

# Indochina with Thailand

PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos & Thailand



Wendy Wu Tours

Experience a Different World

# Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours

Indochina continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own. A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sites and smells of a colourful market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in Indochina requires patience with delays and different standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken in some areas, even by hotel and restaurant staff, so your National Escort or Local Guides will be indispensable during your trip.

Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure and who accept that things can and do go wrong, are those who find their experience most rewarding.

The countries in this region are developing quickly but still lack international standards of civil infrastructure and therefore tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. Concepts of personal responsibility are different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities will not uphold the same safety standards as at home.

Both Asian and Western-style toilets can be very basic, so we recommend you don't turn down the opportunity to go to a nice toilet when they are available; also be prepared that not all public toilets offer Western facilities.

**This pre departure booklet is aimed to provide you with practical advice and cultural information to help you prepare for your holiday.** We are aware that this can seem like a lot of reading material but ask that each of you take the time to familiarise yourself with this information prior to departure.

## TOUR GRADING

### Is this the tour for you?

**Please give us honest and complete information about your health and ability to complete your itinerary.**

Read the tour grading description in our brochure.

Read your [Tour Dossier](#) to find out what the harder aspects and challenges of your tour will be.

Refer to the YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES section to see if you are required to complete a [Medical Information Form](#). If yes, this must be submitted to us before we can issue your final documents.

**Consider that your ability to complete all group activities independently and without assistance will affect not only your holiday, but also the experience of your fellow passengers.**

Depending on the tour you choose, you must be able to:

- Walk, sometimes for long distances, over uneven and unsealed surfaces without assistance.
- Endure a sometimes hectic daily pace of touring, with minimal breaks.
- Climb uneven stairs, sometimes without handrails.
- Step on and off coaches, sometimes onto uneven ground, without assistance.
- Dis/embark between moving pontoons, docks and boats, sometimes without either handrails or assistance.

The [Tour Dossier](#) provides a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in each day's sightseeing for your itinerary. If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation for our more adventurous tours; they will be explained here. We expect all group passengers to read the [Tour Dossier](#) to confirm the itinerary is suitable for your interests and that you are physically able to undertake the demands of the tour.

Occasionally traffic, parking restrictions and construction will mean you will have to walk extra distances from the bus to sites/train stations/airports. In unusual circumstances, this could involve carrying your own luggage.

Sightseeing in Indochina can involve walking for a few kilometres in high temperatures and humidity, over uneven ground or uphill/up steps. All passengers must be able to walk unaided. Whether you are exploring Saigon's bustling downtown in Vietnam, or exploring the hushed Angkor temple ruins in Cambodia; you will need to pay attention to your surroundings. Streets and pavements are uneven, roads are busy and the traffic follows very different rules! Of course, our National Escorts/Local Guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

**It is your responsibility to provide Wendy Wu Tours with correct information.** This applies to all details that you have given to us by phone, or written on the [Booking Form](#), [Visa Application Form](#) and [Medical Information Form](#).

Wendy Wu Tours depends on the details you have provided on your [Booking Form](#) for flight and ground arrangements. There is an incredible amount of red tape in Indochina, especially in Vietnam and Laos so it is crucial that these details are correct 'to the letter'.

**Please make sure your Booking Form is correct:**

Each passenger must fill in their relevant section of the [Booking Form](#), and each provide Next of Kin details.

Your name must be written LEGIBLY and EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS IN YOUR PASSPORT, INCLUDING FIRST, MIDDLE AND LAST NAMES. E.g. if your flight tickets need to be reissued because your writing is unclear, or you have entered a different (commonly used) name then you, the 'passenger', will incur any cost of reissuing tickets.

One passenger per form may sign on behalf of their spouse/companion to legally state that they both agree with all booking conditions therein.

**Do you need to submit a Medical Information Form?**

We send every single passenger a link to download the Medical Information Form on their deposit letter, regardless of their age, to ensure everyone considers any fitness issues well in advance of booking their holiday. However, you are only required to complete and submit this form if you:

- Have a pre-existing medical condition that affects your fitness to travel, or
- Have a medical dietary condition (e.g. food or MSG allergies, coeliac disease), or
- Will be carrying medications which require refrigeration (eg. insulin)
- A history of DVT, or
- Have a clinical mental illness, or
- Have Sleep Apnoea and require use of CPAP or BiPAP machine.

