



# Vietnam Trails Dossier

Go Beyond Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 3

Saigon - Mekong Delta - Hoi An - Hue - Hanoi - Sapa - Halong Bay

The perfect length for a more in-depth exploration of Vietnam, start in the very south in Saigon, venturing north through Hoi An, Hanoi and Halong Bay before heading up into the highlands to spectacular Sapa.

- Drift on the Mekong Delta
- Enjoy cooking in Hoi An
- Cruise the Perfume River
- Explore Hanoi by cyclo
- Discover Sapa's local villages
- Admire the stunning Halong Bay
- Marvel at the Quintessence of Tonkin show

## TOUR MAP



## VIETNAM TRAILS 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 Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

*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.*

### GO BEYOND TOURS:

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Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

### PHYSICAL LEVEL 3:

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All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

Vietnam Trails is rated as a **physical level 3** tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for 2-3 hours and covering longer distances. Walking or other activities such as cycling will be at a gentle pace and will involve straightforward terrain.

- On several days, there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time including some hiking in Sapa
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats throughout the tour often without assistance.

Of course, our National Escorts 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.

### JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 16 days in duration including overnight international flights. Please note, some flights may depart and arrive on Day 2.

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 1 in Saigon and end the tour on Day 15 in Hanoi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 1 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's 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'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- The Notre Dame Cathedral is currently undertaking restorations which will continue until 2023. During this time customers are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, they can view it from the outside

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Saigon

Meals: D

Fly to Saigon where you will be met at the airport in the arrival hall by your Local Guide 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.



#### 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.

### Day 2: Saigon

Meals: B, L, D

Confront the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels. 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 offers a fascinating window into the hardship and traumas of war. This afternoon explore modern day Saigon with its heady mix of local culture and colonial influences. You'll pass the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Central Post Office, stroll along Dong Khoi Street, the Reunification Palace and the chilling War Remnants Museum.



Please note: The Notre Dame Cathedral will be under renovation until 2023. During this time, we are unable to enter the Cathedral; however, we can view it from the outside.

#### 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.

**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 30th April 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.

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**Day 3: Mekong Delta****Meals: B, L, D**

Drive 2 and a half hours 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, travelling by motorised, wooden boats between the islands and changing 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. Return to Saigon this afternoon.

**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 with a little extra.

**Day 4: Saigon to Hoi An****Meals: B, L, D**

Fly 1 hour and 15 minutes to Danang and transfer to the charming town of Hoi An. This afternoon enjoy a walking tour of the narrow and ancient streets of this charming town. Visit one of Hoi An's oldest homes, built over 200 years ago and still occupied by the descendants of the merchant family that originally built it. You will also visit the traditional Hoi An Market, the Quan Cong Chinese Temple and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Later visit the Reaching Out arts and crafts workshop.

**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.

**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****Meals: B, L, D**

This morning, head to the colourful market to experience the amazing sights, sounds and aromas. There will be an opportunity to interact with the local sellers and purchase some of the ingredients to be used in our cooking class today. Next, head to a restaurant, where you will be given demonstrations of how to make some of the region's specialties, have a go at cooking yourself before enjoying the dishes you have prepared for lunch. The remainder of the afternoon is free at your leisure to explore the ancient town or go to the beach.

**Day 6: Hoi An****Meals: B, L, D**

Enjoy a free day in Hoi An at leisure.

**Day 7: Hoi An to Hue****Meals: B, L, D**

This morning drive approximately 4 hours to Hue, this journey will take you over the scenic Hai Van Pass. Hue is the epitome of Vietnam's dynamic past and considered a scholarly city. Upon arrival, visit the Imperial Citadel and the Forbidden Purple City which is still being restored many years after the destruction caused by street fighting and bombing during the American War in Vietnam. Explore the Royal Tomb of Minh Mang; the complex comprises of almost 40 monuments and is surrounded by gardens and pools, making it one of the more beautiful tombs. Continue by road to Thien Mu Pagoda and take a cruise on the Perfume River.

**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.

**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 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.

**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.

**Thien Mu Pagoda** - This 7-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 8: Hue - Hanoi****Meals: B, L, D**

Fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to the charming city of Hanoi this morning. After lunch, enjoy a tour of the city including the Ho Chi Minh Quarter, One Pillar Pagoda and the Confucian Temple of Literature. Wrap up your day with a traditional Vietnamese coffee – with an egg twist.

**Destination Information**

**Hanoi** - With a population of approximately four 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.

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

**Day 9: Hanoi - Sapa****Meals: B, L, D**

Take a road trip into Vietnam's northern Highlands, arriving in Sapa in the late afternoon. The vast panoramas of ribboning rice terraces that snake their way across these highlands are a testament to the extraordinary farming skills of the many communities in the region. Your hotel here will be your base for the next three nights.

You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Sapa. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Hanoi and picked up on your return.

**Day 10: Sapa - Ta Van - Lao Chai - Sapa****Meals: B, L, D**

Transfer to the small Giay village of Ta Van, in the breathtaking Muong Hoa Valley. Enjoy a scenic 1 and a half hour walk through the tranquil rice terraces towards the Black H'mong village of Lao Chai. Marvel at the cascading paddy fields that cling to the mountainside and take in one of Vietnam's most breathtaking views before heading over to nearby Lao Chai village where you will learn the art of Batik painting. Join a hands-on master class led by a local expert and take your creation home. The day concludes with a stroll to the main road before transferring back to Sapa town.



