



PHILIPPINES DISCOVERY

2024 – Go Beyond Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 4
Manila – pampanga – banaue – Baguio – Vigan – Bohol - Cebu

On this 15-day adventure you will uncover stunning scenery – from the vivid green rice terraces of Luzon to the magnificent Chocolate Hills of Bohol and powder white beaches. Combined with intriguing history and remarkable culture, this tour will take you right into the heart of this magnificent destination and its people. Mabuhay!

- Visit Mt. Pinatubo's Stunning Volcanic crater lake
- Hike Luzon's scenic rice terraces
- Discover Vigan's preserved Spanish architecture
- Explore Bohol's scenic rivers and famous Chocolate Hills
- See Sagada hanging coffins
- Meet tiny tarsiers at the Philippine Tarsier Sanctuary

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

TOUR MAP



PHILLIPINES DISCOVERY 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
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

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:

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

PHYSICAL LEVEL 4:

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.

'Philippines Discovery' is rated as a **physical level 4** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time in vehicles rather than hiking or travelling to remote locations. You'll be getting on and off coaches, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be periods of walking whilst sightseeing, often on steep and uneven ground.
- There are days of driving on rough unsealed roads or tracks, and a small number of days which involve driving over 5 hours.
- There are extended hikes on Day 4 and Day 6. Please see the itinerary for more information.

Of course, our 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. If you require any more information about the pace of the tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights. Please note that depending on flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart 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. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations. Join the tour on Day 2 in Manila and end the tour on Day 14 in Cebu. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1-2: Arrive Manila**

Meals: B, L, D

At Manila Airport, you will be met by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel. Your afternoon is at leisure until this evening's welcome dinner.

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

**Destination Information**

Manila – Manila is a rapidly developing city with a fascinating history and an up-and-coming culinary scene. This city is fast paced with multi-cultural influences and a vibrant nightlife.

Day 3: Manila - Pampanga

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, enjoy a tour of Intramuros, the historic centre of Manila. The old walled city has been the base of many of the occupying empires who have held the Philippines in recent centuries, from the colonial Spanish period through the British Empire to the Japanese occupation of WWII, which commenced just a few hours after the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Much of the city was destroyed during the Battle of Manila in WWII, which was some of the fiercest ground fighting that US troops saw in the Pacific Theatre. Today, it is a much-loved heritage site with many stories to tell.



Later, head north to the hills of Pampanga, where you can get to grips with Filipino flavours at a cooking class. Check in at your hotel before dinner.

Destination Information

Intramuros – At the time of the Spanish Empire, only the walled city of Intramuros was considered to be the true Manila, its name means 'within the walls'. This was the seat of the Spanish governor-general during the colonial period, and was considered the religious and cultural centre of the Spanish East Indies. It was also here that the Philippines Campaign was finally ended by the brutal, month-long Battle of Manila, resulting in the country's liberation from occupying Japanese forces.

The Philippines Campaign – Codenamed Operation Musketeer, the Philippines Campaign was the American, Mexican, Australian and Filipino campaign to defeat and expel the occupying Japanese forces from the Philippines in WWII. Japan's invasion of the Philippines had taken place within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

San Agustin Church - Completed in 1607, this baroque Catholic Church is the oldest stone church in the Philippines and holds UNESCO World Heritage Status. It has survived many earthquakes, and served as a hospital for some of them; however, one tower finally succumbed to a series of major earthquakes in July 1880. Occupying Japanese forces used the church as a concentration camp for local hostages during the month-long Battle of Manila.

Fort Santiago - This defensive fortress was built by Miguel López de Legazpi, the Spanish conquistador and later Philippine governor-general, in 1571. During the later British occupation of the 1760s, it was used as the base of operations for the British Royal Navy. In WWII, the occupying Japanese forces utilised its dungeons and storage cells as a prison for hundreds of local Filipino prisoners, along with some 600 American POWs.

Pampanga – Located in the shadow of Mt Arayat, sitting on the wide plains of Central Luzon, Pampanga is known for its hot air balloon and lantern festivals, as well as its strong Christian traditions.

Day 4: Mt Pinatubo Hike

Meals: B, L, D

Early this morning, drive to the base of Mount Pinatubo to hike to the crater lake at its summit. You will travel to Capas Tourism Office (1 hour from the hotel), where the group will typically be required to take a blood pressure test before ascending. A first aider will usually join your group.



Transfer to 4WDs and drive to the trail's starting point. Please note the trail's starting point is entirely dependent on recent weather conditions and can vary daily. It will generally be between 3-6 km (2-4 miles) from the summit; the drier the recent weather, the closer the 4WD can approach.

The hike itself takes approximately three hours uphill and two to three hours back down, after which the 4WDs will transfer you back to the bus. Good shoes and a hat are required, and hikers typically take their own snacks. You may have to cross multiple streams, the flow of which depends on recent weather conditions. The gradient varies from steep to gentle.

You will spend around 45 minutes at the crater, depending on the pace of the group. The ascent must begin by 8am latest, and the descent must begin by noon latest - these are local safety rules. On the descent from the crater, pass through Tarukan Village, a settlement of the Aetas of Capas, who are among the 12 million indigenous peoples in the Philippines.

