-style villa set in tropical gardens by the river, giving you a sense of life during Indochinese times. After lunch, take a short walk along a small canal, towards the Ba Bon Bridge where you will be picked up and transferred back to your hotel in Saigon. Tonight, enjoy the A O Show, the show is a spectacular showcase of Vietnamese culture and performance art, and combines in beautiful precision elements of both old and new.

Please note: The schedule may be changed based on the times of the A O shows. However, the A O show may not be available on certain dates because of schedule changes. In this case alternative options will be offered instead in other cities visited.

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 with a little extra.

A O Show - Featuring Vietnam's most talented performance artists, traditional musicians and circus-like choreography, A O Show explores the lives of the Vietnamese people through its ensemble creations.

Day 4: Saigon – Hoi An

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Confront the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels. The cramped tunnels were central to a few of the war's strategic operations, including the famous 1968 Tet Offensive, and they did not escape damage. American B52 bombers dropped hundreds of missiles leaving huge tell-tale craters behind. The Cu Chi experience can be emotional for some visitors, but it offers a fascinating window into the hardship and traumas of war. Next, it's a short drive through the countryside to visit a cricket farm before transferring to the airport. Fly 1 hour and 15 minutes to Danang and transfer to the charming town of Hoi An.



Destination Information

Cu Chi - the tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Cu Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War, and were the Viet Cong's base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968.

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.

Day 5: Hoi An

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning starts with a cooking class including a market tour, learning about Vietnamese food culture, nutrition, herbal remedies and cooking techniques. Later enjoy a walking tour through the streets of Hoi An, arriving first at Chua Ong Pagoda. Next pass by the 200-year old Tan Ky House and take a short break at the Japanese Covered Bridge - one of Hoi An's most iconic structures. Visit the Reaching Out Tea House, an establishment that aids locals with disabilities, for a rejuvenating cup of tea before having a tasty lunch at a restaurant specializing in traditional Hoi An delicacies.



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 6: Hoi An - Hue

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Leave Hoi An this morning heading north to Hue. Driving over the scenic Hai Van Pass, passing the fishing village of Lang Co, to enjoy panoramic views of the central coastline. Hue was the imperial capital of Vietnam from 1802-1945, when the last emperor abdicated the throne, yet is still regarded as the seat of Vietnam's culture and religion today. This afternoon, take a boat trip along the Perfume River and visit Thien Mu Pagoda.



Destination Information

Hue - Having been the imperial capital from 1802 until 1945 after the last emperor abdicated; Hue is still regarded as the centre of Vietnam's culture and religion. The city is dominated by the Imperial Citadel that is modelled on the Forbidden City in China. There are many wonderful pagodas and temples of high significance and it contains the Grand Tombs of the Nguyen Emperors.

Thien Mu Pagoda - This seven-storey octagonal tower built on a hillock, overlooking the Perfume River is Hue's oldest and most beautiful pagoda. Wander the grounds where bonsai, ponds and the smell of incense set a peaceful backdrop.

Day 7: Hue

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel before exploring Hue's Imperial Citadel. Created in the 19th century, the Imperial City was modelled on the Forbidden City in Beijing and holds many palaces and temples inside its giant walls. Many of the buildings have been damaged by war over the years and are now being restored to their former glory. Transfer to Minh Mang Tomb to explore the opulent and exotic resting place laid out in formal Chinese style. Next, make your way to Thanh Tien Village, well-known for over 300 years of crafting paper flowers. Meet one of the local villagers and learn how to make your own ornate paper flower. Finally, visit Tha Om Garden House and its owner, Mr Vinh. Explore the traditional 19th century Hue residence and listen to Mr Vinh's stories of his royal heritage before returning to your hotel.



Destination Information

Imperial Citadel - A walled fortress accompanied by cannons, artilleries and surrounded by a moat for protection. Inside the Citadel are numerous gates, courtyards and the Forbidden Purple City.