Please take care to complete all sections, which apply to you. Certain conditions require an additional waiver to be signed. Should any ailments either exist at the time of booking, or arise before your departure, you must inform Wendy Wu Tours of these by completing a [Medical Information Form](#).

**Please make sure your visa application form is correct:**

Your name must be written LEGIBLY and EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS IN YOUR PASSPORT, INCLUDING FIRST, MIDDLE AND LAST NAMES. For example, if the Embassy returns your application to our office then you, the ‘passenger’, will incur any urgent visa processing fees. You must also ensure that the photograph supplied is **recent (taken within the last 6 months)** and meets the size criteria of a standard passport photo. Passports must have a minimum of 6 months validity left, from the date of your arrival back into Australia. If you notice any discrepancies or have any queries please phone our office (Visa Dept) and we will be happy to assist.

## ELECTRICITY

There is an electricity supply of 220 Volts throughout Indochina, in the cities and most towns. 240-Volt appliances will work safely with this supply. However, there is no universal power point; they vary not just from one country to the next but from one hotel to another. You can purchase suitable adaptors from Duty Free, department, hardware and travel accessory stores.

**In Vietnam**, they generally use the vertical two-pin (Japan) plug or the round two-pin (Europe) plug.

**In Cambodia**, they generally use the round two-pin (Europe) plug, or the flat three-pin (U.K.) plug.

**In Laos**, they generally use the vertical two-pin (Japan) plug.

**In Thailand**, they generally use the vertical two-pin (Japan) plug or the round two-pin (Europe) plug.

**Vertical two-pin plug (Japan)**



**Round two-pin plug (Europe)**



**Flat three-pin plug (UK)**



### IN REMOTE AREAS

In some areas there is a lesser electricity supply of 110 Volts, which is available only a few hours each day from the towns’ supply, or from a diesel generator. Whenever there is limited electricity supply, there may be limited hot water supply and therefore limited showers. Remote and village areas also experience power surges or outages, both of which can make re-charging electrical appliances very difficult. We advise you to recharge in major cities and to bring a supply of batteries (bought from home) with you to allow for days when you cannot recharge.

## MONEY

Here is a reference table of approximate exchange rates (as at June 2014):

	Vietnam Dong	Lao Kip	Cambodian Riel	Thai BAHT
AU \$1	19,915	7,563	3,800	30.42
NZ \$1	18,389	6,985	3,509	28.09
US \$1	21,205	8,054	4,047	32.39
ZAR1	1,978	751	377	3

*We recommend that you have access to more than one source of money while travelling – bringing some cash, a credit card and an ATM debit card will give you the most security and flexibility.*

Travellers’ Cheques can still be used, however we find that our passengers find other sources of money more convenient due to ATMs being so widespread and currency conversion

**Counterfeit cash** is a problem in this region so shop owners and clerks at banks or exchange desks are very cautious and can refuse to accept notes in bad condition. When purchasing cash prior to departure it is a good idea to stand at the desk to count and check the condition of each note. Don’t accept any notes which are torn, very faded, a different shade, have ink stamps or any writing on them. If you accept the notes and sign the exchange receipt, then notice a problem later, you will not be able to exchange them.

**Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)** are becoming more common and reliable throughout Vietnam and Cambodia, however are more scarce in Laos. Do not rely upon ATMs as your only source of money and keep in mind that they do have their quirks.

ATMs in Indochina do not always display banking system (e.g. Cirrus or Plus) signs, they often have different minimum and maximum withdrawal amounts, may not display English and occasionally run out of cash. If in doubt, simply ask your National Escort, Local Guide or hotel Reception staff for a recommended machine.

**Please note:** when shopping at market places in Indochina, it is essential that you carry smaller banknote denominations as shop owners are more hesitant to accept the larger denominations due to counterfeit concerns.

