

CHINESE WHISPERS

THE LATEST TRAVEL NEWS AND INSPIRATION FROM WENDY WU TOURS

CUSTOMER CORNER

Panda Encounter

HEAD TO HEAD

Rajasthan vs Kerala

FALL FOR VIETNAM

The perfect destination

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

A month by month guide

THE LAND OF GENGHIS KHAN

Magical Mongolia

STYLE SPOTLIGHT:

The Deluxe Collection

UNDISCOVERED CHINA

Learn about China's ancient Shanxi province

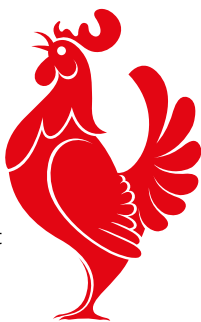


A MESSAGE FROM WENDY



Welcome to the Year of the Rooster!

Chinese New Year is a huge celebration in China. The festival is a time for family, where people travel back to their home towns and villages, creating the biggest mass migration of people in the world – it is estimated that 4% of the world's population are on the move! The Chinese also clean their house to wash away any bad luck, as well as decorate their doors and windows with red paper cutouts. Families spread good fortune by gifting money in red envelopes.



The Year of the Rooster is set to be a year filled with action. You will reap rewards by tapping into your inner rooster traits – loyalty, commitment, hard work and family values.

However, I hope it is not all hard work in 2017 and you will have some time for fun and exploration too! Our popular Discovery Tours allow you to embrace your sense of adventure and do things you would never have the chance to do in Australia. Or if you wish to have access to exclusive experiences, look no further than our Deluxe Collection.

On pages 4-5 we have some hints about when to travel where. Read all about one of our customer's special travel experiences when she got up-close with the giant pandas. Mongolia is a magical destination that should be high on everyone's wish list. Our Product Executive, Nicole wants to share her Travel Tale with you – she was in the right place at the right time to witness the unearthing of a dinosaur fossil!

I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we have enjoyed creating it! I look forward to welcoming you on a Wendy Wu holiday very soon.

Lots of cheers,

Wendy Wu,
Owner & Founder, Wendy Wu Tours

Cover image: Hmong hill tribe

WHAT'S INSIDE...



WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

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Find out the best places to visit each month.



SEE ASIA DIFFERENTLY: OUR DISCOVERY TOURS

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Delve deeper into Asia's rich culture with our Discovery Tours.



UNDISCOVERED CHINA

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Learn about China's ancient Shanxi province.



HEAD TO HEAD – RAJASTHAN VS KERALA

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Two of India's most contrasting states compete.



FALL FOR VIETNAM

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We tell you why Vietnam should be on everyone's travel list.

WHAT'S NEW?

OUR EXPERTS BRING YOU THE LATEST NEWS FROM WENDY WU TOURS

NEW DELUXE COLLECTION AND DISCOVERY TOURS BROCHURES

OUT NOW!

We know that every traveller is different, so we offer a variety of tour styles to cater to your preference. For those wanting to travel with a little bit of extra comfort and enjoy exclusive experiences, try our Deluxe Collection. Our Discovery Tours will immerse you in the authentic charm of Asia with cultural and active experiences. What's your style? See pages 8-11 for more information.

Order your free brochures at wendywutours.com.au/brochures



EXTRA INDIA DEPARTURES

India is more popular than ever in 2017 so we have added extra departures for the second half of 2017 to some of our most popular excellent-value fully inclusive Classic Tours.

Find out more at wendywutours.com.au



NEW JAPAN TOUR: A WEEK IN JAPAN

Due to popular demand, we have created a new 9 day tour to Japan, visiting Tokyo, Hakone, Kyoto and Osaka. This whirlwind tour delves into Japan's most iconic cities and stunning scenic areas.

9 days from **\$6,980pp** twin share fully inclusive departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl & Per.

Find out more at

wendywutours.com.au



NEW GREAT WALL HIKE PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

Explore the remote and wild sections of the Great Wall on this two night pre-tour extension. Hike three sections – Gubeikou, Jinshanling and Simatai with expert hiking guides and watch the majestic sun rise over Simatai.

From **\$945pp** twin share.

Speak to our reservations team for more information.

Note: Available in conjunction with any tour that starts in Beijing between April and October. A good level of fitness is required.



CHINA EXPLORER – NEW DATE!

It's selling like hotcakes! We have added an extra departure for this Discovery tour departing on 11 September.

Pricing is **from \$6,410pp** twin share, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl, Per, Cns*.

Find out more at

wendywutours.com.au

MEET THE WENDY WU EXPERTS Sonia Orrego, Special Groups Manager

What is a Special Group?

In the Special Groups department, we look after private tours for groups of 10 or more people that wish to travel together on a customised itinerary. They may be a group of friends or family, community club, sports team, school group or a special interest group like a gardening club or photography club.

Why do people choose to travel as their own Special Group?

They can tailor-make their itinerary to their group's needs, choose their own dates, flights, unique special touches, everything!

Why choose Wendy Wu Tours to organise your Special Group holiday?

We excel at bespoke tours and holidays. We can look after everything from start to finish, from your flights, visas, accommodation, touring, etc. We have the local knowledge and expertise to ensure your tour is tailored to your group's needs.



Groups of 10 or more, contact our Special Groups department on **1300 727 998**

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

It's time to start thinking about where you will go for your next holiday. While many of our destinations can be visited year-round, some have times of the year where travel is optimal. Here is a guide to help you on your way...



Bagan, Myanmar



APRIL: CHINA

There are so many good times to visit China. However, we would consider April to be a great time. Although the weather varies from place to place, enjoy the most pleasant temperatures in April, with comfy, spring-like days following you wherever you go.

TAKE ME THERE:

A China Experience, 10 days from \$3,880pp twin share. Based on 23 Apr 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Per.



