



Tour Dossier

Grand Tour of Indochina

Classic Tour | 27 Days | Moderate Pace

This document has been designed to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour. All passengers should read this dossier to assess the physical requirements of the programme and their ability to complete the tour.

Classic Tours

Designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures on a fully inclusive excellent value group tour.

Grand Tour of Indochina is a Moderate Pace tour. This is defined in our brochure as the following: Tours require a higher level of fitness and may include standard activities and longer periods of sightseeing. Easy walking, longer drives, climbing of stairs and in/out of boats will be necessary. Some programmes may also include light hiking or a home stay and overnight train journeys.

Anyone with a good level of fitness should be able to complete this itinerary. Of course, our National Escort/Local Guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. Please refer to your Travel Guide for more information.

Tour highlights:

On our Indochina Delights itinerary, you will visit:

- **Saigon** - Vietnam's most cosmopolitan and vibrant city.
- **Mekong Delta** - 'Rice Basket of Vietnam' and home to many living, working and travelling along the river.
- **Hoi An** - Discover this charming UNESCO World Heritage listed site.
- **Hue** - The country's former capital.
- **Hanoi** - Exploration of this charming, historical centre & its French provincial influences.
- **Sapa** - A French Hill station nestled within the mountains high above Hanoi and is home to many colourful ethnic groups.
- **Halong Bay** - Vietnam's 'jewel in the crown'; the stunning beauty of the 3,000 islets of the Gulf of Tonkin.
- **Luang Prabang** - Entry point into Laos & UNESCO World Heritage listed town which retains original character.
- **Vang Vieng** - Idyllic natural scenery.

- **Vientiane** - Capital of Laos: a charming city filled with villas and boulevards.
- **Phnom Penh** - Capital of Cambodia surrounded by the Mekong; home to majestic palaces and pagoda's.
- **Siem Reap** - Gateway to the Angkor Wat temple complex.

Destination Profile

Vietnam - Vietnam is a country of breath-taking natural beauty with an incredible modern day history that quickly becomes addictive. It has experienced war and a bloody revolution in the past 100 years, but the revolution now underway is peaceful and prosperous. The speed of the modern day changes is making Vietnam the absorbing and gripping place that it is today. Vietnam has something to offer everyone, so whether you are a culture vulture, thrill seeker or just looking to relax and take in the beaches, Vietnam will not disappoint.

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.

Development in Indochina - Although Indochina is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Cuisine in Indochina - Most meals (excluding drinks) are included as indicated from the groups' arrival until the day of departure. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

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 or Local Guide.

Traffic in Indochina - Roads in Indochina 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 sections below are approximations only. The roads surrounding Phnom Penh, including those in outer suburbs, are in terrible condition - unsealed and eroded by daily rains.

Joining Your Tour- The tour is 27 days in duration. Join the tour on Day 1 in Saigon and end the tour on Day 26 in Siem Reap. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Please refer to your Final Itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary changes

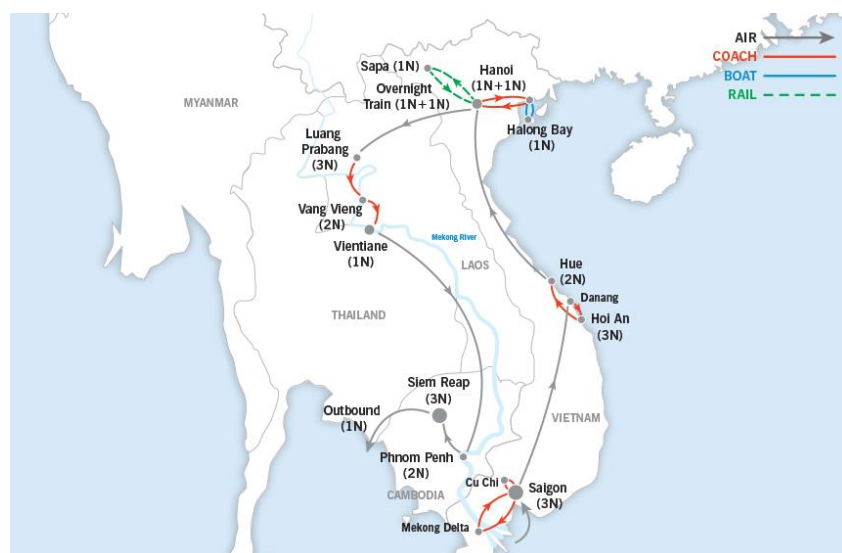
Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