### IN VIETNAM

The local currency is the Dong and is written as “đ” or “VNĐ” (Viet Nam Dong). It is available in notes of 200đ up to 500,000đ although the lesser notes are rarely seen and larger value notes are being converted to plastic. Shopkeepers will sometimes quote a price in USD but it is better to ask for price in VNĐ, as the conversion rate is better, if you are exchanging from Australian or New Zealand currency.

We recommend that you take mainly cash in AUD/NZD and local currency. Most currencies can be exchanged at hotels and banks, but you will need to check with your Local Guide/National Escort before travelling to smaller towns. USD can be exchanged everywhere so if you have any left over from another trip, you can bring this also. When exchanging, the largest note usually given is 100,000đ (only AUD5.00, NZD5.44 and ZAR R50) so you will have a huge wad of notes. Please only carry what you will need each day to avoid unwanted attention.

It is essential to take a **credit card** in case of an emergency. Most of the department stores in Hanoi and Saigon, and most hotels in Vietnam accept American Express, Visa and MasterCard. It is also highly

recommended that each passenger takes photocopies of their credit cards prior to departure and that the copies are kept in various sections of your luggage – i.e not where the original documents are kept!

### IN CAMBODIA

The local currency is the riel, and is written as ‘r’ or ‘KHR’ – however the economy runs on USD. Usually you will be given riel as change for amounts under USD1 and eventually you may be able to buy something small with the riel you’ve collected. You will need to have a supply of USD notes of \$20 value or less, as the locals often don’t accept notes above that.

We recommend you take cash in USD. There are only a few locations in Cambodia (i.e. hotels) where you can exchange AUD and NZD currency into USD; it is easier and at a better conversion rate if you do this prior to departure.

It is essential to take a credit card in case of an emergency. Most hotels accept American Express, Visa and MasterCard. There are several **ATMs** in the major towns and they have become both more common and reliable. However, as with most things ATMs can have their quirks so you should not rely on this as your only source of money.

### IN LAOS

The local currency is the **kip**, and is written as “k” or “LAK”, however the economy runs on USD and Thai Baht. It is available in notes of 1,000k up to 20,000k. Usually you will be given kip as change for amounts under US\$1 and eventually you may be able to buy something small with the Kip you’ve collected. It is a good idea to carry notes of small denominations for ease when travelling.

We recommend you take cash in USD. Buying USD from a bank prior to departure will be easier and attract a better rate.

There are only a few ATMs in Laos so it is best not to rely on these as your sole source of money. It is essential to bring one credit card in case of an emergency, but please note that you should not rely on a credit card as a source of spending money.

### IN THAILAND

The Thai unit of currency is the Thai Baht, , and is written as “฿” or “THB” where 1 baht is divided into 100 satang. Notes are in denominations of 1,000 (brown), 500 (purple), 100 (red), 50 (blue), 20 (green) and 10 (brown) baht. Coins consist of 25 satang, 50 satang, 1 baht, 5 baht and 10 baht.

**Currency Exchange** Most major currencies can be cashed easily at hotels, tourist shops, all provincial banks, shopping centres and money changers. Rates of exchange at banks or authorised money changers are better than those at hotels and department stores. Any amount of foreign currency may be brought into the country. Visitors may take foreign currency out of Thailand, but no more than the amount stated in the customs declaration made on arrival. Travellers leaving Thailand may take out no more than 50,000 Baht per person in Thai currency.

**Credit Cards & ATMs** It is recommended that you take a credit card in case of an emergency. Most outlets take all major credit cards and ATM machines are readily available, where the exchange rate is automatic. Some carry a sizeable surcharge per withdrawal so check with your credit card company beforehand. Not all ATM machines take all kinds of cards; many will not take Visa or MasterCard, or will take one but not the other. Please ensure that you look for the credit card logos on the

ATM signs. ATM machines offer both Thai and English languages. It is advisable to inform your credit card company/bank that you intend to be in Thailand prior to your departure.

## SAFETY & SECURITY

You are recommended to maintain a high level of personal security. Although Indochina is considered to be safe for travellers, ensure you keep belongings on you at all times and that your suitcase/daypack has a lock on it, especially in crowded areas like marketplaces and train stations.

