



Laos and Cambodia Unveiled

Classic Tour | 18 Days | Physical Level 2

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

This epic dual-destination adventure takes you from the lush mountain landscapes of untouched Laos to the treasures of historic Cambodia. En route, swim in turquoise waterfalls, meet local families and explore Angkor's extraordinary temples.

- Be charmed by quaint Vientiane
- Admire scenic Vang Vieng
- Witness the Takbat alms ceremony
- Be captivated by Angkor
- See local life on Tonle Sap
- Visit colonial Battambang
- Explore Phnom Penh by rickshaw

TOUR MAP



LAOS AND CAMBODIA UNVEILED TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Laos and Cambodia visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- 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.

CLASSIC TOURS:

See the classic sights in the company of expert guides so you can really understand the history and culture of the destination. On our classic tours we take care of everything, leaving you to sit back and enjoy the experience to the full. The tours are fully inclusive with all meals and a comprehensive touring programme.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

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.

‘Laos and Cambodia Unveiled’ is rated as a **physical level 2** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it’s more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You’ll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time.
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats 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:

The tour is 18 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 visa fees and 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 Vientiane and end the tour on Day 17 in Phnom Penh. 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 Vientiane**

Meals: D

Fly to Vientiane where you will be met at the airport arrivals hall 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 travel to your hotel for check in.

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**

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

Day 3: Vientiane

Meals: B, L, D

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

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

**Destination Information**

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

COPE - Cooperative Orthotic & Prosthetic Enterprise is a non-profit organisation sourcing walking aids and prosthetic limbs for survivors of land mines.

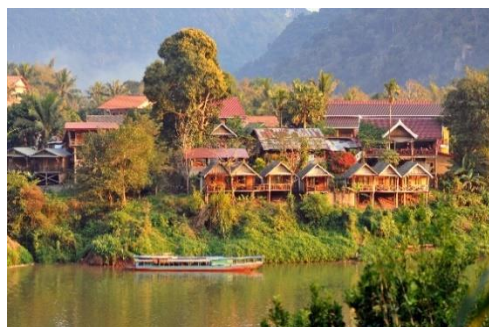
That Luang Stupa - A gold-covered large Buddhist stupa in the centre of Vientiane. Since its initial establishment, suggested to be in the 3rd century, the stupa has undergone several reconstructions as recently as the 1930's due to foreign invasions of the area.

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

Day 4: Vientiane – Vang Vieng

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, visit the Buddha Park located 25 kilometres from city centre, an open-air sculpture park with giant sculptures of Buddha and Hindu deities. Return to Vientiane where we will visit the Contemporary Art Museum displaying many art works of Laos. After lunch transfer 3.5 hours to Vang Vieng.



This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel and soak up the atmosphere on the Song riverbanks.

Destination Information

Vang Vieng - A town in Vientiane Province about 4 hours bus ride north of the capital. The town lies on the Nam Song River. The most notable feature of the area is the karst hill landscape surrounding the town.

Day 5: Vang Vieng

Meals: B, L, D

Today venture across the Nam Song river to visit the Tham Chang cave, used as a bunker during the Chinese-Ho invasion in the early nineteenth century. Sightseeing here involves approximately 1 hour on foot over uneven surfaces and climbing steps to get up to the cave.



Later, enjoy an easy walking tour on the banks of the Nam Song River.

Destination Information

Tham Chang Cave - Tham Jang is a cave just to the southwest of Vang Vieng, Laos. The cave is reached by crossing a bridge that spans across the Nam Song River. You will need to then climb a long flight of steps to the entrance. A spring is located about 50m inside the cave.

Day 6: Vang Vieng – Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

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

**Destination Information**

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

Day 7: Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

This morning visit Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Visoun.

Later, board a boat to cruise the mighty Mekong up to the sacred caves of Pak Ou, known for the hundreds of miniature Buddha sculptures that reside within.

Return to Luang Prabang visiting local villages to witness the daily life of the local people and their cottage industries.

**Destination Information**

Wat Xieng Thong - A Buddhist temple (wat), located on the northern tip of the peninsula of Luang Prabang, Laos. Wat Xieng Thong is one of the most important of Lao monasteries and remains a significant monument to the spirit of religion, royalty and traditional art. There are over 20 structures on the grounds including a sim, shrines, pavilions and residences, in addition to its gardens of various flowers, ornamental shrubs and trees.

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

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

Day 8: Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

Visit the National Museum this morning. Drive 1 hour to Kuang Si Waterfall and the Bear Rescue Centre. En route, stop at Ock Pop Tok weaving centre for a visit. Sightseeing at the waterfall will involve around 1 hour of light walking and on the way up to the waterfall you follow a bush walking track which has a slight upward gradient.



It is possible to take a swim in the river near the falls; if you wish to do this, please remember to bring along your swimsuit and a towel. Changing rooms are available on site.

