



THAILAND & MEKONG EXPERIENCE

Go Beyond Tour | 22 Days | Physical Level 3

Saigon – 4N Victoria Mekong River Cruise – Phnom Penh – Siem Reap –
Bangkok – Kanchanaburi – Hua Hin – Chiang Mai

Experience the very best of Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand in a three-week Asian adventure. Begin in Saigon, cruise upriver to Phnom Penh, and travel north to explore the jungle-swathed temples of Angkor, before heading west into historic Thailand to discover its sandy beaches, revolutionary vineyards and wild national forests with free-roaming elephants.

- Visit the Cu Chi Tunnels and historic Saigon
- Relax on a four-night 4* Mekong cruise
- Visit a craft brewery in Phnom Penh
- Uncover the glories of Angkor
- Pay respects at the Bridge on the River Kwai
- Visit a unique, award-winning Thai vineyard
- Spot wild elephants on a 4x4 forest safari
- Get culinary tips at a Chiang Mai cooking class



Thailand & Mekong Experience 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 Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Cambodia and Vietnam visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things 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 check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

Physical Level 3:

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. 'Thailand & Mekong Experience' is rated as a physical level 3 tour.

A reasonable level of fitness is required, but it is more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You will be getting on and off coaches, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time.
- You will be required to get on and off small boats without assistance.
- There are some steps and uneven ground at the Angkor temples.
- There is a 3km walk at the Hellfire Pass in Kanchanaburi; you may wait at the museum if you prefer not to walk with the group.

Of course, our National Escorts 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.

Country Profile: Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand

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

Cambodia is blessed with unspoilt beaches and beautiful colonial cities like Phnom Penh, Battambang and Kep. In Siem Reap, the breathtaking temples of Angkor are regarded as the heart and soul of Cambodia. Many visitors may never intend to go beyond these magnificent temples; however, they will soon become captivated by other parts of this friendly country.

Thailand- Thailand is a beautiful country, offering travelers stunning scenery from fertile rice fields in the central plains, rising mountains and valleys in the north, to sandy white beaches at famous island destinations such as Phuket in the south. Thailand has an ancient history shaped by war and imperialism, as well as an immersion of culture and faith.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 22 days in duration including international flights. Please note that depending on flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

For travellers booked on 'Land Only' packages, 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 two in Saigon and end the tour on Day 21 in Chiang Mai. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- The Notre Dame Cathedral will be under renovation until 2023. During this time, we are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, can view it from the outside.
- The uppermost level of Bayon Temple will be undergoing restorations from January 2020 and may last several years. During this maintenance period passengers will be unable to access this area but can continue to enjoy the impressive architecture from the lower two levels.

Itinerary – Thailand & Mekong Experience

Days 1-2: Saigon

Meals: Dinner

Fly overnight to Saigon, where you will be met at the airport in the Arrivals hall by your Local Guide or National Escort. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 45 minutes to your hotel and check into your room or store any luggage if arriving before check in time. This evening, you will meet your fellow travellers for a welcome dinner and guide briefing.



Destination Information

Saigon - The exuberant metropolis of Ho Chi Minh City, still locally referred to as Saigon, is driving Vietnam forward into the modern world - yet it is also a treasure trove of fascinating heritage. During the 1960s and early 1970s, it was heavily influenced by the American occupation. It was the seat of the South Vietnam government, until the events that led to the country's reunification in 1976. Today, the old mixes seamlessly with the new; you can wander through timeless alleys to incense-infused temples before catching up with the present in designer malls beneath sleek skyscrapers.

Day 3: Saigon

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Enjoy a relaxed introduction to Saigon, including architectural landmarks such as the French colonial-style Notre Dame and Central Post Office. Tonight's dinner is at NOIR, a true 'dining in the dark' experience. This social enterprise employs visually impaired locals, who invite you on a culinary journey with lasting impact.



Notre Dame Cathedral - Influenced by French design and built between 1863 and 1880, the red brick exterior and 60-metre bell towers overlook downtown Saigon.

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, though it is often erroneously credited as being the work of Gustave Eiffel.

Day 4: Cu Chi Tunnels

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning visit the Cu Chi Tunnels to learn about the Viet Cong's tactical strategies during the Vietnam War. Relax with a fresh 'farm-to-table' lunch at a Vietnamese farm before an afternoon at leisure. You may wish to independently visit the War Remnants Museum or see a show at the opera house.



Destination Information

Cu Chi - The tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Cu Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War, and were the Viet Cong's base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong soldiers as hiding spots during combat, as well as serving as communication and supply routes, hospitals, food and weapon caches and living quarters for numerous North Vietnamese fighters. The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces and helped to counter the growing American military effort.