**Do not leave any valuables unattended in your hotel room.** We advise you to lock away any cash, credit cards, airline tickets, passports, etc. in the safe. Not all hotels will have in-room safes so, if this is not possible, you must either carry these things with you, or put them in the hotel safe. Wearing a money-belt under your clothing is strongly recommended. It is also recommended that you do not bring valuable jewellery, etc. with you to Indochina.

We suggest each passenger makes two photocopies of valuable documents, such as; passports, tickets and visas. We recommend you keep one copy with you in a separate place to the original and leave another copy with family or friends at home.

Likewise while travelling each day, do not leave any valuables unattended on the coach. It is your own responsibility to ensure that you carry your money and valuables on you at all times.

**LANDMINES** – Some remote areas of Cambodia and Northern Laos have not been cleared of Unexploded Ordnance (U.X.O.). All areas within our group itineraries are cleared and considered very safe.

**If you are travelling independently through remote areas**, keep to marked paths and roads regularly used by the locals.

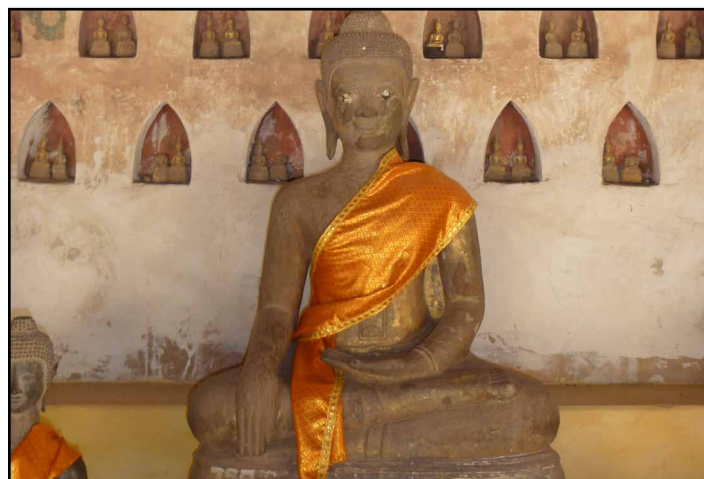
## LUGGAGE

All passengers are limited to two (2) items of luggage each:

**One (1)** suitcase or backpack, with a maximum weight of 20kg. Your main luggage must have a lock on it.

**One (1)** piece of hand luggage, with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is advisable that your hand luggage consist of a ‘daypack’ – a small bag which you can access during the day and carry items like your camera, drinking water, toilet paper, hat, etc.

Please refer to your [Suggested Packing List](#) for more information.



## INSURANCE

It is a condition of travel that all customers have adequate travel insurance for the duration of their travel arrangements.

If you wish to take out an insurance policy through Wendy Wu Tours please contact our office for a quote. Please ensure you have the appropriate cover for your holiday; overseas medical costs are expensive and Medicare or private health insurance will not cover you outside of your home country. Please inform our office the name of your travel insurance company, your policy number and the insurance company's international emergency assistance phone number.

**If you are taking out travel insurance with your credit card company**, you need to investigate the policy's inclusions and conditions fully. You should receive a policy number, an international access phone number to contact them in an emergency and a full copy of conditions.

**You are obliged to inform your insurance company of all pre-existing conditions.**

All travel insurance providers require **you** to contact them ASAP in the unlikely event that you need hospitalisation, medical treatment, or to evacuate (change travel plans for medical reasons), to inform them of your situation. They will then decide the best course of action in regards to further treatment and/or repatriation and make appropriate booking arrangements. Our Ground Partner in Indochina and Thailand will be able to assist you in contacting your travel insurance company.

**You must check your policy** for exact inclusions and procedures.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

### IN VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

These countries use the GSM mobile network – the same as Australia and New Zealand – and both have active roaming agreements with most of the service providers. You will find great coverage in both countries; however, SMS and call rates can be expensive. Please check with your mobile supplier for all associated costs and to activate global roaming services prior to departure.

