



Laos & Cambodia Unveiled Tour Dossier

Classic Tour | 17 Days | Moderate

Vientiane – Vang Vieng – Luang Prabang – Siem Reap – Battambang – Phnom Penh

Embark on an epic adventure through the rich heritage of Laos to Cambodia where you can confront a tragic past in Phnom Penh and find your inner explorer amongst the magnificent temples of Angkor.

Tour Highlights:

Vientiane - Capital of Laos: a charming city filled with villas and boulevards

Vang Vieng - Idyllic natural scenery

Luang Prabang - Entry point into Laos & UNESCO World Heritage listed town which retains original character

Siem Reap - Gateway to the Angkor Wat temple complex

Battambang - A former French colonial riverside town

Phnom Penh - Capital of Cambodia surrounded by the Mekong; home to majestic palaces and pagoda's



Laos & Cambodia Unveiled 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)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders

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 are at your own expense.

Classic Tours

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Indochina on an excellent value group tour travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll 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.

Moderate

'Laos and Cambodia Unveiled' is a **Moderate** tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- You will be required to get on and off boats of varying sizes throughout the itinerary without assistance

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Country Profile: Laos and Cambodia

Laos - Laos has only recently been discovered as a fascinating tourist destination. This delightful jewel is steeped in historical treasures, glorious colonial architecture, lush green jungles and magnificent mountainous terrain. Discover the UNESCO World Heritage listed city of Luang Prabang and the spectacular multi-tiered Kuang Si Waterfalls. Journey by boat along the mighty Mekong River and be amazed by the stunning natural scenery and meet the beautiful, gentle people of Laos. Refreshingly, its long-established ways of life continue; to hurry is simply not the Lao way. This is a truly magical nation.

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

Itinerary Changes

1. It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.
2. The domestic airlines in this region have frequent schedule changes. For this reason, we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights only in the following section. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them.
3. Rice paper making is seasonal, when this is not available, you will still see the rice paper as well as visiting an orphanage school and a tailors' workshop.

4. The following itinerary changes have been made to the 2017 itinerary to improve the flow and pace of sightseeing:
- One night has been removed from Luang Prabang and has been replaced with an additional night in Vang Vieng.
 - To make the itinerary more enjoyable and comfortable, clients will now fly from Vang Vieng to Luang Prabang on Day 5 instead of drive.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 17 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 1 in Vientiane 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.

Important Information Regarding Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our Laos office **+856 (0) 71 254395** to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in Laos. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in Laos as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival time.

Laos & Cambodia Unveiled Itinerary

DAY 1: AUSTRALIA TO VIENTIANE

Fly with QANTAS Airways to Vientiane via Bangkok for a three-night stay. Your National Escort/Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Vientiane International Airport in the Arrivals Hall. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer to your hotel and check-in. In the event of flight delays or changes to arrival times, please see the details above as to what to do in this circumstance.

Destination Information

Vientiane - Vientiane, Laos' laid-back capital, mixes French colonial architecture with Buddhist temples such as the golden, 16th-century Pha That Luang, a national symbol. Along broad boulevards and tree-lined streets are notable shrines including Wat Si Saket, which features thousands of Buddha images, and Wat Si Muang, built on a Hindu shrine. Many bakeries, cafes and villas seem straight out of 19th-century Paris.

DAY 2: EXPLORE VIENTIANE

Nestled in a languid bend in the Mekong, Vientiane is a delightfully quaint city, more a friendlier backwater than the chaotic capital. Spend your day exploring Wat Si Saket, and Wat Phra Keo before visiting COPE – an organisation

helping survivors of land mines. Continue your sightseeing at Luang Stupa and the Patuxai Victory Monument, resembling Paris' Arc de Triomphe. Sightseeing today involves around 2 to 3 hours on foot.

Tonight enjoy dinner and a traditional performance showcasing Lao music and dance.

Destination Information

Wat Si Saket - Wat Si Saket is a Buddhist wat built in 1818 on the order of King Anouvong (Sethathirath V.) Wat Si Saket was built in the 'Siamese style' of Buddhist architecture, with a surrounding terrace and an ornate five-tiered roof, rather than in the Lao style. This may have kept it safe, since the armies of Siam that sacked Vientiane following Anouvong's rebellion in 1827 used the compound as their headquarters and lodging place. It may be the oldest temple still standing in Vientiane. The French colonial government restored Wat Si Saket in 1924 and again in 1930. Wat Si Saket features a cloister wall with more than 2,000 ceramic and silver Buddha images.

COPE - Cooperative Orthotic & Prosthetic Enterprise is a not for profit organisation sourcing walking aids and prosthetic limbs for survivors of land mines.