The guide will go at the pace of the group. However, if you prefer to stay in town and not join the hike, please let the guide know before the group's departure time from the hotel.

Destination Information

Mount Pinatubo – The eruption of this volcano in 1991 led to the evacuation of 20,000 people and great damage to the local communities. A decade or so later, the indigenous population returned to their ancestral lands to start rebuilding.

Day 5: Travel to Banaue

Meals: B, L, D

Today you will be on the road, transferring to the northern highlands (cordilleras) and gateway to the rice terraces of Banaue. En route, visit San Guillermo Church in the town of Bacolor. Despite being half-buried by volcanic flow in 1991, this Baroque church still serves as a local place of worship.



Arrive in Banaue. This highland region is the centre of Ifugao culture and home to dramatic rice terraces. The region features ancient mud-walled and stone-walled rice terraces, surrounded by incredible mountain scenery.

Destination Information

Bacolor – This small town on Pampanga was restored following the eruption of Mount Pinatubo and is known for the iconic San Guillermo Church.

Day 6: Rice Terraces Hike

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, board an 18-passenger jeepney and drive further up into the highlands. Enjoy a trek through the Hapao rice terraces. At the top of the terraces, arrive at a hot spring, where (if time permits) you can bathe in the stream before lunch.



The guide will select the exact hike based on the ability of the group. Trails may be slippery if wet, and you must go at your own pace.

Destination Information

Jeepney - The Philippines relied on utility vehicles in the pre-war period, but many of these were destroyed in the war. Consequently, the country began to rely on the use of U.S. military jeeps left over from the war, and these later evolved into the modern jeepney. The word "jeepney" is a portmanteau of 'jeep' and the pre-war slang term 'jitney' (a van used as a shared taxi or private minibus).

Day 7: Sagada Day Trip

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast this morning take a drive to Sagada which is located two-hour drive from Banaue via beautiful mountain passes. In this region you will find the famous burial caves as well as the hanging coffins suspended on rock faces.

Enjoy a full day tour before returning to the Banaue Hotel.

**Destination Information**

Sagada - This quaint region consists of breathtaking cloud-covered mountains, magnificent caves and dramatic waterfalls. The town is known as a quiet refuge and home to indigenous communities. Few conquistadors reached Sagada, which was protected for many years by its remote nature. There is very little local development; this is one of the few places in the Philippines that preserved its indigenous culture with relatively little colonial influence.

Hanging Coffins - This method of burial is an unusual ritual that has been practised by the local Kankanaey people for centuries. The elderly carve their own coffins from hollowed logs. After death, the bodies are placed in the fetal position. To qualify for such a burial, the deceased must have been a distinguished community leader. The height at which the coffin is placed reflects the deceased's social status.

Day 8: Baguio, the City of Pines

Meals: B, L, D

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and travel to the pleasant city of Baguio, which has several places of interest including a presidential mansion, market area, weaving workshops and the gardens of Burnham Park.

This interesting city began life as an American hill station in the 1900s, built on the site of an indigenous town called Kafagway. The influence of American city planner Daniel Burnham remains obvious throughout the town, even a century on.

**Destination Information**

Baguio – Baguio, the City of Pines, is a university town which presents a welcoming blend of hill tribe culture and urban dwellers. It serves as a nice stopping point between the highlands and the coast, and its cooler climate means it was chosen as 'the summer capital of the Philippines'.

Day 9: Vigan

Meals: B, L, D

Head to the coast today and arrive at the colonial settlement of Vigan - a charming UNESCO World Heritage town facing the South China Sea. Wander the cobblestone streets, lined with colonial houses, museums and pottery workshops. This is one of the best-preserved Spanish colonial towns in the Philippines.



Vigan has been a key location in many battles. It was a trading port long before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century. It was recaptured by locals late in the 19th century, shortly prior to the American occupation. In WWII, it was one of the first places in the Philippines to be invaded by Japan (December 10, 1941) and not liberated until 1945.

Destination Information

Vigan – Vigan is a stroll through Spanish colonial history, and the thoroughfare of Crisologo Street is a wonderful spot to enjoy the local empanadas or ice cream.

Day 10: Laoag to Manila

Meals: B, L, D

Continue north to the city of Laoag for some light sightseeing and admire its coastal sand dunes. This afternoon, you will fly from Laoag to Manila, with one night in Manila before tomorrow morning's flight to Bohol.



***Please Note ** The local flight schedule has recently improved. Where possible, Wendy Wu Tours will instead book a same-day onward connection to Bohol, increasing your time in Bohol to 3Nights instead of the scheduled 2Nights. If this is the case, please note that you will be required to collect your luggage and check in for the second flight again in Manila.*

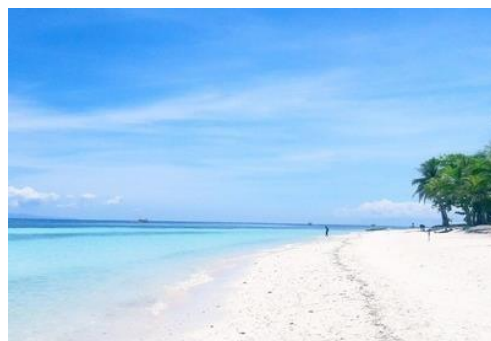
Destination Information

Laoag – Laoag is a northern city with some history behind it, known for its nearby sand dunes and UNESCO church. St Williams Cathedral & Sinking Bell Tower – First built in 1612, the church is known for its Italian Renaissance design. The bell tower is said to be sinking at a rate of an inch per year because it was built on sandy foundations despite its size and mass.