### IN LAOS

Mobile phone coverage is available most of the time in the bigger towns, however is not reliable in mountain and regional areas.

### IN THAILAND

Mobile phones are very popular in Thailand and should have good coverage as long as you have activated Global Roaming.

Please ensure you are aware of all associated costs and have activated your international roaming before departure.

## TRANSPORT

### OVERNIGHT TRAINS

All train travel will be on first class 'soft sleeper' trains, however are not of the same standard as what you may be used to. Each compartment is shared by four people, is air-conditioned, has lockable doors and four cushioned beds which are fixed in place. There is a folding table and room for passengers to sit on the lower berths. A small pillow, clean sheets and a quilt are provided. Hot drinking water is available from a boiler at one end of the carriage. Meals on board will be provided in a packed box.

Please note, the Victoria carriage available between Hanoi and Sapa is of a different standard and is only available for independent travel.

Your bags will be stored in your compartment – there is space under the lower berths and above the door. Because space is limited, your main luggage will be difficult to access, so we advise packing an overnight bag for the journey – see Pack for the train. There is usually a Western-style toilet at one end of the carriage and a squat toilet at the other end.

Your National Escort/Local Guide will try to organise the whole group to sleep in the same carriage, but in busy periods of travel this may not be possible. Each group will receive tickets with sequential berth numbers but, depending on the number of people in your group, you may be sharing with people from another tour group or company, or with local passengers.

In the past we have had requests for 'exclusive use of a compartment' so that a single passenger or a couple do not need to share with anyone else. As there are no two-berth or single-berth compartments available, the only way we can arrange this is to purchase the empty berths and thus give you a private compartment. Relevant costs are available on application and subject to availability.

Overnight trains in Thailand differ to those in Indochina. The berths are 'open plan' along the coach wall either side of the central aisle. Curtains are provided for privacy.

**Keeping valuables safe on the train:** Carry all valuables with you at all times. A money-belt is recommended. One passenger should remain in the compartment at all times to watch all belongings. Your main luggage must have a lock on it or attendants may refuse to store it in the luggage carriage.

**Pack for the train:** We recommend you bring a small overnight bag to carry everything you may need overnight and the next morning. Consider including a face towel, all toiletries and all medication you require until midday the next day, comfortable clothing to sleep in and toilet paper, as the train supply tends to run out. You can also take some bottled water, snacks, etc. on board.

### BOATS

Your tour may include taking a ride in an old wooden boat in the Mekong, in modern speedboats between Phnom Penh and Chau Doc or on board a junk boat in Halong Bay. To take part in any boat ride, you need to be of average mobility to be able to climb on and off these boats and disembark onto makeshift docks without handrails, or onto muddy riverbanks.

**Halong Bay** – The Halong Bay Authorities are taking extra precautions to ensure the safety of all passengers cruising around Halong Bay. 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 where you will spend the evening in a hotel. 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 are any itinerary changes.

**At Halong Bay and Nha Trang in Vietnam**, the boats often need to moor behind each other. Therefore, all passengers must be able to climb over railings and between boats, sometimes without assistance.

**In Thailand** you will undertake several trips in various types of boats. These may not always have canopies (so as not to obstruct the view) so make sure you have sunscreen, a wide brimmed hat and insect repellent on hand.

## TRAVEL HEALTH

*The staff of Wendy Wu Tours across the world are obviously not medically qualified. Therefore they are neither able, nor allowed to give any medical advice, recommendations or administer medications.*

*This section is for Australian passengers only. All other passengers should check with their country's specific travel health advice. A health certificate is not required for entry into these countries.*

### Do you need to visit a Doctor before travelling?

Yes, anyone travelling to a developing country in Asia should consult a Doctor beforehand. The Australian government's Smartraveller scheme advises people to visit either their Doctor or a travel vaccination centre, such as The Travel Doctor (T.M.V.C) to receive a health check and vaccination advice. For most people, this should be 8 weeks before your holiday to allow time for any necessary vaccinations, etc. Remember to take your **Tour Dossier** with you to your appointment. As stated in our booking conditions, Wendy Wu Tours requires all clients to familiarise themselves with any health requirements specific to the countries being visited. All clients should visit their Doctor for these aforementioned purposes, and/or to confirm that they are physically able to undertake the day-to-day requirements of the tour.