1. Vietnam Airlines' domestic flights are subject to frequent changes. For this reason we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights only. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them.
2. The Central Tower of the Angkor Wat complex has a limited number of visitors allowed at any given time, under new regulations from UNESCO since its recent restoration. 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' program on the day of visiting.
3. There will be an opportunity to view The Mausoleum in Hanoi from the outside but we no longer include a visit due to restricted opening hours.

4. 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 be any itinerary changes.
5. Tham Loup Cave – due to health and safety concerns we will no longer visit Tham Loup Cave on Day 19.

Flight Delays or Changes to Arrival Times - 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 office in Vietnam on **+84 989 559 488 (24 hours)** 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 Vietnam. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and an arrival transfer will be arranged accordingly. We will endeavor to arrange a transfer as soon as possible however delays may occur.

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 Cambodia 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 times.



Itinerary – Grand Tour of Indochina

Day 1: Australia to Saigon

Day Outline

Fly with Vietnam Airlines/or Singapore Airlines to Saigon for your three night stay.

Darwin Passengers may depart one day earlier.

Physical Description

You will be met at Saigon airport in the Arrivals hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 45 minutes to your hotel and check into your room or store any luggage if your room is not ready yet.

There is no sightseeing today. At some point, when the whole group has arrived, a tour introduction will be held in the hotel. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting; it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in Vietnam.

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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

Saigon - The exuberant city of Saigon is driving Vietnam forward into the modern world, but is also a treasure trove of fascinating heritage. During the 1960s and early 1970s, Saigon was the Pearl of the Orient, which flourished under the American occupation. In more recent times, it was the seat of the South Vietnam government until the events that led to the country's reunification. Today, the old mixes seamlessly with the new and you can wander through timeless alleys to incense-infused temples before catching up with the present in designer malls beneath sleek skyscrapers.

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Day 2: Saigon

Day Outline

Confront the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels this morning. The cramped tunnels were central to a few of the war's strategic operations, including the famous 1968 Tet Offensive, and they did not escape damage. American B52 bombers dropped hundreds of missiles leaving huge tell-tale craters behind. The Cu Chi experience can be emotional for some visitors, but it offers a fascinating window into the hardship and traumas of war.

Return to Saigon this afternoon and explore the city of Saigon, Vietnam's largest and most vibrant city where a heady mix of local culture and colonial influences collide. Visit Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office, the Reunification Palace and the chilling War Remnants Museum. Finish your sightseeing at Ben Thanh Market.

Physical Description

Remember to take insect repellent today, as mosquitoes are more common in the Cu Chi district. Transfer 2 hours (70km) to Cu Chi. Sightseeing here involves 2 hours on foot on uneven mud paths through the bush and, if you choose, crawling through some of the tunnels.

[N.B: At the Cu Chi Tunnels, you will be given the opportunity to shoot a range of guns (example AK47, M16). If you decide to do this, please be aware that the level of noise is extremely high and although earmuffs are available, they may not provide the level of protection required. It is recommended you bring earplugs from home if you would like to participate].

Sightseeing in downtown Saigon involves approximately 4 hours on foot over the whole day. There are graphic pictures in the War Remnants Museum that some people might find confronting. End the day with shopping time at Ben Thanh Market; watch your valuables in this area.

[N.B During your visit to the War Remnants Museum sensitive photographs and infantry weapons are on display. As it is a self-explanatory museum, you will have time to walk around on our own. Please be aware that some of the remnants on display at this museum may be confronting and upsetting for some group members].

Destination Information

Cu Chi - The tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Cu Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War, and were the Viet Cong's base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968.

The tunnels were used by Viet Cong soldiers as hiding spots during combat, as well as serving as communication and supply routes, hospitals, food and weapon caches and living quarters for numerous North Vietnamese fighters.

The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces, and helped to counter the growing American military effort.

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Notre Dame Cathedral - Influenced by French design and built between 1863 and 1880, the red brick exterior and 60-meter bell towers overlook downtown Saigon.