MAY: TIBET

May brings clear, azure skies to Tibet, giving you the ultimate views of Everest, the 'roof of the world' and its stunning surroundings, including mystical Lhasa, where temperatures reach a pleasant 20 degrees.

TAKE ME THERE:

China & Tibet Discovery, 16 days from \$6,460pp twin share. Based on 27 May 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per, Cns.



JUNE: HIMALAYAN INDIA

The region of northern India, Ladakh State, that sits in the shadows of the mighty Himalayan range is perfect to visit in June. The weather is clear, crisp and sunny and roads are clear of snow.

TAKE ME THERE:

Trans Himalayan Journey – Manali to Leh, 23 days from \$7,840pp twin share. Based on 23 Jun 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per, Drw*, Cbr*, Cns*.



JULY: MONGOLIA

Contrary to many destinations in Asia, Mongolia is best in the summer months. Days are long and you'll get to experience all manner of Mongolian traditions, including the Nadaam Festival where you'll witness wrestling, horse racing and archery.

TAKE ME THERE:

Mongolia & the Naadam Festival, 24 days from \$11,320pp twin share. Based on 08 Jul 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per, Cns*.



AUGUST: SRI LANKA

The Kandy Esala Perahera, one of Sri Lanka's most famous religious festivals, takes place in August 2017. Locals seek blessings from the deities and an ancient, awe-inspiring street procession and celebrations are the highlight.

TAKE ME THERE:

Highlights of Sri Lanka, 14 days from \$5,680pp twin share. Based on 01 Aug 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per, Drw*, Cbr*, Cns*.



SEPTEMBER: CENTRAL ASIA

Home to fabled cities, bazaars and striking architecture, the Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in September are typically warm and dry, but not uncomfortably so. Hiking opportunities are excellent at this time.

TAKE ME THERE:

Road to Samarkand, 26 days from \$9,980pp twin share. Based on 03 Sep 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne*, Per*.



OCTOBER: JAPAN

Don't just think cherry blossoms when you think Japan. Autumn is just as special. See a plethora of red, yellow and golden leaves on the trees across the countryside and cities, plus you'll have more space for yourself to soak up the scenery and culture!

TAKE ME THERE:

Essential Japan, 12 days from \$9,960pp twin share. Based on 23 Oct 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne*, Adl, Per, Cns.



NOVEMBER: MYANMAR

Myanmar is one of the 'hot' destinations to visit. November is in the dry season when temperatures are cooler and rainfall lower, meaning less interruptions to touring. The rainy season has passed and so the countryside will be lovely and green.

TAKE ME THERE:

Myanmar Explorer, 11 days from \$4,980pp twin share. Based on 10 Nov 17, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*.



DECEMBER: CAMBODIA

December is prime time to visit the incredible temple that we know as Angkor Wat. With an average of eight hours sunshine and temperatures reaching a gorgeous 30 degrees, you'll enjoy less humid days, meaning you can focus on what's standing right in front of you.

TAKE ME THERE:

Angkor to the Bay, 16 days from \$5,540pp twin share. Based on 09 Dec 17, departing Syd, Mel.



JANUARY: VIETNAM

Dry and mild conditions can be expected, perfect for walking and exploring in the daytime, and lovely for eating out in the evenings. Central Vietnam is coming out of the wet season, meaning the beaches are prime. In 2018, Tet new year falls in February but you may notice some preparations towards the end of January.

TAKE ME THERE:

Vietnam Escape, 16 days from \$4,340pp twin share. Based on 27 Jan 18, departing Syd, Mel.



FEBRUARY: LAOS

Vietnam and Cambodia's laid-back cousin, Laos has so much to offer in February, the peak of the dry season. Experience all it has to offer from its unspoilt, pristine heritage and vivid colours to its haunting history and enduring French legacy – there's so much to explore.

TAKE ME THERE:

Grand Tour of Indochina, 27 days from \$7,980pp twin share. Based on 04 Feb 18, departing Syd, Mel.



MARCH: INDIA

India has diverse weather from north to south. March is a favourable time to visit as it is generally milder and has less rain. The vibrant Holi Festival is celebrated in March, mostly in the north. The south has a slower pace and it is an ideal time to explore the lush highlands and backwaters.

TAKE ME THERE:

Kerala & the Southern Highlights, 17 days from \$5,480pp twin share. Based on 01 Mar 18, departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per, Drw*, Cbr*, Cns*



Halong Bay, Vietnam

CUSTOMER CORNER

China: My Home Away From Home

Wendy Wu Tours VIP and frequent traveller Sandra Alderton has travelled on nine Wendy Wu tours. Her incredible journey with us began in China in 2010 and from there she has journeyed several times through China and Indochina. Not only that, she enjoyed each tour as a single traveller!

We recently caught up with Sandra to get some hints and tips, and hear about what keeps her travelling with Wendy Wu Tours time and time again.



Sandra & her new friend



You must be a China expert now – what advice would you give to first time travellers?

You need to go with an open mind and adapt to the culture. Some things are very different and the people's demeanours sometimes come across as rude but that's just how they are. If you don't speak any Mandarin, going on a group tour with an English-speaking guide is the way to do it. Sometimes changes happen at the last minute or a flight may be delayed, so you just have to go along with it and enjoy yourself.

Tell us about your experiences with the National Escorts and Local Guides in China.

I have found the guides to be excellent. I have had the same guides on different tours so that was nice. One guide said to me "welcome home" when I arrived in Beijing, as she had been my guide on a previous tour. They always look after me very well and I consider China to be my home away from home.

You have travelled solo on our tours, how do you find that?

I like the security of group tours, and language is not a barrier with the other group members.

Tell us about your most memorable travel experience in China?