Day 5: Board the Victoria Mekong

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Travel from Saigon to Can Tho, the beating heart of the Mekong Delta, where you will board the Victoria Mekong, your home for the next four nights. Sip a sundown cocktail and hear a traditional music performance as the ship casts off towards Long Xuyen.



Destination Information

Mekong Delta - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life progresses around its fertile banks. The Mekong is the 13th longest, and the 10th largest river 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.

Victoria Mekong - Launched in December 2019, the Victoria Mekong is a contemporary 4-star river vessel cruising between the Mekong Delta and Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh. It offers 33 spacious, deluxe cabins and two luxurious VIP suites, while facilities on board include a cocktail pool, three bars, a restaurant and a spa with massage service. To put you right in the heart of local life, there are shore excursions with plenty of opportunities to interact with local people and their culture.

Day 6: Long Xuyen & Tiger Island

Meal: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tender ashore to visit Long Xuyen floating market and the An Giang Traditions Museum with its exhibitions on local cultures. During lunch, the ship sails upstream to Tiger Island. Head ashore to explore by rickshaw, visiting local crafters such as incense makers and a wood carver. Tonight, the ship cruises on to Tan Chau.



Day 7: Mekong Silk Village

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Head ashore by sampan to visit the local silk village where you will witness the many steps involved in silk production, from traditional looms to the use of natural dyes made from tree bark, leaves and fruit.



Day 8: Into Cambodia

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today the ship will cruise to Phnom Penh, crossing the border en route. Spend the day in the infinity pool or taking part in the onboard activities. On arrival in Phnom Penh, enjoy a lively apsara dance performance to welcome you into Cambodia.

Destination Information

Phnom Penh - The capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia is built around four river arms formed by a sharp curve in the Mekong River near the junctions of the Bassac and the Tonle Sap tributaries. This charming city has an atmospheric blend of old Khmer and French colonial architecture, but reminders of the brutal 1970s regime of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge have left their mark.

Day 9: Introduction to Phnom Penh

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Disembark the Victoria Mekong this morning and discover Phnom Penh by cyclo, taking in the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and Wat Phnom. Your afternoon is at leisure.



Destination Information

The Royal Palace - Built in 1866 by the French colonialists, these ornate buildings are now the official residence of the reigning Cambodian royal family and King Sihamoni. View the Throne Hall and Silver Pagoda.

Silver Pagoda - This concrete and marble structure includes a floor with over 5,000 silver tiles, each weighing 1kg. Famous artefacts include a 90kg solid gold Buddha made in 1907 and an Emerald Buddha said to be made of French Baccarat crystal.

Wat Phnom - Home to a hilltop temple that carries the city's namesake. Locals come here to pray for good luck and success.

Day 10: Phnom Penh & the Khmer Rouge

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning's excursion to the Cheung Ek Killing Fields outside the city gives a sombre insight into Cambodia's turmoil under the regime of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. This afternoon fly to Siem Reap.



Please note: You will reach Siem Reap on Day 10, and be provided with a one-day pass for the Angkor complex on Day 11. If you are planning to use your free afternoon on Day 12 to return to Angkor, speak to your guide in Siem Reap on Day 10. They can advise you of the cost to upgrade your pass validity from 1 day to multi-day (approx. \$25). If you do not wish to return to the Angkor Archaeological complex on Day 12, there is no need to upgrade your pass.

Destination Information

Cheung Ek Killing Fields – Visiting the Killing Fields is a deeply moving experience. You will see a short documentary summarising the Khmer Rouge regime and the violence experienced by the victims before walking through the fields independently. You may wish to stop at the memorial stupa to pay your respects. Please keep to the walkways and be respectful of the memorial. For many Khmer people, the brutality of the 1970s is a living memory; for younger generations, it is a deeply personal piece of Cambodian history that affected their parents and grandparents.

Day 11: Siem Reap & the Temples of Angkor

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

The Angkor Archaeological Park is home to over 1,000 temples dating back to the Khmer Empire. Best preserved of all the temples is Angkor Wat, while the jungle-swathed ruins of Ta Prohm evoke a sense of mystery and true adventure. This evening, enjoy a leisurely boat ride on the moat of Angkor Thom as the sun sets. Dinner is at leisure.



Destination Information

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, covering an area of 9 square km, is flanked by a row of 54 stone figures on each side, which leads visitors through an 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.

Ta Prohm – One of Angkor Thom's most atmospheric ruins, swallowed by the roots of the jungle, it was made famous by the film Tomb Raider. It was originally dedicated to Sri Jayarajadamani, the mother of the king who established Angkor Thom.