Central Post Office - Located next to the Notre Dame Cathedral. The Central Post Office building was constructed in the late 19th century. It counts Gothic, Renaissance and French influences and was designed by Auguste Henri Vildieu and Alfred Foulhoux, but is often erroneously credited as being the work of Gustave Eiffel.

Reunification Palace - Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was designed by architect Ngô Viết Thụ and was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It was the site of the end of the Vietnam War during the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its gates.

War Remnants Museum - Comprised of numerous buildings displaying military equipment, photographs and artefacts relating to the Vietnam War from 1961-1975. This museum illustrates a harrowing period in this nation's history

Ben Thanh Market - One of the liveliest areas in Saigon brimming with a diverse array of fresh produce, exotic curiosities and the latest merchandise. Practice your bargaining skills whilst collecting some souvenirs.

Day 3: Saigon - Mekong Delta Cruise

Day Outline

Drive down to the picturesque province of Ben Tre situated along the mighty Mekong. This area is known as the 'Rice Basket of Vietnam', because its rich and fertile lands produce huge amounts of rice, coconuts, vegetables and tropical fruit. Spend the day cruising and exploring before returning to Saigon this afternoon.

Physical Description

Rise early to drive 2-2.5 hours (80km) to the city of Ben Tre. You will travel by motorised, wooden boats between the islands and then change to smaller, paddleboats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance. Approximately 2-2.5 hours later, you will return to Saigon.

Destination Information

Mekong Delta - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life progresses around its fertile banks. The Mekong Delta is the 13th longest, and the 10th largest river, by volume alone and people live, trade, travel and even go to school on the riverbanks. The rice which is cultivated in the many farming lands is said to be enough to supply the entire country.

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Day 4: Saigon to Hoi An

Day Outline

Fly to Danang today and transfer to Hoi An, stopping en route at the Marble Mountains. Upon arrival, enjoy a walking tour of this laid back and wilfully traditional UNESCO listed town to see the elaborate Japanese Covered Bridge, Chinese temple and bustling markets.

Physical Description

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Danang (flight duration 1 hour and 15 minutes); the closest airport to Hoi An. Sightseeing at the Marble Mountains involves some uneven stone steps and it can get hot. If you are unable to complete this activity, you will have to remain with the driver/coach. Transfer 45 minutes to the hotel in Hoi An and check-in.

This afternoon sightseeing tour involves 2 hours of walking.

Destination Information

Hoi An - Perhaps more than any other place in Vietnam, Hoi An retains the feel of centuries past. Once known as Faifo, Hoi An was an influential port along the Silk Road. For over 500 years merchants from China, Japan, France and Portugal settled in the prosperous town resulting in a distinctive blend of culture, cuisine, religion and architecture

Marble Mountains - Five mountainous outcrops each named after natural elements and made from marble. Enjoy sweeping views of Danang Beach, where the American Marines had a huge R&R base during the 1960s and 1970s. At the bottom of these mountains, locals carve numerous sculptures using the marble found here.

Japanese Covered Bridge - First constructed in the 1590s to link the Japanese and Chinese quarters of the town. This iconic pink hued bridge has been restored to its former splendour.

Day 5: Hoi An

Day Outline

Today explore the countryside with a visit to the small farming community of Tra Que. Admire the picturesque lush green countryside and see farmers tend to their crops. This afternoon enjoy a free afternoon in Hoi An.

Physical Description

This morning enjoy a short drive to Tra Que village. An easy 1 hour walk through the vegetable gardens, experience how the local farmers work the land and learn about the history of the village and the importance of herbs in Vietnamese medicine and cuisine. *Mosquito Repellent is recommended.* You will then have lunch in Tra Que village before continuing to Cua Dai beach or enjoy an afternoon free at your leisure to explore this charming town.

Destination Information

Tra Que Village - Located a few kilometres from Hoi An, this picturesque village is renowned for its agriculture. Witness local farming techniques and learn about different exotic Vietnamese produce.

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Day 6: Hoi An

Day Outline

Today is free at leisure to explore and unwind in this traditional town.

Day 7: Hoi An to Hue

Day Outline

This morning leave Hoi An for Hue, driving over the scenic Hai Van Pass. Hue is the epitome of Vietnam's dynamic past, and considered a scholarly city. Upon arrival, explore the UNESCO listed Royal Tomb of Minh Mang.

