



## ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN

### Classic Tour | 13 Days | Physical Level 1

Tashkent – Nukus – Khiva – Bukhara – Samarkand – Tashkent

Discover the wonders of Uzbekistan, a land of ancient cities, grand mosques, and intricately decorated mausoleums, as you follow the historic Silk Road. This journey combines cultural exploration with stunning natural landscapes, from sparkling rivers and serene lakes to rugged mountains, while immersing you in centuries of history and architectural brilliance. Highlights of this in-depth tour include:

- Explore the ancient Toprak Kala Fortress in Khorezm
- Discover the historic monuments of Bukhara including mosques and madrassahs
- Admire the stunning madrassahs at Registan Square in Samarkand
- Experience the lively atmosphere and local goods at Chorsu Bazaar
- Wander through the remarkable collections of the Savitsky Museum in Nukus
- Stroll the streets of the walled city of Ichan Kala in Khiva

## TOUR MAP



## ULTIMATE UZBEKISTAN 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 or local guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

## CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of "Ultimate Uzbekistan", on an excellent value group tour whilst 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 Escort and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

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Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

‘Ultimate Uzbekistan’ falls under a Physical Level 1 category. This indicates a level of fitness that allows you to comfortably remain on your feet with occasional rests. Expect to effortlessly navigate boarding and disembarking from various modes of transport, including coaches and trains. You’ll be walking around remarkable sites and ascending steps to capture those awe-inspiring views!

Please consider:

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing several steps, often without handrails

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travelers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 13 days in duration including overnight international flights in both directions as this is the most likely flight option from Australia.

Travellers booked on ‘Land Only’, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to [info@wendywutours.com.au](mailto:info@wendywutours.com.au) so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Tashkent and end the tour on Day 12 also in Tashkent. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 2 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

## ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It is our intention is 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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Days 1-2: Fly overnight to Tashkent

Meals: D

Fly overnight to Tashkent. On arrival, you will be met in the arrival hall. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to your hotel.

*\*\*Please note that check in on Day 2 is from 8am. If you arrive on an earlier flight and wish to check in before 8am, additional charges apply. Please enquire with our reservations team.*



### Destination Information

**Tashkent** – Tashkent is the capital and largest city of Uzbekistan, as well as the most populated city in ex-Soviet Central Asia, with a population of 3 million people. Much of the city was destroyed in the 1966 Tashkent earthquake, though it was rebuilt afterwards as a model Soviet city.

### Day 3: Tashkent

Meals: B, L, D

Today, explore Uzbekistan's capital, beginning in Tashkent's historic old town. Visit the Barak Khan Madrassah and Tila Shaikh Mosque, home to valuable Islamic archives, before continuing to Chorsu Bazaar, the city's oldest and most vibrant market. Enjoy some free time to wander.

Next, visit a workshop of a famous ceramist family, Akbar and Alisher Rakhimov, where you will learn about the history of ceramics before enjoying tea with freshly baked sweets and pastries. Later, discover modern Tashkent with a visit to Amir Temur Square and the beautifully decorated Tashkent Metro, famed for its striking Soviet-era design.



Sightseeing today is around 3-4 hours on foot.

### Destination Information

**Barak Khan Madrassah** – Built in the 16th century with funds donated by the Tashkent ruler Navruz Ahmed, today this is the oldest educational institution in Tashkent. Though this madrassah is no longer used for its original purpose, it attracts attention for its well-preserved architectural features.

**Tila Shaikh Mosque** – The original mosque was built in 1890 and nowadays one of the largest of its kind in the city of Tashkent. It is part of the famous historical and religious complex Hast Imam, which is situated in front of Barak Khan madrassah.

**Day 4: Tashkent to Khiva via Nukus**

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early and transfer to the airport for your flight to Nukus, a journey of approximately 2 hours.

Your first stop is the Igor Savitsky Museum, often called the “Louvre of the Desert.” Here, you’ll discover one of the world’s most significant collections of Russian avant-garde art, alongside Soviet-era masterpieces and fascinating Karakalpak ethnographic artifacts — all preserved against incredible odds during the Soviet period.



After the museum and lunch, commence the 200 km drive to Khiva, stopping at Chalpik Kala (Tower of Silence), an ancient Zoroastrian funerary site. Also stop at Toprak Kala, an ancient fortress town, believed to have been a royal and administrative centre of Khorezm between the 1st and 5th centuries.