That Luang Stupa - A gold-covered large Buddhist stupa in the centre of Vientiane. Since its initial establishment, suggested to be in the 3rd century, the stupa has undergone several reconstructions as recently as the 1930s due to foreign invasions of the area.

Patuxai Victory Monument - Patuxai means Victory Gate or Gate of Triumph. and, is a war monument in the centre of Vientiane. It was built between 1957 and 1968. The Patuxai is dedicated to those who fought in the struggle for independence from France.

DAY 3: TRAVEL TO VANG VIENG

After breakfast, drive approximately 3 and half hours to Vang Vieng. On the way stop for a couple of hours at Nam Nguem Lake and enjoy a short cruise. This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel and soak up the atmosphere on the Song river banks.

Destination Information

Vang Vieng - A town in Vientiane Province about four hours bus ride north of the capital. The town lies on the Nam Song River. The most notable feature of the area is the karst hill landscape surrounding the town.

DAY 4: EXPLORE VANG VIENG

Today venture into the Tham Chang cave, sightseeing here involves approximately 1 hour on foot over uneven surfaces, and climbing steps to get up to the cave. Later enjoy an easy walking tour on the banks of the Nam Song River.

Destination Information

Tham Chang Cave - Tham Chang is a cave just to the southwest of Vang Vieng, Laos. The cave is reached by crossing a bridge that spans across the Nam Song River. You will need to then climb a long flight of steps to the entrance. A spring is located about 50m inside the cave. The cave was used as a bunker in the early 19th century during the Chinese-Ho invasion.

DAY 5: TRAVEL TO LUANG PRABANG

After breakfast, return to Vientiane for lunch and travel to the airport for your 45-minute flight to Luang Prabang. On arrival check in to your hotel and have dinner at a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Luang Prabang - The capital of Luang Prabang Province in northern Laos, lies in a valley at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers. It's known for its many Buddhist temples, including the gilded Wat Xieng Thong, dating to the 16th century, and Wat Mai, once the residence of the head of Laotian Buddhism.

DAY 6: PAK OU CAVES

This morning visit Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Visoun. Later board a boat to cruise the mighty Mekong up to the sacred caves of Pak Ou, known for the hundreds of miniature Buddha sculptures that reside within. Return to Luang Prabang visiting local villages to witness the daily life of the local people and their cottage industries.

Destination Information

Wat Visoun – Rebuilt in 1898 following a fire due to Black flag Haw raiders, restoration commenced to rebuild the once oldest wooden temple in Luang Prabang from more sturdy bricks and stucco. The highlight here is a 34.5 metre tall Lotus Stupa.

Wat Xieng Thong - A Buddhist temple (wat), located on the northern tip of the peninsula of Luang Prabang, Laos. Wat Xieng Thong is one of the most important of Lao monasteries and remains a significant monument to the spirit of religion, royalty and traditional art. There are over twenty structures on the grounds including a sim, shrines, pavilions and residences, in addition to its gardens of various flowers, ornamental shrubs and trees.

Pak Ou Caves – Near Pak Ou (mouth of the Ou river) the Tham Ting (lower cave) and the Tham Theung (upper cave) are caves overlooking the Mekong River, 25 km to the north of Luang Prabang, Laos. They are a group of two caves on the west side of the Mekong River, about two hours upstream from the centre of Luang Prabang. The caves are noted for their miniature Buddha sculptures. Hundreds of very small and mostly damaged wooden Buddhist figures are laid out over the wall shelves. They take many different positions, including meditation, teaching, peace, rain, and reclining (nirvana).

DAY 7: KUANG SI WATERFALLS

This morning visit the National Museum. Drive 1 hour to Kuang Si Waterfall, sightseeing at the waterfall will involve around 1 hour of light walking and on the way up to the waterfall you follow a bush walking track which has a slight upward gradient. It is possible to take a swim in the river near the falls and if you wish to do this, please remember to bring along your swimsuit and a towel. Changing rooms are available on site. Return to Luang Prabang stopping at Ock Pop Tok weaving Centre.

Destination Information

National Museum – Built in 1904 in the French colonial era, the original building was the Royal Palace but was later converted into a museum.

Kuang Si Waterfalls - A three tier waterfall about 29 kilometres south of Luang Prabang. The falls begin in shallow pools atop a steep hillside. These lead to the main fall with a 60 metres cascade. The falls are accessed via a trail to a left of the falls. Water collects in numerous turquoise blue pools as it flows downstream. The many cascades that result are typical of travertine waterfalls. There are walkways and bridges for your enjoyment. Most of the pools are open to swimming.