The first time I went to China with Wendy Wu Tours I went to the panda base but didn't get up close with the pandas and I regretted it. So the next time, I booked in to do a few hours volunteering as a keeper. I had to sweep up the panda poo and clean out the enclosures. Luckily, their poo doesn't smell because they only eat bamboo. I was able to hand feed a panda and learnt more about the base and its conservation efforts. Pandas stay there for two years then they are released into the wild. They microchip them so they can be tracked and help them to prepare for predators, such as snow leopards. I found the experience of holding the one-year-old panda very emotional and I shed a few tears!

Their fur is very soft.

Are there any other places that were a real highlight for you?

I love Duijiangyan near Chengdu. It is very much the China of old and so beautiful. Our whole group loved it there.

What tour do you have your eye on next?

I would love to visit Sri Lanka or South Africa. There are a few other areas in China such as Yunnan, Sichuan and Nine Villages Valley I would still like to visit, but not sure how I would go with the altitude. I like that I get a loyalty discount, so I'm always planning my next adventure with Wendy Wu Tours.



“ They always look after me very well and I consider China to be my home away from home. ”

TAKE ME THERE
IN PURSUIT OF PANDAS
PRICES FROM **\$3,180pp** FOR 9 DAYS
TWIN SHARE
Fully inclusive departing Syd, Mel, Bne & Per with China Southern Airlines.
To book call **1300 798 118**

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU...

LOYALTY DISCOUNTS

We know that many of you like to travel with us year after year and with so many experiences across Asia to be enjoyed, why wouldn't you? On your next Fully Inclusive Classic Tour, Discovery Tour or Deluxe Tour, you will enjoy a loyalty discount.

Note: Our loyalty discount does not apply to tailor-made itineraries, independent travel or special groups.

EARN YOURSELF A HAMPER (and your friends get a great holiday)

“ The tour gave me a real thirst for more Asian adventure and Wendy Wu Tours is the way to go.”

A very happy Aussie couple – Michael and Lyndelle Rees.

Find yourself returning from your trip with similar comments to Mr and Mrs Rees? We value all of our Wu ambassadors, and we would like to reward you for referring your friends to Wendy Wu Tours. As a token of appreciation, if your friend mentions your name and reference number at the time of booking, we will send you a hamper filled with delicious treats, delivered to your door! Refer as many friends as you like – there's no limit!

Note: Conditions apply. Please see back cover.

LOYALTY DISCOUNT

2nd group tour	SAVE \$100pp
3rd, 4th and 5th group tour	SAVE \$200pp
6th or more group tour	SAVE \$300pp

SEE ASIA DIFFERENTLY ON OUR DISCOVERY TOURS

Seeing a country is just scratching the surface of what your holiday could be.

Our Discovery Tours will give you a deeper understanding of the places you visit by experiencing them through handpicked activities, unique to each destination. Free your adventurous side, explore iconic sites and see Asia from a different perspective.

CHINA



Hike Iconic Landscapes

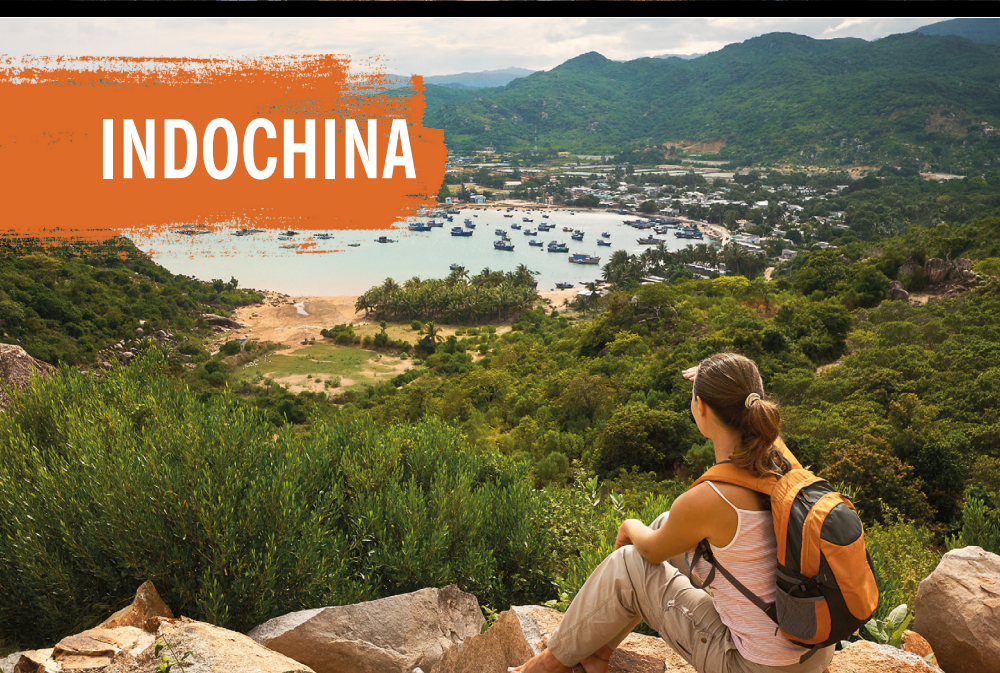
Hike in the footsteps of Ming Dynasty soldiers along the least visited sections of the Great Wall, through the spiralling staircases of the Longji or Yuanyang rice terraces.



Explore by Bike

Cycle among paddy fields and limestone karsts, or along Xian's ancient city wall.

INDOCHINA



Trek with Hilltribes

Hike the rice terraces and colourful minority villages of Sapa or the Red Yao villages of Hoang Su Phi.



Sightsee like a Local

Take to Hoi An's streets by bicycle; wind through the lush Mekong Delta by rickshaw.

JAPAN



Experience Ancient Traditions

Witness the art of a tea ceremony, test your rhythm during a Taiko drumming class, sample sake, squeeze into a kimono or cheer on champion Sumo.



Embrace the Great Outdoors

Hike the base of Mt Fuji, make friends with snow monkeys and experience the magical Sapporo Snow & Ice Festival.

