



# ANGKOR TO THE BAY

## Classic Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 1

Siem Reap – Phnom Penh – Saigon – Hoi An – Hue – Halong Bay – Hanoi

Our most popular Indochina tour takes you on a journey of discovery, from the breathtaking temples of Angkor and the Mekong Delta through to the natural grandeur of Halong Bay, experiencing all manner of delights enroute.

- Be inspired by the spectacular Angkor temples
- Experience local life on Tonle Sap
- Explore the fascinating Cu Chi Tunnels
- Visit captivating Phnom Penh
- Try traditional farming techniques in Hoi An
- Marvel at Hue's Imperial Citadel
- Stroll through Hanoi's alleyways
- Cruise the magnificent Halong Bay

## TOUR MAP



## ANGKOR TO THE BAY TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Vietnam & Cambodia visa fees for Australian passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

*The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures 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.*

## CLASSIC TOURS:

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

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

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Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

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

Please Consider:

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

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

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 18 days in duration including international flights.

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

Join the tour on Day 2 in Siem Reap and end the tour on Day 17 in Hanoi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### ITINERARY CHANGES:

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

## DETAILED ITINERARY

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

Meals: D

You will be met at Siem Reap Airport by your Cambodian guide. Together, with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, travel to your hotel.

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



#### 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 3: Beng Mealea & The Villages of Tonle Sap

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, explore the less-visited Beng Mealea, a mysterious sandstone temple reclaimed by the Cambodian jungle. Dating back some nine centuries and built originally as a Hindu temple to Vishnu, its ruins are wreathed in vines and colossal tree roots now swallow its stones. Explore on foot via the wooden walkways and bridges around the site.



Continue on to Tonle Sap. This afternoon's excursions are seasonal. In the high-water season, you will travel to Kompong Khleang, a unique village on stilts, while in the low-water season you will visit Chong Kneas floating village.

Return to Siem Reap, with a visit to SATCHA, an organisation working alongside local craftsmen to create high-end and traditional Cambodian arts and crafts. This evening, enjoy a traditional Apsara dance performance at dinner.

#### Destination Information

**Beng Mealea** - Dating from the 11th - 12th century, this sprawling temple spans over a square kilometre. Largely overrun by jungle vegetation and constructed in a distinctly Angkorian style, Beng Mealea dates to approximately the same period as Angkor Wat, and may even have served as its 'prototype'.

**The SATCHA Handicraft Centre** - A social enterprise showcasing traditional and high-end Cambodian art. Local creators are supported with materials and training to produce their crafts such as silk weaving and wood carvings, with many of the handicrafts available to purchase.

**Day 4: Angkor Wat & Angkor Thom**

Meals: B, L, D

Spanning from the 9th to 15th century, the Angkor complex was the capital of the thriving Khmer Empire, and home to over 1,000 temples. Begin at the city of Angkor Thom, built by Jayavarman VII. Here, sights include the enigmatic Bayon, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King. One of the most evocative ruins here is to the temple of Ta Prohm, enveloped in a labyrinth of jungle.



This afternoon is devoted to the fascinating and awe-inspiring Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world and nationally considered to be Cambodia's spiritual heart. Later, relax on board a boat and view the sunset on Angkor Thom's moat.

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

**Angkor Wat** – This 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

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**Day 5: Siem Reap – Phnom Penh**

Meals: B, L, D

Depart Siem Reap and fly 1 hour to Phnom Penh, a city of attractive boulevards. Visit the Cambodian Royal Palace and the opulent Silver Pagoda before travelling to the National Museum, home to an extensive number of artefacts. Sightseeing today will involve approximately 3 hours on foot.

**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 a pleasant blend of oriental and colonial architecture, but reminders of a troubled past are also evident.

**The Royal Palace** – Built in 1866 by the French, these ornate buildings are the official residence of the reigning Cambodian royal family and King Sihamoni.

**Silver Pagoda** – This concrete and marble structure includes a floor with over 5,000 silver tiles, each a kilo in weight. Famous artefacts include a 90kg solid gold Buddha, made in 1907, and the Emerald Buddha; opinions differ as to whether the latter is made of emerald, jade, or French Baccarat Crystal.