Physical Description

Drive north for 4 hours (approximately 140km) over the Hai Van (Cloudy) Pass to Hue. This is a winding and steep but scenic road along the coast. Sightseeing around the Royal Tomb of Minh Mang this afternoon involves approximately 1 hour on foot.

Destination Information

Hue - Having been the imperial capital from 1802 until 1945 after the last emperor abdicated; Hue is still regarded as the centre of Vietnam's culture and religion. The city is dominated by the Imperial Citadel that is modelled on the Forbidden City in China. There are many wonderful pagodas and temples of high significance and it contains the Grand Tombs of the Nguyen Emperors.

Royal Tomb of Minh Mang - Emperor Minh Mang reigned in the Nguyen Dynasty, the last of the Vietnamese dynasties, from 1820-1840. The construction of his tomb was completed after his death and is said to have taken approximately 10,000 workers to complete. The complex comprises of almost 40 monuments and is surrounded by gardens and pools, making it one of the more beautiful tombs in Vietnam.

Day 8: Hue

Day Outline

Today explore the imposing Imperial Citadel and Forbidden Purple City. Next, stop see the Thien Mu Pagoda before boarding a cruise to sail along the Perfume River.

Physical Description

There is 2 hours of easy sightseeing at the Citadel, which is mainly in the open so remember your hat/sunscreen etc. Afterwards, spend 45 minutes on foot at the Thien Mu Pagoda. There are steep and uneven steps without handrails. Afterwards embark a 1 hour cruise along the Perfume River. Boarding your cruise could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff.

Destination Information

Imperial Citadel - A walled fortress accompanied by cannons, artilleries and surrounded by a moat for protection. Inside the Citadel are numerous gates, courtyards and the Forbidden Purple City.

Forbidden Purple City - Constructed for personal use by the Imperial family, their concubines and eunuchs. This royal structure is still being restored many years after the

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destruction caused by street fighting and bombing during the American war in Vietnam. Wander the grounds and foundations whilst viewing the remaining woodwork and architecture.

Thien Mu Pagoda - This seven-storey octagonal tower built on a hillock, overlooking the Perfume River is Hue's oldest and most beautiful pagoda. Wander the grounds where bonsai, ponds and the smell of incense set a peaceful backdrop.

Day 9: Hue to Hanoi – Overnight Sleeper Train

Day Outline

This morning fly to Hanoi and discover the sights of this charming city. First stop will be the Ho Chi Minh Quarter and view Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum from the outside only, followed by the Humble House on Stilts, One Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature.

Later this afternoon transfer to Hanoi railway station to board your overnight train to Lao Cai.

Physical Description

Fly to Hanoi (flight duration 1 hour) this morning. Upon arrival commence your day tour with a visit to view the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum from the outside. Sightseeing in central Hanoi involves approximately 4 hours on foot.

This afternoon, transfer to Hanoi station to board your overnight train to Lao Cai station. You may have to carry your luggage over numerous train tracks to reach your platform and carriage because of the layout of Hanoi station. You will be sharing a 4 berth cabin with other passengers who may not be part of the Wendy Wu Tours group. Private use of the cabin is available but it is at an additional cost. Wear comfortable clothes on board to sleep in and take snacks as none are readily available. This journey usually takes 9 hours (over 340km) and can be quite bumpy.

Destination Information

Hanoi - With a population of approximately 4 million, Hanoi is a charming and richly historic city of lakes, shaded boulevards and leafy open parks. The centre is an architectural museum piece housing groups of ochre coloured buildings holding the air of provincial French towns of the 1930s, a "Paris of the Orient" as people have called it.

Ho Chi Minh Quarter - Dedicated to the father of modern Vietnam and where Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum stands in Ba Dinh Square. Ho Chi Minh first declared independence from French rule in 1945.

One Pillar Pagoda - Rebuilt in 1955 after damage during the French evacuation, the pagoda is made of wood and sits on a single pillar. Designed to reflect the shape of a lotus flower emerging from the water, it has become a popular spot for locals to enjoy the tranquil surroundings.