Angkor Wat – This 12th century temple complex is the largest religious monument in the world. Angkor Wat showcases the Khmer civilisation at its grandest, and was originally designed to represent Mt Meru, the Hindu equivalent of Mt Olympus. With its fascinating decorative flourishes, it is the best-preserved temple within the complex.

Day 12: APOPO Hero Rats Project

Meals: Breakfast

This morning visit APOPO Hero Rats Project. This humanitarian centre trains rats to scent-detect unexploded wartime landmines in more rural areas of Cambodia so they can be safely deactivated by expert teams, saving untold lives. Stop by a local artisan project before enjoying an afternoon at leisure. You may wish to return to Angkor Wat independently, visit the Angkor National Museum, or simply relax in the hotel. (B)

Destination Information

APOPO Hero Rats Project Visitor Centre – During the turmoil of the twentieth century, landmines were used extensively in Cambodia. Most have been removed, but some rural areas remain uncleared, leading to tragic accidents even today. APOPO is training rats to save lives by sniffing out these mines. You will learn about the APOPO mine clearance programme from the guides, watch a video of their work, and see a Hero Rat demonstration. APOPO has been working on this scheme since the mid-1990s and to date, no rat has ever been harmed by the project; like sniffer dogs, their role is detection only. You can read more about the organisation's work at: <https://www.apopo.org/en>

Day 13: Bangkok

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Take a one-hour flight from Siem Reap to Bangkok. Check in at your hotel to refresh yourself before a street food tour.



Day 14: Bangkok at Leisure

Meals: Breakfast

Today is at leisure to relax or explore Bangkok independently. Optional private excursions, such as to Ayutthaya or the Thonburi canals, are available.



Day 15: Kanchanaburi & The Bridge over the River Kwai

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Travel to Kanchanaburi, made famous by 'The Bridge over the River Kwai'. Here, learn about the experience of Southeast Asian and Allied POWs, who were forced to work on the railway during the Japanese occupation of WWII. Pay respects to the victims at the Allied War Cemetery and museum and walk through Hellfire Pass before a short train journey through the Kwai Noi Valley. Your hotel tonight is at Kanchanaburi.



Destination Information

Hellfire Pass - Constructed for the Burma Railway during the WWI Japanese occupation of Thailand, this brutal project was carried out by Allied POWs and South Asian forced labourers. Of the 330,000 people who worked on the line, it is estimated that 16,000 Allied soldiers and 90,000 South Asian civilians died as a result. This remote part of the railway was particularly hard to build due to the scale of rock-cutting required. Its name derived from the eerie glow produced by the torches at night.

Please note the 3km walk will be on uneven ground, involves some steep steps and it is likely to be humid; bring mosquito repellent. If you do not wish to take part, you will still be able to see the pass from around 15 minutes' walk from the museum and you may remain in the museum area independently.

Day 16: Hua Hin & Monsoon Valley Vineyard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Depart Kanchanaburi and travel south to the beach resort of Hua Hin, stopping en route to visit a toddy palm plantation. Arrive at Hua Hin and take a break to refresh yourself with an independent lunch. Later this afternoon, head to Monsoon Valley Vineyard for a surprising insight into Thai viticulture. These award-winning New Latitude varietals have revolutionised winemaking, succeeding in a truly unexpected climate. Enjoy a tour and tasting before dinner at the vineyard's restaurant.



Destination Information

Monsoon Valley Vineyard - Monsoon Valley (formerly Hua Hin Hills Vineyard) was founded by Chalerm Yoovidhya, a wine-loving entrepreneur who challenged the notion that grapes could not be grown outside traditional latitudes or the four-season cycle. His award-winning wines are now served in restaurants across the world. The key grapes grown here are Shiraz (Syrah), Colombard, Chenin Blanc, Dornfelder and Chianti. You will enjoy a short tour and tasting before sitting down to an early dinner overlooking the vineyard.

Please note that the vineyard previously offered elephant rides, but has put a stop to this practice as of 2020. As part of our commitment to responsible travel, no Wendy Wu tour will ever include an elephant ride.

Day 17: Hua Hin & Kui Buri

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Enjoy a morning at leisure in Hua Hin, perhaps visiting the beach, before heading out to Kui Buri National Park, where you'll join a park ranger on a 4x4 wildlife safari through the forest.

This is one of the few places in Thailand where elephants still roam freely in the wild. Kui Buri elephants are completely wild and sightings cannot be guaranteed, but afternoon safaris here have excellent sighting rates. You may also spot gaurs, golden jackals, langurs or wild boar, and if you are lucky, gibbons, Malayan tapirs or even the rare leopard.