**Destination Information**

**Nukus** — This remote and isolated city hosts one of the best collections of Soviet art in the world. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest city in Uzbekistan.

**Khiva** — This small town may have been founded up to 2,500 years ago and was said to have been discovered by Shem, the son of Noah. The town certainly existed by the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, as a minor fort and trading post on a Silk Road branch to the Caspian Sea and the Volga River.

**Day 5: Khiva**

Meals: B, L, D

Discover the walled inner town of Ichon Kala, Uzbekistan’s first UNESCO World Heritage site, listed in 1990. Visit the Kukhna Ark Fortress, the turquoise-tiled Islom-Khodja Minaret, and the mausoleum of Pakhlavan Makhmud



Continue to Madrassah Rakhimkhon, once a centre for studies in religion, astronomy, geography, and mathematics, then see the striking Kalta Minor Minaret and the 19th-century Tash Hauli Palace, decorated with fine china-blue tiles.

This evening, enjoy a traditional folklore performance demonstrating unique Khoresmian style, music and traditions.

Sightseeing today is around 4 hours on foot.

**Destination Information**

**Ichon Kala** — A well-preserved example of Muslim architecture in Central Asia at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ichon Kala is the inner town of Khiva. The town is surrounded by brick city walls, with four gates at the cardinal points.

## Day 6: Khiva to Bukhara

Meals: B, L, D

Depart for Bukhara across the famous Kyzyl Kum Desert, known as the “Red Sands.” The journey is approximately 470 km and takes 7–8 hours along a route that follows the ancient Great Silk Road. En route, there will be several photo stops to capture the desert landscapes, flora, and fauna, as well as a stop on the banks of the Amudarya River, the fabled “Oxus” of antiquity. Arrive in Bukhara in the late afternoon.


**Destination Information**

**Bukhara** – Bukhara is a city with a history spanning over 2,500 years and was an integral part of the Persian Empire for centuries. The city is home to more than 350 mosques and 100 religious colleges. As a key point along the Silk Road, Bukhara became a major centre of commerce, religion, and culture. Its most famous landmark, the 12th-century Kalon Minaret, is said to have survived Genghis Khan’s invasion because he was struck by its beauty, even as the rest of the city was destroyed.

## Day 7: Bukhara

Meals: B, L, D

Begin a full day discovering Bukhara’s many remarkable sights with a walking tour of the historical centre, starting at the Lab-i-Khauz ensemble, the modern heart of traditional Uzbekistan. Continue to explore both the city’s must-see landmarks and hidden gems, including madrassah Nadir Khon, Devanbegi Khanaga, Mogaki Attari Mosque, the Poi Kalon Minaret and Mosque, and the madrassahs of Ulugbek and Aziz Khan.



Time permitting, watch a plov cooking demonstration and enjoy a delicious lunch of the national dish.

In the afternoon, visit the Ark Fortress, Bolo Hauz Mosque, the Mausoleum of Ismail Samani, and Chashma-Ayub. Conclude the day at the Hunarmand workshops near Lyabikhauz, supported by the UNDP, where you can observe traditional crafts including block printing, metal chasing, suzani embroidery, carving, miniature painting, and gold embroidery.

Sightseeing today is around 4 hours on foot.

**Destination Information**

**Poi Kalon Minaret** – One of the most prominent landmarks of the city, the 47m tall Kalon minaret was constructed in 1127 by the Karakhanid ruler Arslan Khan.

**Ark of Bukhara** – The fortified residence of the rulers of Bukhara but it also housed palaces, temples, barracks, offices, the mint, warehouses, workshops, stables, an arsenal, a prison and nowadays a museum.

**Bolo Hauz Mosque** – Translated the name of the mosque means “The Mosque of the Bala Lake”, which refers to the octagonal pool located in the public forecourt lined with stone steps.

**Day 8: Bukhara to Samarkand**

Meals: B, L, D

Head out of town this morning to see the Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa, the summer residence of the former emir, showing a unique mixture of traditional Russian style architecture mixed with local oriental traditions.

Depart Bukhara for Samarkand by train, a journey time of around 1.5 hours, arriving in the late afternoon. Depending on the group size, luggage will be transferred by road.



**Destination Information**

**Sitora-i-Mokhikhosa** – Located 4 km outside Bukhara, this summer residence dates back to the early 20th century. The first palace was built by Emir Nasrullah and served as a seasonal retreat, showcasing a mix of Russian and Central Asian design elements.