**National Museum** – Home to one of the world's finest collections of Khmer pottery, bronzes and sculptures dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

**Day 6: Phnom Penh – Saigon**

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum for a harrowing insight into Cambodia's tumultuous past. This sombre museum was the site of the Khmer Rouge Security Prison 21, a torture and execution centre built within a former secondary school during the regime of Pol Pot. It now stands as a museum, commemorating the atrocities that occurred here. Many people find it quite confronting and emotional; you will be given time to explore on your own.

Later, continue to the hilltop temple of Wat Phnom at the heart of the city before your 1-hour flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), where you will meet your Vietnamese National Escort.

**Destination Information**

**Tuol Sleng Museum** – This former school was used by the Khmer Rouge as a detention and torture centre in the late 1970s. Today this building houses paintings and photographs of the victims. You can see the crude cells built in the classrooms and the torture devices used to extract confessions by the regime.

**Wat Phnom** – A hilltop temple, rebuilt on multiple occasions since its original version in the late fourth century. The walls within the sanctuaries are covered in murals, chiefly telling the stories of the Buddha. Locals flock here to pray for good luck and success.

**Day 7: Saigon & The Cu Chi Tunnels**

Meals: B, L, D

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. Sightseeing here involves two hours on foot on uneven mud paths through the bush and, if you choose, crawling through some of the tunnels.

Continue the day with further insights at the Reunification Palace and the chilling War Remnants Museum, before finishing at Ben Thanh Market.

**Destination Information**

**Saigon** – Formally 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, but is also a treasure trove of fascinating heritage. It was a major base of the American military during the Vietnam War, and 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.



**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). They 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.

**Reunification Palace** – Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, the palace is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City. 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 and focusing especially on the years from 1961-1975. This museum illustrates a harrowing period in this nation's history.

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**Day 8: Mekong Delta**

Meals: B, L, D

Drive two and a half hours down to the picturesque province of Ben Tre, situated along the mighty Mekong. This area is known as the 'rice basket of Vietnam', because its rich and fertile lands produce huge amounts of rice, coconuts, vegetables and tropical fruit.

Spend the day exploring, travelling by motorboat between the islands and changing to smaller paddleboats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance. Return to Saigon this afternoon.

**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 12th longest river in the world, and people live, trade, travel and go to school on the riverbanks.

**Day 9: Saigon – Hoi An**

Meals: B, L, D

Explore modern-day Saigon, with its heady mix of local culture and colonial influences. See the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Central Post Office and the beautiful Thien Hau Pagoda.

Transfer to the airport for your 1 hour 20 minute flight to Da Nang Airport. From here, transfer 45 minutes to your hotel in Hoi An and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

*Please note: The Notre Dame Cathedral will be under renovation until 2023. During this time we are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, it can be viewed from the outside.*

**Destination Information**

**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 combines 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.

**Thien Hau Pagoda** – Located in Cholon, the Chinatown of Saigon, this beautiful 19th century pagoda is dedicated to the goddess of the sea.

**Day 10: Hoi An & Tra Que Village**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit Tra Que Village, a local farming project just outside of Hoi An. Here, the community has come together to create a large vegetable farm. Learn the traditional methods used by the farmers, then try your hand at raking the ground and sowing seeds.

This afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of Hoi An's narrow ancient streets. We will visit one of the town's oldest homes, built by a merchant family over 200 years ago, which is still occupied by their descendants.



We will also visit the traditional Hoi An Market, the Quan Cong Chinese Temple and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Stop at the Reaching Out Tea House to experience the social enterprise work happening here.

### 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.

**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.

**Reaching Out Tea House** – Provides opportunities and meaningful employment for people with disabilities to learn new skills. In the Tea House, you will experience a peaceful atmosphere allowing you to embrace the traditional Vietnamese service from the staff with speech and hearing impairments. Try the locally grown products and sip on tea and coffee as you enjoy the calm and quiet atmosphere of the Tea House.

**Day 11: Hoi An – Hue**

Meals: B, L, D

Today, drive approximately 4 hours to Hue via the scenic Hai Van Pass. Hue is the physical embodiment of Vietnam's dynamic past, and considered a scholarly city. Here, visit the seven-storey Thien Mu Pagoda and take a cruise on the Perfume River.