Please note: Approximately 1 hour driving/ 1.5 hours walking

**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.

**Batik Painting** - The beautiful textiles of the Black H'mong are famous around the world and Batik is a traditional part of H'mong culture. Under threat from modernization, Batik is now only practiced by a handful of villagers. By taking part will be supporting a sustainable tourism project that supports local women and ensures this amazing art form is handed down to the next generation

**Day 11: Sapa - Lao Cai - Suoi Ho - Ma Tra****Meals: B, L, D**

Start this half-day walking tour by visiting the rustic village of Suoi Ho. Take a stroll through its sleepy streets and get a glimpse of village life. Later, enjoy views of the stunning countryside as you walk along the Suoi Ho River, en-route to the second village of Ma Tra. Soak in its vibrant culture and visit its quaint Christian church, before being picked up by car and returning to Sapa Town. Walking today will be approximately 3 and half hours.



**Day 12: Sapa - Fansipan - Hanoi****Meals: B, L, D**

This morning you will have a chance to reach to the summit of Vietnam's highest peak, Mount Fansipan by a brand new cable car to admire stunning views of Muong Hoa valley and Hoang Lien National Forest from above. The cable car transports you from the base of the 3,143-metre Fansipan mountain to its highest point within 15 to 20 minutes. It stops near the top of Fansipan mountain for fantastic photo opportunities and you then have the option to walk up about 600 steps to reach the summit. Back at the bottom of the mountain continue your tour visiting Sapa Museum. Later transfer to Hanoi.



Taking the steps to the summit of Mount Fansipan is optional, please be aware that they will be slippery in wet weather and require a good level of fitness.

**Destination Information**

**Mount Fansipan** - Known as the 'Roof of Indochina,' the 3,143m high Mount Fansipan is located in Vietnam's Lao Cai province very near to the town of Sapa.

**Day 13: Hanoi - Halong Bay****Meals: B, L, D**

Arrive early in Hanoi and freshen up before driving 4 hours to Halong, where you will take an overnight cruise to the far-most corners of the bay by boat. Boarding your 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.

Enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities (which are subject to change due to cruise selection and weather conditions).

Sightseeing includes visiting underground caves on the islands, which require climbing up and down steps inside and outside of the caves. End the day on deck with a drink in hand to watch the sunset over the bay followed by a freshly prepared dinner, before retiring to your cabin for the night.



You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Halong Bay. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Hanoi and picked up your return.

Please note: 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. 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.

### 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. Unique 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.

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#### Day 14: Halong Bay - Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

Spend the morning sailing through Halong Bay. After an early lunch (or brunch meal) disembark your cruise and return to Hanoi. This evening, attend The Quintessence of Tonkin show, an artistic open-air performance celebrating the rich history of northern Vietnam.



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#### Day 15-16: Depart Hanoi

Meals: B

Fly home to Australia, arriving the same or following day.

Late check-out is not included in our South East Asia group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

## VIETNAM TRAILS TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

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 Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

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

### INSURANCE:

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We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also 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 original.

### EATING IN VIETNAM:

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Southeast Asia 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. Whilst Southeast Asian 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 Southeast Asia, 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, appetizers 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 Thailand and some other countries in Southeast Asia, fork and spoon 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 Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Those with dietary requirements - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Southeast Asia. We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

#### **GROUP SIZE:**

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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 18 travellers in a Go Beyond Tour, 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.

#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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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 3 to 4-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 Vietnam. 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 or Local Guide. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but cannot be guaranteed.

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

**Solo travellers:** If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

### PORTERAGE:

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Please be aware that porterage is not included on our tours in Vietnam. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

### TRANSPORT:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. **However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).** Roads in South East 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 Southeast Asia 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 customers use seatbelts where available and remain seated 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.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast 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.

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.

#### **DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM:**

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Although Southeast Asia 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 you National Escort or Local Guides.

#### **VIETNAMESE PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:**

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If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese 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 Vietnam, Tet Holiday is usually in late January or early February. International Labour Day is on 1st May, Reunification Day is on 30th April, and National Independence Day is on 2nd September.

#### **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 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.

#### **LUGGAGE:**

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All travellers are limited to 2 items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and 1 piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

#### **PACKING LIST & CLIMATE:**

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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](http://www.weather.com)



### 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.

### EXCHANGING CASH:

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It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Vietnam. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Vietnam, however other currencies such as

Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series (2003 onwards) to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange, apart from in some national banks in Vietnam, such as Vietcombank.

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.

### CLIMBING STEPS:

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Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. 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.

### APPROPRIATE DRESS:

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Vietnam has many religions, cultures and histories. Please be considerate of the local beliefs and customs and dress with consideration.

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques.

Religious sites and homes throughout Southeast Asia – for Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory, so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off and carry a pair of thick socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces. The following itinerary will indicate when you need to consider this.

### 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)

Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers. We work closely with our airline partners to take effective measures to protect you from contracting and spreading COVID-19, in accordance with legal requirements and government guidelines. Please follow the below link for more details on our COVID vaccination policy: <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-visas/covid-vaccination-policy/>

### COVID SAFE:

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Your safety and well-being will always be our Number 1 priority which is why we've instituted the most stringent COVID health and safety protocols on all of tours. As we continue to monitor current restrictions and operational impacts, these protocols will evolve, and we will provide detailed guidelines for your particular tour prior to departure. For further details please go to the following link <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/about-us/travel-with-confidence/>

**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.

Updated: September 2023