Day 8: TAKBAT

Rise early this morning to view Takbat, a Buddhist ceremony before visiting the impressive Wat Mai and climbing the Phousi Hill for panoramic views of the city. Later fly 1 and a half hours to the fascinating city of Siem Reap and wander the Angkor Night Market.

Destination Information

Phousi Hill - A 100 metre high hill in the centre of the old town of Luang Prabang. It lies in the heart of the old town peninsula and is bordered on one side by the Mekong River and on the other side by the Nam Khan River. The hill is a local religious site, and houses several Buddhist shrines. Halfway up the hill, overlooking the Nam Khan is Wat Tham Phousi, a Buddhist temple. At the summit of the hill, overlooking the town and surrounding countryside, is Wat Chom Si, which is also a Buddhist temple and is a tourist highlight of Luang Prabang.

Siem Reap - Siem Reap is a bustling tourist destination due to its proximity to both the ancient Khmer national capital city of Angkor as well as Tonle Sap Lake. Angkor Wat is one of the main attractions and is the world's largest religious monument, in addition to being the spiritual and cultural heart of Cambodia.

DAY 9: EXPLORE ANGKOR

Spanning from the 9th to 15th century, the Angkor complex with over 1,000 temples was the seat of the thriving Khmer Empire. UNESCO manages the complex and to enter, your group will drive approximately 6km out of town to the main entrance gate to get your entrance passes, which you must carry with you. If you choose to climb at any site, you must be able to climb and descend without assistance. Begin at the temple of Ta Prohm, enveloped in a labyrinth of jungle before continuing to the city of Angkor Thom and the enigmatic Bayon, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of

the Leper King. This afternoon is devoted to the fascinating and awe-inspiring Angkor Wat.

Please note: The Central Tower of the Angkor Wat is closed on Buddhist holidays and on all other days the complex has a limited number of visitors allowed at any given time, under regulations from UNESCO. If you wish to visit this tower, you will be required to wait in the queue alongside all other visitors. The ability to do this will be determined upon the groups' schedule.

Destination Information

Ta Prohm - Swallowed by the jungle where Strangler Figs and Kapok Trees have entwined themselves around the ruins. Undoubtedly, the most atmospheric ruin at Angkor with several towers, closed courtyards and narrow corridors to explore.

Angkor Thom - This fortified city is flanked by a row of 54 stone figures on each side, which leads you through a 23m imposing stone entrance gate to the various temples inside.

Bayon - Beautifully crafted central towers, decorated with four opposing faces representing King Jayavarman VII. Bayon's stone galleries display extraordinary bas-reliefs incorporating over 11,000 figures.

Elephant Terrace and Terrace of the Leper King -Giant viewing platforms used for public ceremonies, which served as a base for the King's grand audience hall.

Angkor Wat - Surrounded by a 190m moat and taking 30 years to build, Angkor Wat represents the Khmer civilisation at its grandest. With its fascinating decorative flourishes, extensive bas-relief and multiple tiers, it is the best-preserved temple within the complex.

DAY 10: TONLE SAP LAKE

Today explore the less visited Beng Mealea, a mysterious temple completely overrun by the jungle where you will explore on foot for approximately an hour and half. In the high water season, you will also visit Kompong Khleang a unique village on stilts. In the lower water season, you will visit Chong Kneas floating village. Return to Siem Reap via a Cambodian artistry assembly - Les Artisan D'Angkor before arriving back at your hotel this evening. Tonight enjoy dinner while watching an Apsara dance performance

Destination Information

Bang Mealea - Dating from the 11th century, this sprawling temple covers over one square kilometre. Largely overrun by vegetation and constructed in a distinctly Angkor Wat-

style, Beng Mealea precedes and may even have served as a 'prototype' for Angkor Wat.

Artisan D'Angkor - Established in 1998, this community workshop teaches the unique arts of painting, silk weaving, wood and stone carving in traditional Cambodian style to local young people.

DAY 11: BANTEAY SREI

Today travel to Preah Khan Temple, Banteay Srei and explore Banteay Samre before climbing to the summit of Pre Rup Temple to view the sunset over the paddy fields.

Destination Information

Banteay Srei - A Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva and considered by many to be the 'Jewel in the Crown' of Angkorian art. The temple is cut from stone of a pinkish hue and contains some of the finest stone carvings in the world.

Banteay Samre - Built approximately halfway through the 12th century, Banteay Samre is decorated with many intricate and well-preserved carvings of Hindi Mythological stories and Buddhist depictions.