### 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, 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 is built on a hillock overlooking the Perfume River. Dating back to 1601, it is Hue's oldest and most beautiful pagoda, and considered the unofficial symbol of the city. Wander the grounds where bonsai, ponds and the smell of incense set a peaceful backdrop.

**Day 12: Hue**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit the tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh, an unusual architectural combination that blends a traditional Chinese past with a modern Western future. Continue to Minh Mang Tomb to explore the opulent and exotic resting place laid out in formal Chinese style.



Afterwards, move on to a beautiful old maison that has been transformed to Truc Chi – an art space and workshop – by a team of enthusiastic young artists. Learn more about Truc Chi and have the chance to buy their hand-made products (passport covers, fans or candle boxes made from bamboo pulp). After lunch, visit the imposing Imperial Citadel and Forbidden Purple City.

### 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.

**Forbidden Purple City** – Constructed for personal use by the Imperial family, their concubines and eunuchs. This royal structure is still being restored many years after the destruction caused by street fighting and bombing during the American war in Vietnam. Wander the grounds and foundations whilst viewing the remaining woodwork and architecture.

**Day 13: Hue - Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to the charming capital city of Hanoi. This afternoon, take a cyclo tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter. Each cyclo takes one passenger and is operated by a cycle driver behind the carriage. Wrap up your ride with a strong Vietnamese coffee at a café overlooking Hoan Kiem Lake – an important symbol of Vietnamese folklore.



### 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 French towns of the 1930s; a “Paris of the Orient”, as people have called it.

**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.

**Day 14: Hanoi – Halong Bay**

Meals: B, L, D

Drive around 2 and a half hours today from Hanoi to Halong, where you will take an overnight cruise to the far-most corners of the bay by boat. There is usually a crowd of boats at the docks; however, the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing.

Boarding your boat could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff.



The boat has an enclosed dining area and an open area on the upper deck. Enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities (which are subject to change due to cruise selection and weather conditions). Sightseeing includes visiting underground caves on the islands, which require climbing up and down steps inside and outside of the caves. End the day on deck with a drink in hand to watch the sunset over the bay followed by a freshly prepared dinner, before retiring to your cabin for the night.

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 15: Halong Bay - Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning sailing through Halong Bay. After an early lunch (or brunch meal) disembark your cruise and return to Hanoi. This evening, attend The Quintessence of Tonkin show, an artistic open-air performance celebrating the rich history of northern Vietnam.

**Day 16: Hanoi**

Meals: B, L, D

Discover the sights of Hanoi today. First stop will be Ba Dinh Square, then the Ho Chi Minh Quarter and pass Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, followed by the Humble House on Stilts and the One Pillar Pagoda. Next, drive to the serene Temple of Literature, Hanoi's first university.

**Day 17-18: Depart Hanoi**

Meals: B,

You will be transferred 1 hour from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your overnight international flight. Any time before your flight is at leisure.

*Check out is usually at noon – please contact our Reservations team if you would like to prebook Late Checkout. Please note: Only breakfast is provided on the group's day of departure.*

## ANGKOR TO THE BAY TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam & Cambodia and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

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 see our website for more information including links to the mobile apps and web platform: <https://help.wendywutours.com.au/knowledge/cambodia-e-arrival-card>

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.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis. For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

### INSURANCE:

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

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

### EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in many 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.

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 bowl. Usually, chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Those with dietary requirements - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Southeast Asia. We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

### **GROUP SIZE:**

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 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.

### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels 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 Australia and Vietnam. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by



Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

**Solo travellers:** If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

### PORTERAGE:

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Please be aware that portering 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:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. **However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).** Roads in Vietnam have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

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

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. 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.

## DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; 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.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

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If you are travelling within the below Cambodian and Vietnamese Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. In Vietnam, Tet Holiday is 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025 & 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026; International Labour Day is on 1<sup>st</sup> May every year; Reunification Day is on 30<sup>th</sup> April every year and National Independence Day is on 2<sup>nd</sup> September every year. In Cambodia Khmer New Year is 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April every year, the King's birthday is 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> May and the Water festival is between 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November in 2024 and between 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> November in 2025.

## SOUVENIRS:

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

## LUGGAGE:

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

## PERSONAL EXPENSES:

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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 \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

### CLIMBING STEPS:

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Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide 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:

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We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: August 2024