INDIA & SRI LANKA

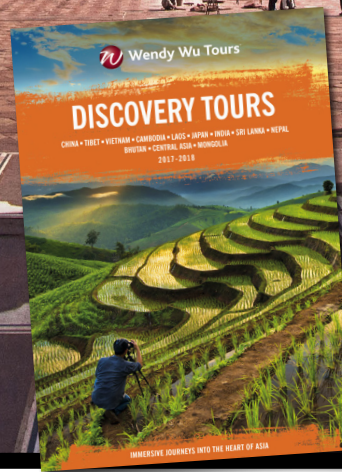


Walk in the footsteps of Maharajahs
Stay overnight in a restored fort, wander through colourful bazaars discover the world's ultimate monument to love.



Trek Sri Lanka

Hike to stunning vantage points through tea plantations, a national park and rice paddies.



TAKE ME THERE

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK-OUT OUR EPIC JOURNEYS THAT TAKE YOU TO:

- Tibet's Everest Base Camp
- Mongolia's Gobi Desert
- Bhutan's Tiger's Nest Monastery
- Himalayan India ■ China's Silk Road
- Central Asia's Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

To book call **1300 798 118**

STYLE SPOTLIGHT: THE DELUXE COLLECTION

Our Deluxe Collection includes specially crafted tours with luxury at the forefront. We aim to impress with the unique, exclusive experiences included in our Collection. We have all the hottest destinations covered with deluxe tours to China, Tibet, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Japan, India and Sri Lanka.

If you are a discerning traveller, these meticulously designed, deluxe journeys will immerse you in an experience that will bring Asia to life. **Here is a small selection of the exclusive range of experiences on offer:**



DRINK CHAMPAGNE ON THE GREAT WALL

We take you to a part of the wall that is away from the crowds and for you to toast the moment with a glass of champagne!



MEET THE WARRIORS WITH AN EXPERT

Xian is home to the Terracotta Warriors – a collection of impressive soldiers and their stallions. We'll introduce you to this marvel through one of the members of the excavation team who was there at the moment the army was first discovered – a truly unique experience.



EXPERIENCE THE CEREMONY OF TAK BAT

As the sun rises, Luang Prabang in Laos comes alive with monks taking to the streets in an uninterrupted line, dressed in orange robes, collecting alms. This is a magical experience and not to be missed.

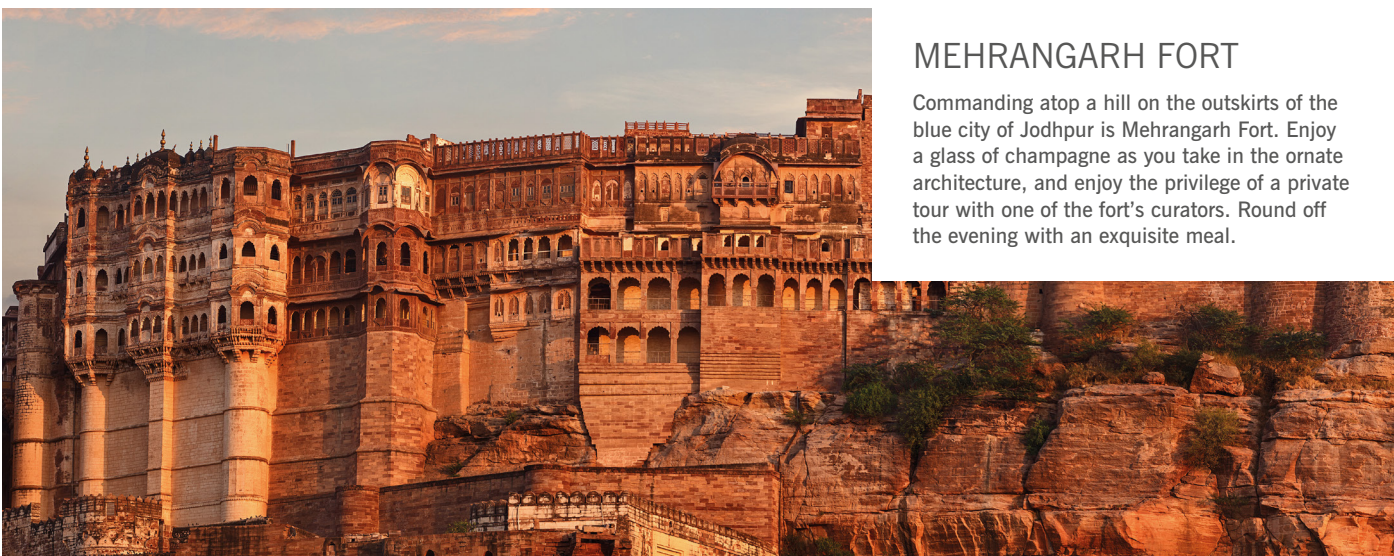
'A O SHOW' AT SAIGON'S OPERA HOUSE

Saigon's magnificent Opera House is an ornate example of French colonial architecture. The amazing A O show takes you on a journey through daily life in Vietnam with acrobatics, athleticism and theatrical visuals.



MEHRANGARH FORT

Commanding atop a hill on the outskirts of the blue city of Jodhpur is Mehrangarh Fort. Enjoy a glass of champagne as you take in the ornate architecture, and enjoy the privilege of a private tour with one of the fort's curators. Round off the evening with an exquisite meal.



MARVEL THE MIGHTY MOUNT FUJI

At the 5th Station of Mount Fuji, be blown away by the panoramic vistas while sipping on a cold glass of Japanese sake.



FABULOUS FEATURES:

- 5 star accommodation and deluxe cruising
- Sumptuous dining options
- Unique and exclusive sightseeing and experiences
- Small group sizes with professional guides
- More 'me' time to explore

MEET A GEISHA IN TRAINING

The age-old traditions of Geishas are a part of quintessential Japan. Spend an evening seeing a traditional Maiko (apprentice Geisha) perform Japanese dance and song while dining on traditional cuisine.