**Medical Information Form** – please refer to the YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES section.

### DRINKING WATER

It is not safe to drink the tap water, nor take ice in your drinks. There will usually be a complimentary bottle of water every day or a kettle or flasks of boiled water in your hotel room, on your overnight junk boat and on board trains. Boiled water is suitable for drinking and cleaning teeth. Safe, bottled drinking water is readily available for sale everywhere – from small shops, supermarkets, restaurants and hotels. Always ensure that the seal is unbroken. Water is available to purchase on the coaches across all four countries for a small local fee

### PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT

Take all pharmaceutical products that you may require on your tour; do not rely on being able to purchase these during your holiday. You will see pharmacies all over Indochina but they stock local traditional medicine and many unregulated brands of Western medicine. You are also very unlikely to find anyone who can speak English, nor any products with English writing.

Consider taking a 'personal medical kit' containing any medication or medical equipment you may need during your time in Indochina. Suggestions include:

All prescribed medication (with a prescription, or cover note for any medical equipment you will carry, from your Doctor).

Headache tablets

Anti-diarrhoeal tablets

Cold and flu tablets

Travel sickness tablets

Lozenges

Insect repellent and sunscreen

Anti-bacterial hand wipes and/or gel

Spare pair of glasses/contact lenses.

## CUSTOMS & DUTY FREE

### IN VIETNAM

You can bring in up to 1.5L of alcohol, 400 cigarettes/tobacco and unlimited amounts of foreign currency (declare this on your customs form). Vietnam's officials remain sensitive to what they call 'culturally damaging material' that portray the nation or government negatively; they forbid things like films or books which are officially banned (some people have had guidebooks taken!) and pornography.

### IN CAMBODIA

You can enter Cambodia with one opened bottle of alcohol, 200 cigarettes or the equivalent of tobacco, and a reasonable amount of perfume of personal use. Currency needs to be declared upon arrival on your customs form. Note that cigarettes/tobacco and alcohol are cheaper for sale within Cambodia than at duty free. Exporting any cultural, archaeological or Angkor period sculpture is illegal without a licensed permit. Heavy penalties apply and these items will be confiscated. If you buy a souvenir that could be mistaken for a genuine antique, get an official receipt from the shop.

### IN LAOS

You can bring in up to 1L of alcohol, 500 cigarettes, 1 bottle perfume/ cologne and unlimited amounts of foreign currency (you will need to declare this on the customs form). It is prohibited to import any amount of local currency (Laotian Kip or LAK). Failure to comply may result in penalties in accordance with the laws of Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Exporting antiques such as old Buddha images or bronze drums is illegal. If you buy a souvenir that could be mistaken for a genuine antique, get an official receipt from the shop.

### IN THAILAND

A reasonable amount of clothing and toiletries are allowed into Thailand Duty Free. Up to 200 cigarettes and 1L of wine/spirits can be brought into the country. If you purchase any antiques or objects of art, you must obtain an export licence through the Department of Fine Arts.

## TIPPING

Tipping is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry today and the Indochina and Thailand region is no exception. We strive to establish trust with our guides, who rely on and expect tips from passengers. If the guides are keen to work with our passengers regularly, they become familiar with our itineraries as well as the Wendy Wu Tours' philosophy and expectations we have of their work.

A nominated tipping amount is included in all group tour pricing; however it is not paid to Wendy Wu Tours in your final payment. This is so that it can be given directly to your National Escort/Local Guide in Indochina. They will distribute the tips among your main service providers – guides and drivers – on your behalf.

Hotel porters are not covered in this amount. If you require their assistance, tipping is at your discretion.

The tipping amounts will be outlined in your final itinerary.

## ADDITIONAL TIPPING

For independent passengers, or group passengers with pre/post tour arrangements, you should allow **USD7-10 per person per day** for guides and drivers.