Destination Information

Kui Buri National Park: Considered one of the best wild elephant and gaur sighting spots in Thailand, Kui Buri was established as a national park in 1999. It covers 969 square kilometres, set against the scenic backdrop of the Tenasserim Hills. These sprawling evergreen forests are home to one of the biggest wild gaur and elephant populations in Thailand, and a diverse number of other species of birds, deer and apes. A ranger will drive you out in search of elephants and gaur, and keep an eye out for carnivores such as golden jackals, bears, and the elusive leopard.

Day 18: Chiang Mai

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Depart Hua Hin and return to Bangkok for your short flight to the peaceful, laidback city of Chiang Mai in Thailand's cooler northern highlands.

Day 19: Doi Suthep

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Explore Chiang Mai's highlights by rickshaw before driving out to Doi Suthep's magnificent hilltop temple with its panoramic views. Return to Chiang Mai for lunch at a social enterprise restaurant offering life-changing vocational training to reformed women from Chiang Mai's Correctional Institution. Enjoy some free time before tonight's cooking class, in which you will learn to prepare a traditional Thai dinner.



Destination Information

Chiang Mai – Located among tall 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, which was eventually occupied by the Burmese. For the next 200 years Chiang Mai was virtually abandoned until it was again taken over by Siam in the 18th century.

Doi Suthep - - One of Thailand's most sacred temples, tucked away in the mountains at 1,056 metres above sea level, and offering panoramic view of Chiang Mai. Catch the cable car to visit the exquisite golden pagoda at the top.

Day 20: Chang Chill

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Spend the morning at Chang Chill, a pioneering new ethical elephant sanctuary. This is a respite and care centre for elephants rescued chiefly from the tourist and illegal logging industries. One of the world's few truly elephant-friendly experiences, Chang Chill invites you to walk into the forest and observe elephants grazing and socialising.

Meet the elephant keepers before continuing to the rest station for traditional Thai refreshments. From the elephant station, visitors can observe the elephants playing and bathing in the mud pit. Continue to the riverside to learn more about elephant enrichment, and help fill feeding tubes with corn, sugar cane and bananas. From the observation deck, watch the herd eat through the treats as you enjoy your own lunch. Later, return to Chiang Mai for a farewell dinner accompanied by a traditional Thai performance.



Day 21-22: Depart Chiang Mai

Meals: Breakfast

Any time before your flight is free at your leisure today. You will be transferred from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Fly to New Zealand, arriving home the same or following day.

Late check-out is not included in our Southeast Asia group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

Thailand and Mekong Explorer Travel Information

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam and Cambodia. 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 from the date of entry into Bangkok

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Thailand for stays of up to 30 days.

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.

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 actually has its own distinct characteristics. Cambodia, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh ingredients and medley of flavours.

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 groups' 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. 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 will be well catered for - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip.

We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

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 3 to 4-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. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

Porterage

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.

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 1 or 2 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 seatbelts are used where available and customers must 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

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, Cambodia & Thailand Public Holidays

If you are travelling within the below Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded.

Vietnam: Tet Holiday is between 21st – 27th January 2023, Reunification Day is on 30th April every year, International Labour Day is on 1st May every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

Cambodia: Khmer New Year is 13th – 17th April, the King's birthday is 13th - 15th May, and the Water festival is between 7th – 9th November 2022.

Thailand: Chakri Memorial Day - 6th April, Songkran Festival 13th – 15th April, Labour Day – 1st and 2nd May, Coronation Day – 5th May, the Kings Birthday – 28th July, the Queen's Birthday – 3rd June, Chulalongkorn Day – 24th October.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

The group size on our Go Beyond Tours is 18 passengers. You may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. On our group tours we operate a seat-and-a-half policy, allowing you to travel in greater comfort.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. 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.

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.

Luggage

All travelers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Vietnam. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, however other currencies such as New Zealand Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are undamaged. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange, apart from in some national banks in Vietnam, such as Vietcombank.

We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of NZ\$350.00 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that cannot resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

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

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all 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.

Appropriate Dress

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

Cultural Difference

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques.

Religious sites and homes throughout South East Asia – for Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory, so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off and carry a pair of thick socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces. The above itinerary will indicate when you need to consider this.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your Doctor or local Health Centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers. We work closely with our airline partners to take effective measures to protect you from contracting and spreading COVID-19, in accordance with legal requirements and government guidelines.

Please follow the link [here](#) for more details on our COVID vaccination policy.

COVID Safe

Your safety and well-being will always be our Number one priority which is why we've instituted the most stringent COVID health and safety protocols on all of tours. As we continue to monitor current restrictions and operational impacts, these protocols will evolve, and we will provide detailed guidelines for your particular tour prior to departure. For further details please go to the following link [here](#)

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. 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 a confirmation invoice. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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