Pre Rup Temple - A popular place to view the sun setting as the view over the rice fields is spectacular. Pre Rup was built by Rajendravarman II and may have been an early royal crematorium.

DAY 12: TRAVEL TO BATTAMBANG

Travel approximately 3 hours to Battambang, stopping at the Puok District to visit the National Silk Centre. Learn about silk creation and the harvesting of mulberries before continuing to Battambang.

Destination Information

National Silk Centre - A fascinating way to learn about Cambodian silk. Here you will witness silk creation and the growing and harvesting of mulberries.

Battambang - Cambodia's second largest city. Situated on the banks of the Stung Sangke River, Battambang possesses some of the grandest and best-preserved colonial architecture and scenic countryside.

DAY 13: EXPLORE BATTAMBANG

Climb to the top of Phnom Banan to reach the Prasat Banan Temple to admire the breathtaking view. Return to the town, stopping at a vineyard for wine tasting. In the afternoon, visit 'La Maison de Coco' and learn how to make rice paper.

Please note rice paper making is seasonal, when this is not available you will still see the rice paper as well as visiting an orphanage school and a tailors' workshop.

Destination Information

Prasat Banan Temple - Located on the top of a small hill, the temple was built in the 11th century and consists of 5 towers.

La Maison de Coco - A non-governmental organisation which runs projects to give skills and support to the local people.

DAY 14: JOURNEY TO PHNOM PENH

Today drive approximately 4 to 5 hours to the capital, Phnom Penh, stopping en route for a couple of hours to explore Udong and Kampong Chhnang Province to see traditional handmade pottery and climb Touch Hill to admire the surroundings. There are approximately 415 steps to climb to reach the top of Touch Hill. Continue to Phnom Penh and visit the Tuol Sleng Museum. There will be an optional tour to the Killing Fields (to be paid for locally).

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.

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.

DAY 15: PHNOM PENH

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Phnom Penh today; sightseeing will be around 3 hours of leisurely walking this morning. Explore sites such as the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and Wat Phnom. Sightseeing at Wat Phnom involves a climb of 30m high and on ladders up to the hilltop temple.

Destination Information

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

Silver Pagoda - This concrete and marble structure includes a floor with over 5,000 silver tiles each weighing 1kg. Famous artefacts include a 90kg solid gold Buddha made in

1907 and an Emerald Buddha said to be made of baccarat crystal.

Wat Phnom - Home to a hilltop temple that carries the cities namesake. Locals flock here to pray for good luck and success.

DAY 16: DEPART PHNOM PENH

Transfer to the airport according to the departure time of your international flight.

DAY 17: ARRIVE AUSTRALIA

Arrive home today.

LAOS AND CAMBODIA UNVEILED TRAVEL INFORMATION

Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Laos and Cambodia and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa.

We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for Vietnam are issued with specific start and expiry dates which are based on the dates stated on the visa application form. Travel must be completed within those dates. Please be advised that your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office **75 days prior to departure**; if received after this, urgent visa processing fees will apply. Also, please note we do not accept passports and visa applications within 30 days prior to departure. Passports will be returned with your Final Documentation **2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure**. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15 courier fee will apply.

Insurance

We strongly 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 originals.

Eating in Indochina

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

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your groups' arrival until breakfast on your day of departure. When dining in Vietnam, 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, appetisers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. In Thailand and some other countries in Indochina, forks and spoons are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. 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 Vietnam is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Vietnamese cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

Accommodation

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

Rests assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standard meet your needs.

Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. 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.

Seatbelts: Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Indochina and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason, some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

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

Development in Laos and Cambodia

Although Laos and Cambodia are 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.

Laos and Cambodia public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. In Laos: International Women's Day - 8th March, Laos New Year Holiday 14th – 17th April. In Cambodia: Khmer New Year is 13th – 17th April every year, the King's birthday is 14th - 16th May and the Water festival is between 4th – 7th November.

Souvenirs

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

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Tipping Policy

Tipping is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry. A nominated tipping amount is included in all group tour pricing, however is not collected in your final payment received by Wendy Wu Tours. This is so that it can be paid directly to your National Escort who will then distribute the tips among your main service providers – guides and drivers– on your behalf. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants, hotel porters taking luggage to your room or river guides is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation.

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.

Packing List and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com.

Luggage

All clients 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 7kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Indochina. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Indochina however, other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. US Dollars should be from the new series

from the year 2003 onwards. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip.

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

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

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 AUD\$250 should be sufficient; however for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

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

Climbing Steps

Some sightseeing involves climbing quite a number of steps. 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.

Cultural Differences

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

Vaccinations and Your Health

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.

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with 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

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice with deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

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