TRAVEL TALES

The Land of Genghis Khan – Magical Mongolia



Our Product Executive, Nicole Black recently travelled to Mongolia, experiencing all manner of adventures. We caught up with her to find out all about it.

How would you describe the people in Mongolia?

There are no people as welcoming, kind and generous as Mongolians. They are always curious of travellers and love to try to connect. They are inspiring, self-sustaining people full of hospitality and earthly wisdom. I met a nomadic herdsman and his family at Elsen Tasarkhai who herd camel and sheep. We were invited into their ger to enjoy homemade Airag (fermented mares milk). A communal bowl is passed from guest to guest and it is customary to take at least a sip. It has a salty sour flavour. I was able to take a short ride on a Bactrian (two-humped camel) native to Mongolia. We made our way to the sand dunes near their ger, and the views were spectacular. There was no other sound other than the faint steps of the camel on the soft sand.

“ It is an epic journey! Breathtaking views through unspoilt steppes... ”

What was the most memorable place you visited?

Definitely the Hustain Nuruu National Park to see the endangered Przewalski Horse found in only three areas of Mongolia. We tried to be quiet and move slowly, making sure not to frighten them off, but the horses had other ideas, and confidently galloped towards us. It was magnificent! They do not look like the horses we are all familiar with; they are shorter with a stocky build.

Tell us about your most memorable meal

Khuushuur – a mutton and vegetable dumpling that is deep-fried and wrapped in a flat, half-circular pocket. Yum!

Tell us about any interesting customs or traditions you encountered?

Our guide taught us the anklebone game or shagai. The four sides of an anklebone are called sheep, goat, horse and camel and there are numerous games they play with these.



Nicole on tour!

I also witnessed a Mongolian hair cutting ceremony that Mongolian children have between the ages of 2-4 to symbolise the transition from baby to child. Guests take turns at snipping a random section of hair from the scalp and after, the child's head is shaved.

Are there any particular moments that really stood out?

Finding a dinosaur bone in the Gobi Desert – talk about being in the right place at the right time! I was very lucky to witness this, as it is not something everyone would get to



Travel tips for Mongolia...

- ✓ Bring a torch for evenings when you wish to leave/return to your ger
- ✓ Be prepared for long days in a 4WD, driving along unsealed tracks
- ✓ Dress in layers as the temperature can change quickly year-round with summer temperatures ranging from 8 degrees in the evenings to over 30 degrees during daytime
- ✓ It is polite to take a sip/nibble of any delicacies offered to you
- ✓ Never whistle inside a ger – it is said to call bad spirits into the home

see. Listening to throat singing (Khuumii) is something I will never forget. It is an important part of their celebrations, culture and customs. The nomad's life and connection with animals and the environment are strongly reflected in their songs. The songs are hypnotic, calming and enchanting.

cases a wardrobe. At the centre of the ger is a wood-lit stove. Bathrooms are private, in a communal area and there is a dining ger as well where you eat your meals.

Tell us about the ger camps

They are circular, made of a wooden framework and felt covers. The entrance to the ger faces south towards the sun, the north side is where nomads keep their most treasured and sacred belongings. The west is the male side and the east female. Small wooden furniture is painted in vivid orange. Each ger has a low-lying table and two chairs, single bed frames, in some

What is the one thing we should know about travelling in Mongolia?

It is an epic journey! Breathtaking views through unspoilt steppes, long hours of driving and the hospitality of a traditional nomadic culture will have you wanting to explore even more of Mongolia.

Nicole's Mongolia Fast Fact:

The real image of Mongol Leader Genghis Khan is a mystery. He never allowed anyone to paint his portrait, sculpt his image or engrave his likeness into a coin. All images of what we know of Genghis Khan have appeared since his death.

NICOLE'S TOP EXPERIENCES



Visiting with a nomadic family at Elsen Tasarkhai



Discovering a dinosaur bone at the Flaming Cliffs



Living like a nomad in ger camps



Throat singing performance (Khuumii)

TAKE ME THERE

MONGOLIA REVEALED

PRICES FROM **\$9,040^{PP}** FOR **19 DAYS**

TWIN SHARE
Fully inclusive departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per & Cns

To book call **1300 798 118**

UNDISCOVERED CHINA

Shanxi Province

With thousands of years of fascinatingly diverse history, China is one of the world's oldest civilisations. Much of this ancient history can be found in the Shanxi Province, a region in north eastern China that shares a border with Inner Mongolia. If you've already ticked off China's main sights, then a tour of this intriguing region is a must for a second visit.

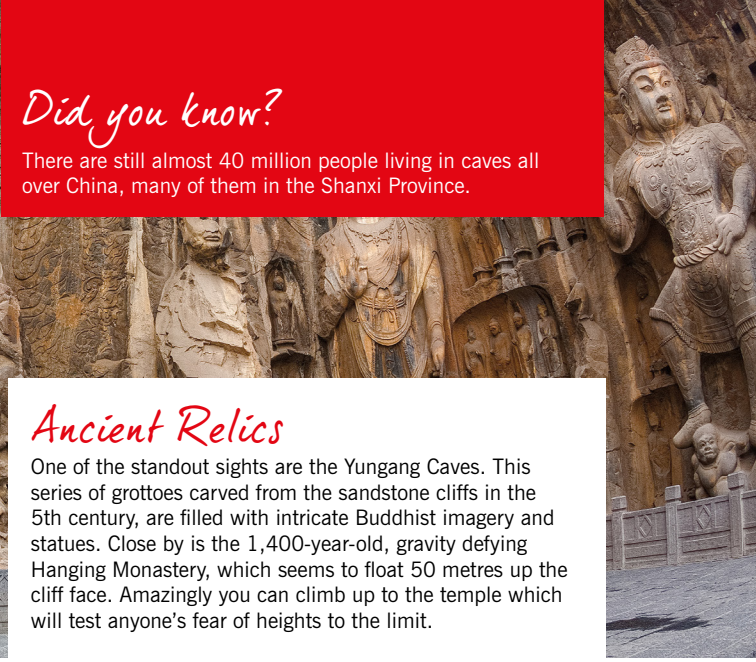


Go back in time

A trip to China's Shanxi Province will take you back in time about 5,000 years with its ancient history and rich culture. Not to be confused with its neighbour, the Shaanxi Province, famous for the Terracotta Warriors, this northern region contains some of the most significant ancient relics in China.