**Samarkand** – Samarkand is Uzbekistan’s second-largest city. Its prominence began in 329 BC when Alexander the Great conquered the nearby city of Maracanda. Renowned for its beauty, Samarkand became a hub for builders, craftsmen, philosophers, and scientists, growing into a legendary city along the Silk Road. From Samarkand, the Silk Road diverged east to China, south to India, and west to Persia, making the city a vital centre of commerce and culture.

**Day 9: Samarkand**

Meals: B, L, D

Today, explore the highlights of Samarkand and its city centre, beginning at Registan Square to admire its three stunning madrassahs: the Ulug-Bek Madrasah (15th century), the Tillya-Kori Madrasah (17th century), and the Sher-Dor Madrasah (17th century). Visit Gur Emir, the mausoleum of the great conqueror Tamerlane.

Continue to the Bibi-Khanum Mosque, the grandest structure of Amir Temur’s era, before exploring the Silk Road bazaar and the Shahi Zinda necropolis. The day concludes with a visit to Bagizagan Winery, including a tour of the museum and a wine tasting experience.



Sightseeing today is around 3-4 hours on foot.

## Destination Information

**Registan Square** – One of Samarkand's most iconic landmarks, Registan Square is framed on three sides by the turquoise-tiled Sher-Dor and Tillya-Kori Madrassahs. Both the interiors and exteriors are richly decorated with ornamental glazed brickwork, mosaics, and carved marble. The square is celebrated as an architectural gem of Islamic art and is particularly notable for its rare depiction of animals in Islamic decoration. Nearby, a large bazaar offers a wide variety of goods including nuts, fresh and dried fruit, spices, honey, and local crafts.

**Shah-i-Zinda** – This mausoleum complex, whose name means “Tomb of the Living King,” is located northeast of the city. It surrounds what is believed to be the grave of Qusam ibn-Abbas, a cousin of the Prophet Mohammed who is thought to have brought Islam to the region in the 7th century. The complex features a series of quiet, beautifully decorated rooms, making it both a spiritual and architectural highlight of Samarkand.

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### Day 10: Samarkand | Shakhrisabz

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, travel approximately 90 km south of Samarkand to Shakhrisabz, the birthplace of the great conqueror Amir Timur (Tamerlane). The journey takes around 2 hours. Explore the city's highlights, including the remnants of Ak-Sarai Palace, the Dorus-Tilavat cemetery, and the Kok-Gumbas Mosque. Return to Samarkand in the afternoon.



## Destination Information

**Shakhrisabz** – A 2700-year-old city that has played a major role in the history of the Central Asia region, mostly due to it being the birthplace of Amir Timur in 1336. During the early years of the Timurid Dynasty, the city enjoyed his considerable patronage.

**Ak-Sarai Palace** – One of the greatest buildings in Shakhrisabz, Ak-Sarai Palace means ‘White Palace’. Timur’s most ambitious project, construction began in 1380 and took 24 years to complete, a few months before the death of the great ruler.

**Dorus Tilavat Cemetery** – The original burial complex of Timur’s ancestors and was formed after the death of the eminent religious leader Shamsiddin Kulal, the founder of Sufism, the spiritual mentor of Emir Taragay and of Timur himself.

**Kok-Gumbas Mosque** – Construction on the Kok-Gumbas Mosque began in 1435 on the order of Timur’s grandson, Ukug Beg. The name translates to ‘blue dome’.

## Day 11: Samarkand to Tashkent

Meals: B, L, D

Continue exploring Samarkand with a visit to Ulugbek's Observatory, built in 1428–1429 by Ulugbek, the grandson of Amir Timur, followed by a visit to the ancient settlement of Afrosiab.

Enjoy some leisure time for shopping in Samarkand before transferring to the train station in the late afternoon for your 2-hour journey to Tashkent. Depending on the group size, luggage will be transferred by road.



## Destination Information

**Ulugh Beg Observatory** – Ulugh Beg was Tamerlane's grandson and a great astronomer. During his rule in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, he summoned the great minds of the Islamic world to Samarkand.

**Afrosiab** – Located on the spurs of the Chupan-Ata hills northeast of present-day Samarkand. According to legend, it was here on the banks of the river Siab that the Turanian king and hero Afrosiab, a figure from the folk epic Shahnama, founded the town that later became the capital of Sogdiana.