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

Day 8: Hue - Hanoi

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Transfer to the airport for your 1 hour and 20 minute flight to Hanoi. On arrival visit Viet Phu Thanh Chuong, a 21-century house with traditional Vietnamese architecture. Whilst in Hanoi, enjoy a spa treatment of your choice at your hotel.

You will be given a voucher today for a free spa treatment, of which you have a choice between an aromatherapy body massage or a traditional Vietnamese massage. You have the freedom to book your treatment with your hotel reception at a time of your choice.

Destination Information

Hanoi - With a population of approximately four million, Hanoi is a charming and richly historic city of lakes, shaded boulevards and leafy open parks. The centre is an architectural museum piece housing groups of ochre coloured buildings holding the air of provincial French towns of the 1930s, a "Paris of the Orient" as people have called it.

Day 9: Hanoi

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning you will visit the Ho Chi Minh Complex for a look at the life of the father of modern Vietnam. First, pass Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum. In the same complex, we will see the Humble House on Stilts, the Ho Chi Minh Museum and the One Pillar Pagoda. Drive to the serene Temple of Literature, Hanoi's first university dating back to 1070 and a historical centre of learning, now dedicated to Confucian worship. Later visit the home of a water puppet artist, the descendant of a family of water puppet performers. This Vietnamese traditional performance art has roots dating back to the 10th century. You will have a chance to talk with the artist, watch the process of making the puppets and enjoy a private water puppet show.

**Destination Information**

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

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

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

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

Water Puppets - Vietnamese Water Puppets were invented thousands of years ago by farmers in the Red River Delta region near Hanoi, as a means to entertain themselves when the rains flooded their paddy fields. Today puppeteers stand in waist deep water and control the puppets via pole and strings. Most plays focus on folklores and tales of rural life.

Day 10: Hanoi – Halong Bay

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, drive to the coastal town of Halong, around 2 and a half hours from Hanoi. On arrival in Halong, you will take an overnight cruise to the far-most corners of the bay. Enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities. End the day on deck watching the sunset over the bay followed by a freshly prepared dinner.



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.

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

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 – Hanoi

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Spend the morning soaking up the scenery, enjoy a hearty breakfast mid morning before heading back to the harbour and returning to Hanoi for an afternoon tea at La Fée Verte Bar in the hotel de l'Opera around 3 - 6 pm. A tea set of L'opera propose 2 menu options for you to choice: English afternoon tea or Vietnamese high tea. Later enjoy a farewell dinner at Home Hanoi Restaurant.



Day 12: Depart Hanoi

Meals included: Breakfast

Fly back to New Zealand, journey home by chauffeured transfer.

Jewels of Vietnam Travel Information

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it from the date of entry into Indochina

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure; if received after this, urgent visa processing fees may apply.

Visas for Vietnam are issued with specific start and expiry dates which are based on the dates stated on the visa application form.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

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 so y sauce are used in most local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

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. 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.

Evenings at Leisure

To give you more flexibility and choice when travelling on selected Exclusive tours; we have carefully balanced special highlight meals with evenings at leisure so that you can explore the many culinary delights that Southeast Asia has to offer. Alternatively, you can use this time to enjoy the facilities of your luxurious accommodation.

Your National Escort will be happy to provide you with advice about good places to eat, and assist in the booking of transportation to get you there (at your own expense).

Accommodation

As 'Jewels of Vietnam' tour is part of our Exclusive Collection, you will be staying in 5* accommodation throughout your tour. We have provided time in your itinerary to have the opportunity to experience the facilities of your accommodation, or relax, allowing you to get the most out of the hotel experience.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers). Roads in 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.

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.

Vietnam public holidays

If you are travelling within the below 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. Tet Holiday is between 25th – 29th Jan 2020, International Labour Day is on 1st May every year, Reunification Day is on 30th April every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

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 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. The minimum age of customers on this tour is 18 years old.

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 instead of a National Escort.

Tipping Policy



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. In order 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 in 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 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.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is 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.

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