



# CAMBODIA & MEKONG UNCOVERED

## Classic Tour | 17 Days | Physical Level 1

Phnom Penh – Battambang – Siem Reap – 3N Victoria Mekong Cruise – Kampot – Phnom Penh

Explore Cambodia's complex history and fascinating heritage, and soak up the sights and sounds of the Mekong. Uncover all the highlights of the kingdom, from cooking classes to cultural shows, plus — of course — the majestic temples of Angkor.

- Discover captivating Phnom Penh
- Be inspired by majestic Angkor
- Cruise the Mekong for 3 nights
- Learn Cambodian history at the Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng
- Discover the secrets of Kampot pepper
- Unravel the mysteries of the silk making process
- Explore colonial Battambang

To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit [wendywutours.com.au](http://wendywutours.com.au)

## TOUR MAP



## CAMBODIA & MEKONG UNCOVERED 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
- 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:

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.

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## 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.

‘Cambodia & Mekong Uncovered’ 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 17 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 1 in Phnom Penh and end the tour on Day 16 in Phnom Penh. 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: Fly to Phnom Penh

Meals: D

Fly to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital. Depending on your time of arrival, the rest of the day is yours to start soaking up the local culture.

Our representative will meet all today's arrivals outside the Arrivals Hall at Phnom Penh Airport ahead of the transfer to the hotel.

Check into your room, or store luggage if arriving earlier than the check-in time. This evening, meet your group for dinner and a welcome briefing with your Cambodian Local Guide or National Escort.

*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

**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.

### Day 2: Explore Phnom Penh

Meals: B, L, D

Explore Phnom Penh, a European-feeling city of airy boulevards and colonial villas. Though it is still scarred by the events of the 1970s, the city has been renewed with energy and optimism. Enjoy a guided tour of the city, stopping to visit the magnificent Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and National Museum. Visit the city's chief landmark, the temple of Wat Phnom, before an afternoon at leisure.



### Destination Information

**Royal Palace** – The ornate roofs of the Royal Palace are the most striking feature of Phnom Penh's skyline, constructed in the elaborate Khmer style and glittering with gold. The palace has been the official residence of Cambodia's monarchs since its construction in the 1860s.

**Silver Pagoda** – The Silver Pagoda is part of the Royal Palace complex, and is also known as the Temple of the Emerald Buddha thanks to the precious statue displayed there. Its rich decoration includes silver tiles, Italian marble, and murals of the Reamker (Cambodia's national epic, a Buddhist tale similar to the Hindu Ramayana).

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

**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.

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**Day 3: Phnom Penh**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, learn about Cambodia’s tragic past under the Khmer Rouge regime with visits to the Tuol Sleng Museum and the Killing Fields. Return to Phnom Penh in the afternoon, with time to explore further.

**Destination Information**

**Khmer Rouge** – A totalitarian group of revolutionaries who seized and held power in Cambodia from April 1975 to January 1979. The Khmer Rouge turned Cambodia into a military dictatorship in which all rights, arts and intellectual pursuits were abolished. Approximately 2 million Cambodians (nearly 25% of the population) were killed in labour camps, prisons and mass execution sites. They continued their guerilla warfare for many years after the Vietnamese forces invaded and overthrew them in 1979.

**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.

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**Day 4: Travel to Battambang**

Meals: B, L, D

Journey to Battambang, Cambodia’s lesser-known city. With a population of less than 120,000, Battambang is a laidback city nestled on a bend of the Sangkae River. Set in some of the country’s most beautiful landscapes, Battambang is also home to Cambodia’s grandest colonial architecture.



### Destination Information

**Battambang** – Cambodia’s third largest city. Situated amid scenic countryside, on the banks of the Sangkae River, sleepy Battambang possesses some of Cambodia’s grandest and best-preserved colonial architecture. For more than a century, it was a provincial capital of the Thai province of Inner Cambodia, ceded to French Indochina in 1907; however, the population was always predominantly Khmer.

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#### Day 5: Historic Battambang

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, explore of traditional local house for a glimpse of rural life. Head out of town to the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Banan Temple and admire the breathtaking hilltop views. Pause to witness a local phenomenon – hundreds of thousands of bats erupting from the hillside for their nightly hunt.



### Destination Information

**Prasat Banan Temple** – Located on the top of a small hill, the temple was built in the 12th century and consists of 5 towers. There are many steps to the top - please let the guide know if you need to pause, or prefer not to join.

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#### Day 6: Siem Reap & Circus

Meals: B, L, D

Travel west to Siem Reap, arriving in the afternoon. Enjoy time at leisure before dinner. This evening, enjoy a rollicking performance by graduated of the Phare Cambodian Circus. This NGO organisation transforms the lives of disadvantaged local youths, providing them with a formal education and vocational training in the performing arts.



### Destination Information

**Siem Reap** – Siem Reap translates to ‘the defeat of Siam’, in reference to the centuries-old conflict between Cambodia and Thailand. Since the French purchase of Angkor from Siam, Siem Reap has grown from a small village to a popular tourist destination, thanks to its proximity to the World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat.

**PHARE Cambodian Circus** – Stone carvings from ruins across Cambodia show the importance of circus arts throughout the kingdom's history. Yet when the Khmer Rouge regime banned almost all performances across the country in the 20th century, many of these arts were almost lost. PHARE was founded in 1994 as a performing arts school with a twofold mission: to revive these forgotten arts and provide vocational training to disadvantaged youths who might otherwise have a bleak future. In 2013, the school opened its Big Top tent in Siem Reap, where graduates perform nightly. Profits support the school in Battambang, which teaches a variety of arts as well as providing a formal education.