Humble House on Stilts - In the grounds of the Presidential Palace sits the 2 storey wooden home of Ho Chi Minh who ruled Vietnam from here until his death in 1969.

Temple of Literature - Hanoi's first university dating back to 1070 and a historical centre of learning, now dedicated to Confucian worship.

Day 10: Arrive Sapa

Day Outline

Arrive into Lao Cai station early this morning and drive on a winding, mountainous road up to Sapa to store your luggage if your room is not available.

A day in the mountains awaits you. After breakfast, transfer towards Ban Khoang stopping for views of Mt Fansipan Vietnam's highest mountain en-route. Begin a light trek to observe the daily life of the Black H'mong and Red Dzao minority who live here, and still hold onto their unique way of life and maintain their traditional values. You will have a chance to view the valleys endless rice terraces, small minority villages, forested mountains, waterfalls and stunning landscape. Stroll around minority villages before being transferred back to Sapa in the afternoon.

Physical Description

Arrive into Lao Cai station at approximately 5am and drive for 1 hour (34km) to Sapa.

[NB: Check-out time in Vietnam is midday so your group's rooms may not be ready when you arrive. This morning you will commence sightseeing and check into the hotel later.]

After breakfast you will drive 45 minutes towards Ban Khoang, where you will see and visit remote villages of Black H'mong and Red Dzao. You will walk for approximately an hour on uneven terrain, up and down terrace fields. If your visit is between May and October, it will coincide with the local planting and harvest time, a chance to see the local farmers in action. Take a further walk of up to 1 hour to see rural life unfold in front of you before transferring back to Sapa. A late lunch will be arranged in Sapa.

Over the next few days you will have the opportunity to visit some of the small villages around Sapa to see different ethnic hill tribes. Your National Escort/Local Guide will adjust your itinerary and length of the hikes according to your group's fitness, interest and physical abilities. The sightseeing involves hiking in occasionally muddy, slippery and steep terrain and driving over rough, unsealed and winding roads.

Destination Information

Sapa - Located 1,600m above sea level and close to the Chinese border. This mountainous area with its spectacular landscapes and temperate climate is sure to make a lasting impression on its visitors. The H'mong and Dao people, the largest and most colourful ethnic groups in the region, are a cultural highlight.

Red Dzao Tribe – Adorned with beads and silver coins, long locks wrapped inside large red turbans – The Red Dzao cut a distinctive figure in their weaved traditional dress throughout Sapa. They are one of the oldest tribes to have migrated from China, during the 13th century.

Day 11: Sapa

Day Outline

After breakfast, you will take a light trek to Cat Cat village inhabited by the Black H'mong people, located west of Sapa at the foot of Fansipan Mountain. You will have a chance to visit a stunning waterfall and the remains of a hydraulic power station built by the French in 1925.

On completion of your hike transfer to Lao Cai railway station where dinner will be at a local restaurant nearby, before boarding your overnight sleeper train back to Hanoi.

Physical Description

Take a light hike to Cat Cat village and the surrounding areas including the hydraulic power station. You will spend approximately 2 hours on foot, which includes climbing steps without handrails, which may become slippery after rain. Later you will be transferred (1 hour) to Lao Cai railway station, having dinner before boarding an overnight soft sleeper train back to Hanoi.

Destination Information

Black H'mong Tribe – Migrating from China in the 19th Century, the Black H'mong wear distinctive indigo dyed linen typically accompanied by aprons, leggings and cylindrical hats. They are now one of the largest ethnic groups in Vietnam, cultivating the lands of Sapa with rice and medicinal plants.

Day 12: Arrive Hanoi

Day Outline

Upon arrival into Hanoi Railway Station you will be met and transferred to your hotel to check in and freshen up before your day of sightseeing. First stop will be a visit to the Ethnology Museum followed by a thrilling cyclo ride through Hanoi Old Quarter. This evening you will watch a performance of the famous Water Puppets, which have a history dating back thousands of years.

Physical Description

Arrive in Hanoi early this morning (approximately 6:30am), and transfer to your hotel to check in and freshen up. There will be easy sightseeing at the Ethnology Museum before your cyclo ride through the Old Quarter. Each cyclo takes one passenger and is operated by a cycle driver behind the carriage.