## Day 12: Depart Tashkent

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book



## UZBEKISTAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

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A visa is not required for Australian passport holders for a stay of up to 30 days.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

As Central Asian immigration and customs officials are notoriously strict, please make sure you keep all forms for when you exit the country. A lost customs or immigration form could result in a fine.

When entering Uzbekistan, you will need to complete a foreign currency declaration form and keep a copy yourself. Failure to do so accurately or exiting the country with more currency than when you entered may result in delays, fines or the additional sums being confiscated.

Some medications available over the counter or by prescription in other countries, such as sleeping tablets, may be illegal or restricted in Uzbekistan. You should declare all prescription medications and other restricted items on arrival in Uzbekistan and carry a copy of the prescription with you.

### INSURANCE:

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It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours.

We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time. We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

## EATING IN UZBEKISTAN:

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All meals are included in our fully inclusive Classic tours, 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 different ways they are prepared and cooked.

Uzbek cuisine is influenced by Middle Eastern, Turkic, and Central Asian traditions. Typical ingredients include mutton, chicken, rice, noodles, vegetables, legumes, yogurt, dried fruits, and mild spices such as cumin and coriander. Signature dishes include plov (rice pilaf with meat and vegetables), lagman (handmade noodles with vegetables and meat), shashlyk (grilled kebabs), and naan (flatbread). Breakfasts often feature naan with ayran (a yogurt-based drink), savoury noodles or porridge, eggs, honey, jam, or toast. Black tea is the most common drink, and coffee can usually be requested. Fresh cow's milk is rarely available. Lunch is the main meal of the day, with dinner usually a lighter version of lunch.

Alcohol is available in Uzbekistan, though it is not included in your tour price. Vodka is often offered in restaurants, and tea (Chay) remains the staple beverage at meals. Uzbek cuisine is hearty and often rich in meat, oil, and dough.

If you have any **food allergies or any other preferences**, please let us know at time of booking. Your guide will do their best to ensure that your requirements are met, however, 'no guarantees can be made'. Long driving distances, road conditions or flight times may delay or alter your meal times, which could mean a dedicated meal is replaced by those supplied on the aircraft. Vegetarian only alternatives are not usually available though Uzbekistani restaurants are more flexible. There are always plenty of salads, vegetables and bread offered at most meals.

## DEVELOPMENT AND WHAT TO EXPECT:

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Travelling in Central Asia offers both rewards and challenges. While the country is developing rapidly, it still differs from Australia in terms of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility and safety may not always match those at home. For example, you may encounter road hazards such as uneven surfaces, unmarked holes, or minimal safety barriers. All Wendy Wu Tours suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum, prioritising your wellbeing throughout the journey.

Many former Soviet countries in Central Asia were isolated and underdeveloped by Western standards for decades, and infrastructure in some areas still reflects this. Even in newly built or high-standard hotels, staff may be less experienced and service can sometimes appear abrupt. Roads may be in poor condition and officials may occasionally act unpredictably. English is generally limited outside of hotels (except among younger generations), and the Cyrillic alphabet is still widely used, though Uzbekistan is gradually shifting toward the Latin script. Your guide will be indispensable in helping navigate these differences. We have found that travelers who approach the region with a sense of humour and adventure, and who accept that delays or minor disruptions can occur, are those who gain the most rewarding experiences.

## ACCOMMODATION:

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All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, TV, and a 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.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star 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 Central Asia. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

## TIPPING POLICY:

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Central Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognise 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.

## GROUP SIZE:

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. On Classic Tours, will 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 10 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.

## TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used throughout the tour.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class. Pre-seat flight allocation is not available.

**Trains:** The “Afrosiab” train is used. Depending on the group size, luggage may be transferred by road due to limited storage space onboard. Please ensure your suitcase is lockable.

## **SOUVENIRS:**

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We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that 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 that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

## **PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:**

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Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

## **PACKING LIST AND CLIMATE:**

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Temperatures for most of your time spent in Uzbekistan will range from 23c to 35c between May and late September.

Modest clothing such as long lightweight pants and shirts that cover your shoulders for men and women is highly recommended. Headscarves for ladies are required for visits to mosques and madrassas throughout Central Asia.

Women should bring a scarf from home, as you are required to cover your head at some attractions.

Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

## **VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:**

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We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

**BEFORE YOU LEAVE:**

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

**AFTER YOUR BOOKING:**

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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