One of the highlights is the ancient walled town of Pingyao. It is probably the most famous city in Shanxi and considered the best preserved in the whole of China. The wall surrounding the city stretches about 6 kms, enveloping the 50,000 people still living inside. Spending the night in a restored guesthouse, within a traditional courtyard setting is one experience not to be missed. Walking along the cobbled streets, dating back to the Zhou Dynasty (827-728BC), will give you a real flavour of what life may have been like centuries ago.





Did you know?

There are still almost 40 million people living in caves all over China, many of them in the Shanxi Province.

Ancient Relics

One of the standout sights are the Yungang Caves. This series of grottoes carved from the sandstone cliffs in the 5th century, are filled with intricate Buddhist imagery and statues. Close by is the 1,400-year-old, gravity defying Hanging Monastery, which seems to float 50 metres up the cliff face. Amazingly you can climb up to the temple which will test anyone's fear of heights to the limit.

Noodle heaven

The noodle is king in Shanxi. There are almost 1,000 types of noodle and you'll get a chance to try a fair few of them. The ancient city of Datong in particular is famous for its knife cut noodles. But as well as noodles there are lots of delicious dishes including well flavoured broths, flatbreads, sweet potatoes, spicy aubergine stews and several pork combinations. You certainly won't go hungry in Shanxi. Plus, being only an hour from Mongolia, there are lots of food influences using lamb as the main ingredient.



The Great Wall

Travelling around the north of the province, you will pass by ancient sections of the Great Wall. Many of these sections are even older than the parts you can see around Beijing. Interestingly, they are made of mud instead of brick and were built to defend the region from marauding hordes from Mongolia and beyond.



TOP ANCIENT SIGHTS



The walled town of Pingyao



5th century Yungang Grottoes



1,400-year-old Hanging Monastery



11th century Wooden Pagoda

TAKE ME THERE

ANCIENT CHINA

A fascinating tour of the Shanxi Province to see China's ancient sights and civilisations.

PRICES FROM **\$5,060^{PP}** FOR **18 DAYS**

TWIN SHARE

Fully inclusive departing Syd, Mel, Bne, Adl*, Per & Cns*.

To book call **1300 798 118**

LET US GUIDE YOU

Chimi, Bhutan

As Bhutan's first female tour guide, and having met with the current king at a round table of tour guides, Chimi has extensive experience guiding Wendy Wu passengers. Here she shares with us her insider tips, must-sees and favourite Bhutanese food.



Thimphu



Punakha

What do you enjoy the most about being a National Escort?

I enjoy meeting people from different countries and learning all about your cultures. I love my job too and I love being an ambassador for Bhutan and sharing our culture, traditions, religion and legends with customers.

Where do you like visiting the most on tour?

Punakha, it has so much history and is the location of the Punakha Dzong, where all of Bhutan's kings have been crowned. It is my favourite Dzong in all of Bhutan (and there are many to choose from) because of its history and inside it is the most beautiful, with pillars covered in gold, decoratively painted walls.

What's your favourite local dish?

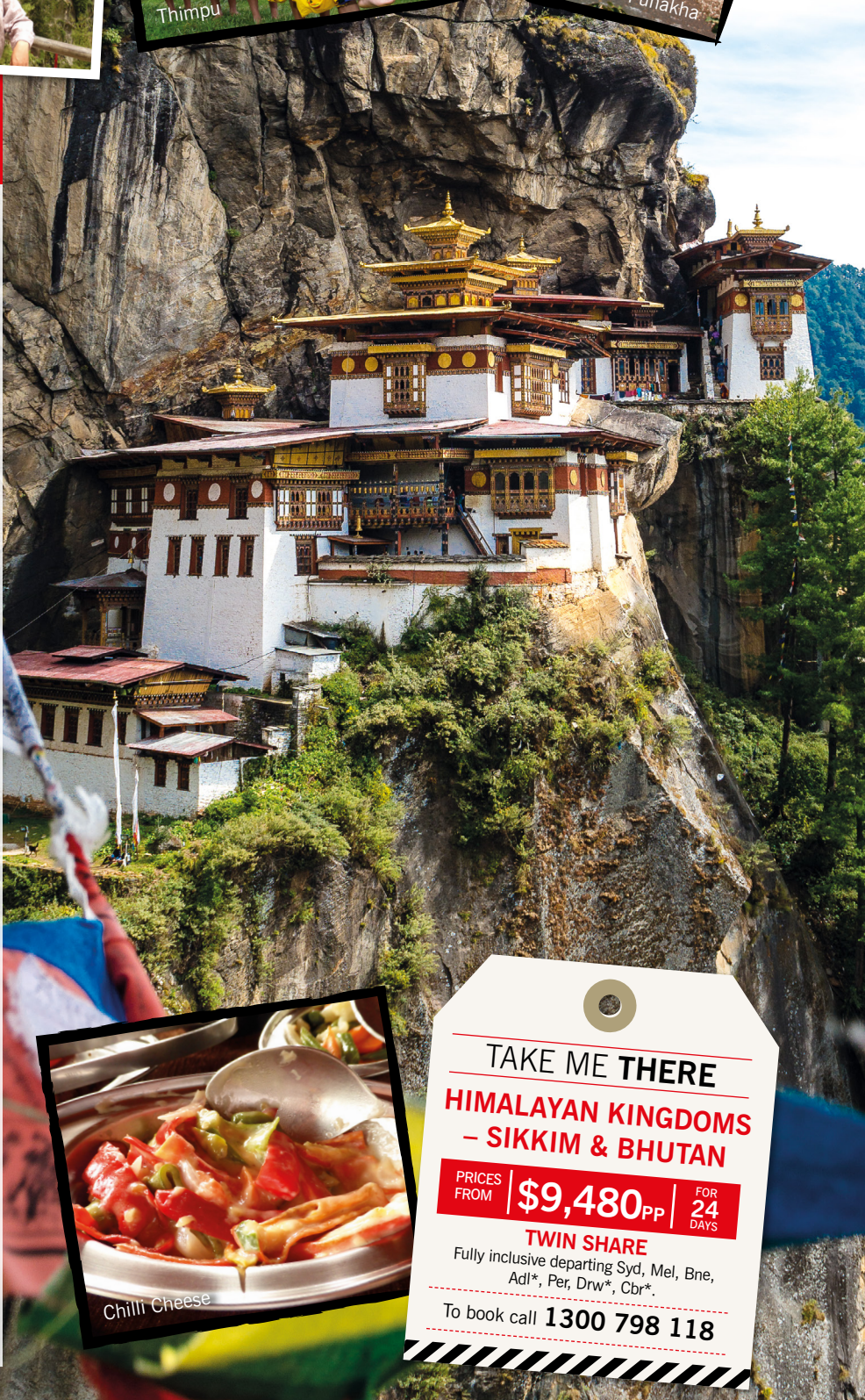
Chilli with cheese, locally known as emadadshi, though I think this may be too hot for foreigners, but it is always worth a try.