Destination Information

Ethnology Museum – Numerous artefacts from 54 different ethnic minorities across Vietnam are on display here. Giving an insight into the heritage and diversity of the country.

Hanoi Old Quarter - A maze of streets weaving through Hanoi and dating back to the 13th century. Each street specialises in merchants and artisans selling their wares of silk, silver, wood and more.

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Water Puppets - Vietnamese Water Puppets were invented thousands of years ago by farmers in the Red River Delta region near Hanoi, as a means to entertain themselves when the rains flooded their paddy fields. Today puppeteers stand in waist deep water and control the puppets via pole and strings. Most plays focus on folklores and tales of rural life.

Day 13: Halong Bay

Depart Hanoi today and board your traditionally designed junk boat. Cruise amongst the magnificent karst peaks on the tranquil green waters of Halong Bay whilst spending the night on board the boat.

Physical Description

Drive 4 hours (170km) to Halong Bay Port, including a 20-minute rest stop. There is usually a crowd of boats at the docks; however, the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing. Boarding your junk boat could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff.

The junk boats have been modelled on the traditional 'junk' which was both home and working vessel for fishermen for centuries. They usually hold about 40 passengers; have an enclosed dining area and an open area on the upper deck. We have lunch on board and cruise around the bay before anchoring for the night. Sightseeing includes visiting underground caves on the islands, which require climbing up and down steps inside and outside of the caves. A torch is optional as the caves have been lit in colourful lighting.

[NB: We recommend packing a smaller bag for our trip to Halong Bay. Main luggage can be left at our hotel in Hanoi and picked up on Day 16 when we return. Your Halong Bay cruise may be affected by local weather conditions].

Destination Information

Halong Bay - Compared to the landscape of the limestone islets of Guilin in China and Krabi in southern Thailand, Halong Bay shares a common border with China in the north and harbours some of the most stunning scenery in Vietnam. Bizarre rock sculptures jut out dramatically from the clear emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin and numerous grottoes have created an enchanting, timeless world, looking out onto the horizon with the sails of the junks and sampans completing the picture.

Day 14: Halong Bay to Hanoi

Day Outline

Spend the morning sailing through Halong Bay. Disembark you cruise and return to Hanoi this afternoon where the remainder of the evening is at leisure.

Physical Description

After an early lunch (or brunch meal), return to the docks and drive back to Hanoi, returning in the late afternoon.

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DAY 15: Hanoi to Luang Prabang

Day Outline

Fly to Luang Prabang where the afternoon is free at your leisure before enjoying the views from Phousi Hill in the evening.

Physical Description

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Luang Prabang (flight duration 1 hour and 25 minutes). Transfer 15 minutes to your hotel and check-in. Sightseeing at Phousi Hill involves 1 hour on foot; the hill is 100m high and this area is fairly steep with steps but the view is worth the climb.

[NB: If you wish to participate in the Takbat ceremony tomorrow morning, please inform your guide today who will purchase food on your behalf to offer the monks. This will be at your own expense and not included in the tour cost].

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.

Phousi Hill - a 100m 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.

DAY 16: Luang Prabang

Day Outline

In the early morning experience a Takbat ceremony. Visit Wat Xieng Thong and enjoy a cruise long the Mekong River to Pak Ou Caves.

Physical Description

Rise early this morning to view Takbat, a Buddhist ceremony. Transfer to the docks and board a motor boat which takes 2 hours to ride 25km upstream. Sightseeing at Pak Ou involves climbing of steps from the base of the dock to the first cave and walking over uneven surfaces that includes up the hill to the second cave where you will need your torch. After lunch on board our boat, return to Luang Prabang this afternoon.

Destination Information

Wat Xieng Thong - A Buddhist temple (wat), located on the northern tip of the peninsula of Luang Phrabang, 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) Visit wendywutours.com.au

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 17: Kuang Si Waterfalls

Day Outline

Visit the National Museum before visiting Kuang Si Waterfalls. On return to Luang Prabang visit Ock Pop Tok Weaving Centre.

Physical Description

Drive 1 hour (32km) on a fairly good sealed road to Kuang Si Waterfall. Sightseeing here will involve around 1 hour of light walking. On the way up to the waterfall you follow a bush walking track which has a slight upward gradient.

[N.B: It is possible to 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].