Day 11: Fly to Bohol

Meals: B, L, D

Fly to Bohol and explore the charms of Panglao island (connected to Bohol's main island by road bridge). See the stalactite studded Hinagdanan Cave and the lovely Bohol Bee Farm, where you might like to try an organic ice cream while admiring the glittering ocean views.



Any time before dinner is at leisure. .

Destination Information

Panglao Island – This island is connected to Bohol by road bridge. It is known for picture perfect beaches, including the vibrant Alona Beach, which is a popular spot for a cocktail.

Hinagdanan Cave - This atmospheric limestone cave is a popular spot thanks to its tiny, crystal-clear lagoon, some 12 metres deep. It was once used as a hideout for locals during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in WWII. Please note that the limestone is naturally slippery and good footwear is recommended.

Bohol Bee Farm - This rustic organic farm is well-known on the island for its homemade honey products, produced by the farm's bees, as well as its variety of unique ice cream flavours such as malunggay (moringa), jackfruit, durian, lemongrass, pandan and more.

Day 12: Bohol Countryside Tour

Meals: B, L, D

Venture out on a tour of the countryside. Admire the iconic Chocolate Hills, a rolling geological landscape of dome-shaped hills, before joining a lunchtime river cruise. Later, continue to the Philippine Tarsier Sanctuary in Corella to learn about conservation efforts to protect the world's second smallest primate.

**Destination Information**

Chocolate Hills – A scenic geological formation with hundreds of round hills, spread over an area of more than 50 sq kilometres. They are covered in green grass that turn brown during the dry season and resembles chocolate drops, hence the name.

Tarsier Sanctuary – As the smallest primate in the world, tarsiers are intriguing creatures with large round eyes and long fingers. The sanctuary is essentially a large forest run by the Philippine Tarsier Foundation and dedicated to the conservation of the endangered animals and their habitat.

Day 13: Cebu Island

Meals: B, L, D

Take the ferry to Cebu and enjoy a short city tour. Stop for a photo opportunity at the Roof of Cebu, the highest point on the island, where you can enjoy a refreshing beer as you take in the incredible views.

Check into your hotel before this evening's farewell dinner.

**Destination Information**

Cebu – The 'second city' in the Philippines is a bustling commercial centre, with lively bars, eateries and shopping opportunities.

Day 14-15: Depart Cebu

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast this morning, today is at your leisure until it is time to transfer to the airport for our flight back to Australia. Due to flight schedules, you may arrive home on the following day.

Late check-out is not included in our Southeast 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.



PHILIPPINES DISCOVERY TOUR TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into the Philippines for stays 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 New Zealand.

At the time of booking Visa conditions may have changed, currently no visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

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 SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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. The Philippines in particular, have some excellent local dishes worth trying such as tasty curries, fresh seafood dishes and lechon (suckling pig), mechado (beef) and fritada (pork or chicken prepared with vegetables).

The cuisine in the Philippines is typically has a mix of both Chinese and Spanish influences with unique Filipino twists that make for some memorable dining experiences. Like many other Asian nations, rice is a staple and usually prepared at most meals. The Philippines is also known for its desserts as the ice cream and smoothies are famous for being both refreshing and delicious.

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

All the restaurants we visit will be researched and inspected regularly to ensure that they follow the strictest health, cleanliness, and safety guidelines. 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.

**PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS
AT TIME OF BOOKING**

DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES:

Although the Philippines is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities in some areas. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the New Zealand. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the New Zealand; 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 local guides.

TIPPING POLICY:

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in US Dollars and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

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.

LUGGAGE:

We recommend that you do not exceed 20kgs of checked in baggage on your international flights as many of the domestic airlines within Southeast Asia that we use have a luggage allowance of 20kgs. In addition to this you are permitted to take 5kgs as hand baggage. Please Note: Any electronic devices using lithium batteries (including spare batteries) must be carried in your hand baggage and not put in your checked-in baggage. This applies to all flights.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities.

Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and Southeast Asia.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. 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 need.

EXCHANGING CASH:

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities. US Dollars are easily exchanged however other currencies such as New Zealand Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged.

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. The local currency is the Philippine Peso although tipping can be done in US Dollars.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

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.

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.

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.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence 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:

The Philippines has many religions, cultures and histories. 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.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. However, minibuses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).

Roads in Southeast Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times.

Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Seatbelts: Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in 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 where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

Air: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-flight seat allocation is not available on internal flight sectors.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your doctor or local Health Centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safe Travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand 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 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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