What tips would you give to anyone who is thinking about visiting Bhutan?

Bring cash, and try to bring large denominations as smaller denominations get a worse rate of exchange. Travel with an open mind and free spirit. Many aspects of Bhutanese life and culture are different to the western world, an open mind means you are more likely to enjoy your holiday.

Do you have any local tips?

I definitely like to take customers to a traditional farmhouse. Here you can have a hot stone bath, see how the farmers live and work, and try traditional Bhutanese food including my favourite chilli cheese. It is here that you will get to see, touch, feel and taste real Bhutanese life. It's a very authentic, local experience. I also like taking customers to the post office in Thimphu, here you can get your photo taken, and printed onto a set of stamps, real stamps, that you can use to send your postcards home.



Chilli Cheese

TAKE ME THERE

**HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS
- SIKKIM & BHUTAN**

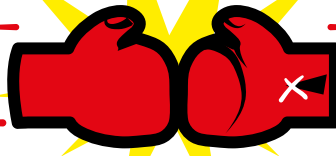
PRICES FROM **\$9,480^{PP}** FOR **24 DAYS**

TWIN SHARE
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HEAD TO HEAD

RAJASTHAN



KERALA

TWO OF INDIA'S MOST ENTICING STATES COMPETE
IN A CLASH OF COLOURFUL CULTURE...



CULTURE

The 'Land of Kings', a state born out of conflict, Rajasthan was once 22 feudal states, a place where many a Raj (king) went to war and then built a gorgeous architectural masterpiece to establish their new kingdom. That's why Rajasthan has such a wealth of spectacular palaces and forts. It has also remained thoroughly traditional, a mixture of different peoples and cultures - the locals still wear traditional dress - beautifully coloured saris and turbans. This is unquestionably India's most exotic state.

ATTRACTIONS

India's largest state, Rajasthan packs a punch in the 'things to do and see' stakes; from the UNESCO World Heritage-listed forts that watch over their surrounding towns and cities from their hilltop perches; to the vast stretches of starkly beautiful desert that you can survey from atop a camel; to the majestic tigers that stalk Ranthambore National Park.

FOOD

Rajasthan's culinary heritage was dictated by the aridity of its landscapes. Many dishes are made with milk rather than water, contain lots of ghee and plenty of sugar and spices - the curries here can be dangerously hot! Due to the high population of Marawaris in the state, vegetarian food is also prominent, featuring plenty of lentils and grains, though meat dishes, particularly mutton and chicken are common. The local people have also developed a penchant for sugary treats - sweets are served throughout a meal, not just after!

SHOPPING

The markets and bazaars of Rajasthan are a riot of colour. The state is particularly well-known for its gem stones and jewellery, and there is always a full rainbow of colourful fabrics available on stalls stocking textiles. This is also a great place to pick up traditional crafts - in fact many items we take for granted today are still made by hand here, from leather bags to jewellery. Jaipur is a particularly good place for shopping - just head into the maze of stalls and spend to your heart's content.



CULTURE

Kerala makes a strong claim to being 'God's own country', it's bright, lush vegetation, peaceful backwaters and paradisiacal beaches providing a strong argument. At the very southern tip of India and a coastal state, Kerala's culture is an amalgamation of many ethnicities and religions - its classical culture best expressed in its unique and colourful performing arts, the best known of which is kathakali, a riotous dance-drama. A cosmopolitan and laidback place, Kerala is India's most enchanting state.



ATTRACTIONS

Kerala is more about visceral experiences than attractions - here, the pace slows down, leaving you time to relax on warm sands of beautiful beaches, listen to the sounds of nature as you cruise the unique backwaters, and feel the aches melt away with an Ayurveda treatment. Kerala's cities offer a fascinating day of exploration, with elements drawn from the diversity of the region - colonial architecture, Chinese fishing nets and colourful temples to name a few.