Your Local Guide/National Escort may also arrange visits to other nearby ethnic villages, depending on time available today.

Destination Information

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 18: Luang Prabang to Vang Vieng

Day Outline

This morning say goodbye to Luang Prabang and begin the drive to Vang Vieng, stopping en route at Pathang Village to admire the spectacular views over karst mountain landscapes.

Physical Description

Drive 7 hours (240km) to Vang Vieng over mountainous roads with photo stops along the way. Easy sightseeing en route in Pathang Village involves 1 hour on foot.

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 19: Vang Vieng

Day Outline

Today you will explore the Tham Chang Cave before walking through the dramatic countryside along the Nam Song River.

Physical Description

Sightseeing at Tham Chang involves approximately 2 hours on foot over uneven surfaces and climbing of steps to get into the caves. Afterwards there will be an easy walk along the riverside.

Destination Information

Tham Chang Cave - Tham Jang 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 20: Vang Vieng to Vientiane

Day Outline

Today we drive south to Vientiane, Laos' capital. Nestled in a languid bend in the Mekong, Vientiane is a delightfully quaint city, more a friendlier backwater than the chaotic capital. Spend the rest of the day exploring with visits to Wat Si Saket, Wat Phra Keo, That Luang Stupa, and the Patuxai Victory Monument, resembling Paris' Arc de Triomphe.

Physical Description

Today you will drive 3.5 hours (160km) to Vientiane. This afternoon involves easy sightseeing (1-2 hours of walking) around Vientiane.

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.

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.

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
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undergone several reconstructions as recently as the 1930s due to foreign invasions of the area. It is regarded as the most important national monument in Laos and a national symbol.

Patuxai Victory Monument - Patuxai means Victory Gate or Gate of Triumph. Resembling the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the Patuxai Victory Monument is a war monument in the centre of Vientiane. Built between 1957 and 1968, the Patuxai is dedicated to those who fought in the struggle for independence from France.

Day 21: Vientiane to Phnom Penh

Day Outline

Depart Vientiane and fly to Phnom Penh, a city of attractive boulevards. Visit the opulent Silver Pagoda and Cambodian Royal Palace before travelling to the National Museum with extensive artefacts on display.

Physical Description

Transfer to the airport for a morning flight to Phnom Penh (flight duration 90 minutes). Upon arrival, there will be 3 hours of leisurely sightseeing this afternoon.

Destination Information

Phnom Penh - The capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia is built around four river arms formed by a sharp curve in the Mekong River near the junctions of the Bassac and the Tonle Sap tributaries. This charming city has a pleasant blend of oriental and colonial architecture, but reminders of a troubled past are also evident.

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

National Museum - Housing the world's finest collection of Khmer pottery, bronzes and sculptures dating from the 4th century.

Day 22: Phnom Penh

Day Outline

Spend the morning visiting the children of the Apsara Arts Association. Continue to Tuol Sleng Museum for a harrowing insight into Cambodia's tumultuous past. Lastly stop at the Russian and Central Markets to explore the many stalls including souvenirs in abundance.

Physical Description

Visit the Apsara Association to see a performance (ask your Guide if you would like to make a donation). Afterwards, sightseeing at the Tuol Sleng Museum involves 1 hour on foot. This museum commemorates the atrocities that occurred during the regime of Pol Pot.

Most people find it quite confronting and emotional so you will be given time to explore on your own.

Later this afternoon spend some time at the Russian and Central markets; watch your valuables while in and around these areas.

Destination Information

Apsara Arts Association - Established to cultivate traditional arts; dance, music and theater of Cambodian culture whilst keeping Cambodian culture alive.

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.

Central and Russian Markets - One of the liveliest areas in Phnom Penh. Everything that is used, worn or eaten is piled high throughout the labyrinth of stalls.

Day 23: Phnom Penh to Siem Reap

Day Outline

This morning ascend to the hilltop temple of Wat Phnom before transferring to the airport to board your flight to Siem Reap. Upon arrival visit the captivating rose coloured temple of Banteay Srei before finishing your day at the summit of Pre Rup to watch the sunset.