## TRAVEL WITH CONSIDERATION

At Wendy Wu Tours we believe responsible travel is not about how much you give, rather it is about how much you consider. Some of our group tours include visits to local schools, villages or homes. We urge you to use this opportunity to give something back to the country you are visiting by learning a little and behaving with respect and consideration.

### TAKING PHOTOS

Once again, we encourage you to think about how you would like to be treated by camera wielding tourists – always check that it is ok before taking a photograph of a local person. Simply indicate to your camera to ask and never take the photograph if someone gestures or says that they do not want you to.

Carry a small notepad with you so that you can write down the contact details of people who you have promised to send a copy of the photo to – and keep your promise! Remember that you are an ambassador of your country and your interaction with this person shapes their attitude towards the world and tourists that come after you.

Remember to take consideration when touring around religious, government or military sites, as they may have regulations prohibiting photography.

### DRESS APPROPRIATELY

The locals in some parts of this region dress conservatively according to their culture.

When visiting temples, pagodas, royal palaces and Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Hanoi, both men and women should dress in non-revealing clothes. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads.

Religious sites throughout Indochina and Thailand may require visitors to remove their shoes to before entering. If you do not want to remove them, you will have to remain outside. Bring some shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Vietnam.** Ruou ran (snake wine), a Vietnamese specialty of rice wine with a pickled snake inside, is believed to cure any sickness.

**Cambodia.** The Tonle Sap River in Cambodia, is the only river in the world that reverses its flow annually.

**Laos.** In Laos, 80% of all work is in agriculture with its biggest export being coffee.

**Myanmar.** There is a widespread superstition in Myanmar about cutting hair. No one cuts their hair on a Monday, Friday or their Birthday!

**Thailand.** Thailand means 'Land of the Free', and is the only country in South East Asia to have never been colonised.

## READING LIST

**Brother Enemy** - Nayan Chanda

**Mekong** - Milton Osbourne

**The River's Tale (A Year on the Mekong)** - Edward A. Gargan

**Highways to a War** - Christopher Koch

**A Dragon Apparent** - Norman Lewis

**Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma** - Amitav Ghosh

### VIETNAM

**Insight Guide Vietnam (2005 edition)** - West & Rutherford

**The Quiet American** - Graham Greene

**Vietnam: A History** - Stanley Karnow

**Lonely Planet World Food Vietnam** - Richard Sterling

**When Heaven and Earth Changed Places** - Le Ly Hayslip

**Three Moons in Vietnam** - Maria Coffey

**A Bright, Shining Lie** - Neil Sheehan

**Shadows and Wind** - Robert Templer

**The Girl in the Picture** - Denise Chong

**Catfish and Mandala** - Andrew X. Pham

**The Tunnels of Cu Chi** - Tom Mangold and John Penycate

**Anatomy of a War** - Gabriel Kolko

**Hanoi Adieu** - Mandaley Perkins

**Down Highway One** - Susan Downie

**Novel Without A Name** - Duong Thu Huong

**Vietnam: The Australian Experience** - J. Rowe

### CAMBODIA

**Angkor (Odyssey Guide, 5th edition)** - Rooney & Danford

**Insight Guide Laos & Cambodia (2003 edition)** - Clare Griffiths

**First They Killed My Father** - Loung Ung

**Red Lights and Green Lizards** - Liz Anderson

**Cambodia Now: Life in the Wake of War** - Karen J. Coates

**A History of Cambodia** - David Chandler

**River of Time** - Jon Swain

**Brother Number One** - David Chandler

### LAOS

**Insight Compact Guide Laos** - Simon Robson

**A History of Laos** - Martin Stuart Fox

**Stalking the Elephant Kings** - Christopher Kremmer

**Monks and Motorcycles** - Franklin E. Huffman

**Ant Egg Soup: Adventures of a Food Tourist in Laos** - Natacha Du Pont De Bie

**Shadow War: The C.I.A's Secret War in Laos** - Kenneth Conboy

**Voices from the Plain of Jars** - Fred Branfman

**Short History of Laos: The Land In Between** - Grant Evans



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Experience a Different World™

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