FOOD

Exotic is the perfect word to describe Kerala's cuisine. With such an abundance of pungent spices that it is nicknamed the 'land of spices', Kerala's food is full of tropical flavour. Coconut appears in various forms in most dishes, alongside the deep flavour of tamarind whilst, unsurprisingly for its coastal location, fish features very heavily in many traditional dishes. For a truly authentic dining experience, make sure you dine off banana leaves rather than ceramics.

SHOPPING

Kerala once sent many spices to Europe, but trust us when we say make any excuse to go there and buy them for yourself! Tea and coffee are also both excellent purchases, both grown in Kerala's fertile highlands. You'll also find a wealth of wonderful handicrafts, made by skilled local artisans that will bring a taste of Kerala's exoticism to your living room back home - particularly if you choose something made out of coconut.



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Conclusion

It's impossible to choose between these two captivating states. Each offers a unique and colourful culture that you can really sink your teeth into. However, both share the ambience of their wider region - northern India being busy and bustling, and southern India relaxed and easy going. Whilst we would suggest you do both, if you do have to choose, base it on the vibe that you prefer.

TAKE ME THERE

KERALA & SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS

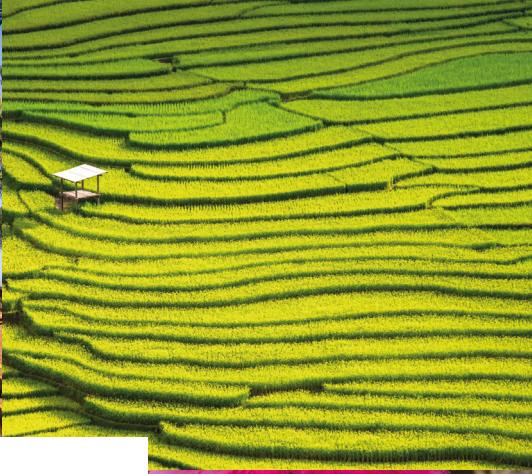
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FALL FOR VIETNAM

Vietnam has all the things needed to make one fantastic travel destination. Turning its back on a turbulent past, it is a country very much on the up, attracting traveller after traveller with a combination of unique heritage, enchanting natural scenery and a seriously delicious cuisine.

What more could you ask for?



CULTURE

Vietnam's culture is a bit of a mishmash of influences, but all the more fascinating for it. Under the influence of China for a millennium and part of French Indochina for 70 years, this is a country where about half of the population earn their living from agriculture. As you can imagine, the Vietnamese people's way of life, beliefs and values are very different from our own – ancestor veneration is a part of everyday life and plenty of people still wear traditional dress. To get a taste of the country through the ages try Hanoi – a compelling mix of traditional, crumbling French grandeur and the contemporary, whilst Saigon is the powerhouse city driving the country forward with a big nod to its colonial past.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Vietnam's landscapes are wonderfully diverse, stretching from the mountains and rice terraces of the northern highlands,

to the magnificence of Halong Bay's karst towers, to the rich, lush greenery of the Mekong Delta. One of the most wonderful things about all this beauty is how easy it is to access – an overnight train from Hanoi up to the spectacular views of Sapa, a couple of hours by road from Saigon into the heart of the Mekong Delta. In Vietnam you are never far from some exotic landscape or another.

FOOD

Vietnam's cuisine is not only one of the world's healthiest, but also one of the most delicious! Full of distinctive flavours, created by perfectly balancing salty, sweet, sour and hot, it is the use of plentiful fresh ingredients, herbs and spices that make it so good. Whether you are eating in a high end restaurant, or find a mouth-watering snack on one of the plentiful street stalls, your food will be prepared and cooked to order – be it summer rolls, pho or a banh mi. Speaking of, the banh mi perfectly encapsulates Vietnam's

colonial past in several tasty mouthfuls – a French-style baguette filled with delights such as pork belly, Vietnamese sausage, pate, egg or tofu with pickled carrots, coriander and cucumber.

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THE BEST OF THE BLOG: Wendy Wu Tours Staff Hotlist for 2017

We love to share interesting stories and news on our blog and love talking all things travel. This month we asked the staff at Wendy Wu Tours where they want to travel to in 2017. Our passports are ready. Is yours?

Visit our blog: wendywutours.com.au/blog



CHINA-AUSTRALIA YEAR OF TOURISM 2017

The team at Wendy Wu Tours recently attended the Opening Ceremony for the China-Australia Year of Tourism at the Sydney Opera House. Officials from the Australian and Chinese governments attended and we were taken on a musical journey to celebrate China's rich culture and tradition.



TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL

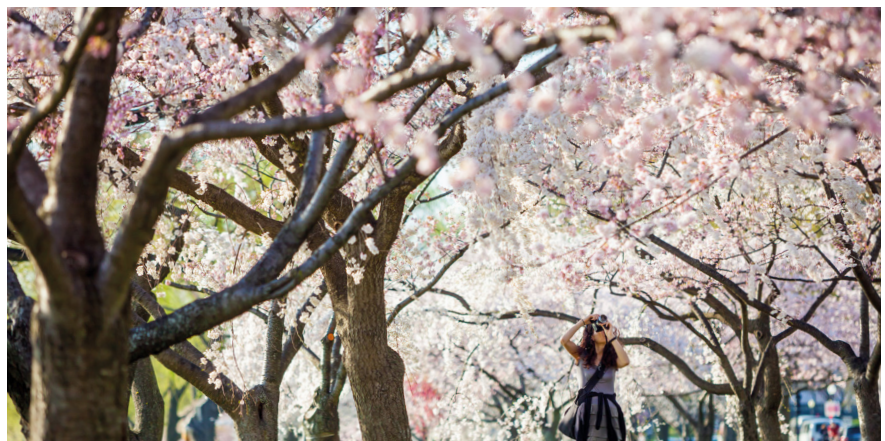
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Demand has been at an all-time high for travel to Japan for 2017's cherry blossom season in March and April. We are almost booked out! If this is something you want to experience in 2018, we suggest booking now to avoid disappointment!

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