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**Day 7: Explore Angkor**

Meals: B, L, D

The Angkor Archaeological Park encompasses over 1,000 temples, all the remains of different capitals of the Khmer Empire between the 9th and 15th centuries. Our tuk-tuk tour begins from the old city of Angkor Thom as we pass through the magnificent South Gate flanked by 54 gods and demons. At Angkor Thom's centre is the enigmatic Bayon, a breathtaking temple of innumerable sculptural decorations. Also admire the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King.



Continue to Ta Prohm before the rest of the day is dedicated to Angkor Wat, the most magnificent and best preserved of all of Angkor's treasures. Later, take a leisurely boat ride on the moat of Angkor Thom and view hidden elements of the old Khmer water systems.

**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 12th century temple complex is the largest religious monument in the world. Surrounded by a 190-metre moat and taking 30 years to build, Angkor Wat showcases the Khmer civilisation at its grandest, and was designed to represent Mt Meru, the Hindu equivalent of Mt Olympus. With its fascinating decorative flourishes, extensive bas-relief and multiple tiers, it is the best-preserved temple within the complex. Angkor temples were traditionally dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, but Angkor Wat broke tradition in that it was originally dedicated to Vishnu, and was later reworked as a Buddhist temple. The silhouette on the flag of Cambodia is that of Angkor Wat, and it is recognised as Cambodia’s spiritual and cultural heart.

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**Day 8:           Cooking Class**

Meals: B, L, D

Join a traditional Cambodian cooking class at an organic farm, learning about the flavours that go into Khmer cuisine. This afternoon, enjoy a tour of some of Cambodia’s social enterprises dedicated to fostering positive change, learning about the impact of their remarkable work on local communities.



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**Day 9:           Countryside Experience**

Meals: B, L, D

Head out of Siem Reap to enjoy an immersive countryside experience. Visit a number of farms and local villages part of the Trei Nhoar Community and discover the true essence of Cambodia, witnessing a more traditional way of life, untouched by modernity, as you gain insights into daily life of the rural Khmer population. Enjoy a home-cooked meal with the locals and return to Siem Reap in the late afternoon.

**Destination Information**

**Trei Nhoar** – A community comprised of ten villages set in the rural countryside outside Siem Reap.



**Day 10: Victoria Mekong**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer to Kampong Cham to embark on your next adventure – a three-night cruise on our premium small ship, the Victoria Mekong. Begin your cruise with a complimentary cocktail on deck, watching the sun set.

**Destination Information**

**Mekong River** – The 7th longest river in Asia and the heart of Southeast Asia civilisation, there is no tapestry of river life as fascinating and varied as the Mekong.

**Day 11: Angkor Ban & Kampong Cham**

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the laid-back village of Angkor Ban with its wooden stilt houses. This afternoon, sail to Kampong Cham, where charming colonial architecture meets vibrant local life, and enjoy a guided tour as you stroll along the serene banks of the Mekong.

**Destination Information**

**Angkor Ban** – A commune in north-western Cambodia located along the Mekong River and the hometown of ancient wooden houses. Angkor Ban holds a great amount of history with the houses in the village being used for storage under the Khmer Rouge. Many of the villages infrastructures still stand today, showing its resilience and history.

**Day 12: Oudong**

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a walking tour of Koh Chen village, where you'll meet a local copper and silversmith, before continuing to the country's former capital, Oudong. Arrive in Phnom Penh and end the afternoon in style with a signature cocktail at Raffles Hotel Le Royal before returning to the ship.



**Day 13: Kampot**

Meals: B, L, D

Disembark the Victoria Mekong and depart Phnom Penh, heading for the coastal town of Kampot, stopping en route at a pepper farm to learn about the famous Kampot pepper. Enjoy a walking tour of Kampot, a charming town characterised by its colonial architecture.

**Destination Information**

**Kampot** – The former port city of Kampot is an enchanting small town best known for its sleepy, relaxed atmosphere and its salt and pepper production. Wander the town and glimpse the former glory of its French Colonial architecture.

**Kampot pepper** – Pepper from this region is considered some of the best in the world. The province enjoys ideal elevation and humidity for pepper production, along with quartz-rich soil that nourishes the vines. Kampot pepper is the first Cambodian product to receive the French appellation DOC - a geographical indication that protects trade names for special food products. The EU also granted Kampot pepper protected geographical indication status in 2016. Because it is rare abroad, it is usually reserved for recipes that highlight its qualities, such as sauteed crab, steak au poivre and cacio e pepe.

**Day 14: Kampong Trach Cave**

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Kampong Trach Cave, with its breathtaking limestone formations. Continue to Trapeang Sangke, a community-based initiative dedicated to preserving mangroves in the area, and enjoy a boat trip through the vast mangrove forests.

**Day 15: Return to Phnom Penh**

Meals: B, L, D

Return to Phnom Penh. This evening, admire modern Phnom Penh as you sip a cocktail at a local sky bar, and consider how this reinvigorated capital is moving forward.



**Days 16-17: Fly Phnom Penh to Australia**

Meals: B

Fly to Australia, arriving home the same or following day.





## TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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An entry visa are required by all visitors to 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 is 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.

## 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 24 travellers in a Victoria Mekong 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, instead of a National Escort.

## 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 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 or 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.

### PORTERAGE:

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Please be aware that portorage 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 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.

### 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 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 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.

### **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: December 2024