Physical Description

Visit Wat Phnom, climbing 30 meters high and on ladders to this hilltop temple before you are transferred to the airport for your morning flight to Siem Reap (flight duration 55 minutes). Visit Banteay Srei which involves approximately 1.5 hours on foot. Later this evening climb approximately 20 to 40 steps to enjoy the sunset at Pre Rup.

Destination Information

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

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. This huge complex of palaces and temples were built on the sprawling alluvial plain to the north of Tonle Sap.

Banteay Srei Temple - A 10th-century Cambodian temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, located in the area of Angkor in Cambodia. Banteay Srei is built largely of red sandstone, a medium that lends itself to the elaborate decorative wall carvings which are still observable today.

Pre Rup Temple - Built in 961 as the state temple of Khmer king Rajendravarma. It is a temple mountain of combined brick, laterite and sandstone construction. The temple's

name is a comparatively modern one meaning "turn the body". This reflects the common belief among Cambodians that funerals were conducted at the temple, with the ashes of the body being ritually rotated in different directions as the service progressed.

Day 24: Siem Reap

Day Outline

Spanning from the 9th to 15th century, the Angkor complex with over 1,000 temples was the seat of the thriving Khmer Empire. This morning 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.

Physical Description

Sightseeing within the Angkor area involves driving to and exploring the temples on foot. It can get hot and humid here so you must carry sun protection and drinking water with you. Spend the morning and afternoon sightseeing within the Angkor complex, returning to town for lunch in the heat of the day. 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.

[NB. The Central Tower of the Angkor Wat 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 23-meter 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 190-meter 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 25: Siem Reap

Day Outline

This morning observe life on the waterways of the Tonle Sap and its floating villages. From here, continue to Beng Mealea, a mysterious temple completely overrun by the jungle. Return to Siem Reap via a Cambodian artistry assembly - Les Artisan D'Angkor before arriving back at your hotel this evening.

Physical Description

Early this morning depart for the short drive to Tonle Sap and experience a one-hour cruise on the lake. Disembark and travel for two hours (80km) to Beng Mealea, located outside the UNESCO heritage protected area. Explore on foot for approximately 1.5 hours, using a newly built boardwalk to discover this temple. Please ensure when walking anywhere outside the walls of these temple ruins, you must follow marked paths as the landmine clearance project here has not been completed yet. Later this afternoon return to Siem Reap, stopping to visit Artisan D' Angkor en route.

Destination Information

Tonle Sap - The Tonle Sap is the largest fresh water lake in Southeast Asia. During the rainy season, it can swell from 3,000sq km to 7,500sq km.

Locals have built floating villages on the Tonle Sap, which include schools, restaurants, markets, and even a medical clinic.

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 26: Depart Siem Reap

Day Outline

The morning is at leisure before a transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Physical Description

Any time before your flight is free at your leisure. You will be transferred (20 minutes) to the airport according to the departure time of your international flight.

Day 27: Arrive Australia

Day Outline

Arrive home.

Tour Profile

Visa Requirements - Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam, 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. Visas for Cambodia are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Visas for Laos are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days. 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 **80 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 travellers 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.

Accommodation - All 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 remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local 3-3½star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Vietnam.

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, apart from in some national banks in Vietnam, such as Vietcombank. 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 - 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.

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

Rail Journeys - This trip involves two overnight train journeys where you will share a 4 berth cabin with other passengers. Please refer to your Travel Guide for more information. We will always endeavour to keep group members together in the same compartment, however there may be times where this is not possible. In this case, you may find yourself sharing with group members of the opposite gender and other travellers. Facilities on board are basic with both Western-style and Asian-style toilets. Some members of the group will be allocated a berth on the middle or top of the cabin, so please be prepared to climb ladders in and out of bed.

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.

Consider Cultural Differences - Indochina has many religions, cultures and histories. Please be considerate of this, the local beliefs and customs and dress with consideration.

Group Size - In most cases, the group will operate with a minimum of 10 participants accompanied by a National Escort. However, if the group is operating with less than 10 passengers, you will be accompanied by expert Local Guides in each of the main cities.

Climate - You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which is 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.

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 <http://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 followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure, and will include a travel wallet, lanyard, a travel guide (which includes a suggested packing list) and phrase book, along with your final itinerary and international e-tickets.

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 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Tipping - 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.

Updated: 12 April 2016