Destination Information

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

Kuang Si Waterfalls – A 3-tier waterfall about 29km south of Luang Prabang. The falls begin in shallow pools atop a steep hillside. These lead to the main fall with a 60m cascade. The falls are accessed via a trail to a left of the falls. Water collects in numerous turquoise blue pools as it flows downstream. The many cascades that result are typical of travertine waterfalls. There are walkways and bridges for your enjoyment. Most of the pools are open to swimming

Day 9: Luang Prabang – Siem Reap

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early this morning to view Takbat, a Buddhist ceremony before visiting the impressive Wat Mai and climbing the Phousi Hill for panoramic views of the city. Continue to visit the impressive Wat Mai and local market.



Later fly 1 and a half hours to the fascinating city of Siem Reap and wander the Angkor Night Market

Destination Information

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

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

Day 10: Siem Reap

Meals: B, L, D

Spanning from the 9th to 15th century, the Angkor complex with over 1,000 temples was the seat of the thriving Khmer Empire. UNESCO manages the complex and to enter, your group will drive approximately 6km out of town to the main entrance gate to get your entrance passes, which you must carry with you. If you choose to climb at any site, you must be able to climb and descend without assistance.



Begin at the city of Angkor Thom and the enigmatic Bayon, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King, before continuing to the temple of Ta Prohm, enveloped in a labyrinth of jungle. This afternoon is devoted to the fascinating and awe-inspiring Angkor Wat.

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

Destination Information

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

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

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

Ta Prohm - Swallowed by the jungle where Strangler Figs and Kapok Trees have entwined themselves around the ruins. Undoubtedly, the most atmospheric ruin at Angkor with several towers, closed courtyards and narrow corridors to explore. Angkor Wat - Surrounded by a 190-metre moat and taking 30 years to build,

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

Day 11: Siem Reap

Meals: B, L, D

Today explore the less visited Beng Mealea, a mysterious temple completely overrun by the jungle where you will explore on foot for approximately an hour and half. In the highwater season, you will also visit Kompong Khleang a unique village on stilts. In the lower water season, you will visit Chong Kneas floating village.



Return to Siem Reap with a visit to SATCHA, an organisation working alongside local craftsmen to create high-end and traditional Cambodian arts and crafts. This evening, enjoy a traditional Apsara dance performance at dinner. Tonight, enjoy an Apsara dance performance over dinner.

Destination Information

Beng Mealea - Dating from the 11th century, this sprawling temple covers over one square kilometre. Largely overrun by vegetation and constructed in a distinctly Angkor Wat-style, Beng Mealea precedes and may even have served as a 'prototype' for Angkor Wat.

Tonle Sap - The Tonle Sap is the largest fresh water lake in Southeast Asia. During the rainy season, it can swell from 3,000sq km to 7,500sq km. Locals have built floating villages on the Tonle Sap, which include schools, restaurants, markets, and even a medical clinic.

The SATCHA Handicraft Centre - A social enterprise showcasing traditional and high-end Cambodian art. Local creators are supported with materials and training to produce their crafts such as silk weaving and wood carvings, with many of the handicrafts available to purchase.

Day 12: Siem Reap

Meals: B, L, D

Today travel to Preah Khan Temple, Banteay Srei and explore Banteay Samre.

**Destination Information**

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

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

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

Day 13: Siem Reap - Battambang

Meals: B, L, D

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



Destination Information

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

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

Day 14: Battambang

Meals: B, L, D

This morning visit a family who produce local products such as rice paper, wine and dried bananas before a visit to the Ancient Khmer House. After lunch, climb to the top of Phnom Banan to reach the Prasat Banan Temple and admire the breathtaking view.

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



Destination Information

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

Day 15: Battambang - Phnom Penh

Meals: B, L, D

Today drive approximately 4 to 5 hours to the capital, Phnom Penh, stopping en route for a couple of hours to explore Udong and Kampong Chhnang Province to see traditional handmade pottery and climb Touch Hill to admire the surroundings. There are approximately 415 steps to climb to reach the top of Touch Hill.

**Destination Information**

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

Day 16: Phnom Penh

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Phnom Penh today, incorporating around 3 hours of leisurely walking this morning. Explore sites such as the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and the hilltop temple of Wat Phnom. Visit the Tuol Sleng Museum and reflect on Cambodia's tumultuous past before dinner.

**Destination Information**

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

Silver Pagoda - This concrete and marble structure includes a floor with over 5,000 silver tiles each weighing 1 kilogram. Famous artefacts include a 90 kilogram solid gold Buddha made in 1907 and an Emerald Buddha said to be made of baccarat crystal.

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

Tuol Sleng Museum - This former school was used by the Khmer Rouge as a detention and torture centre in the late 1970s. Today this building houses paintings and photographs of the victims. You can see the crude cells built in the classrooms and the torture devices used to extract confessions by the regime.

Day 17-18 Depart Phnom Penh

Meals: B

Today, if time permits, there will be an optional tour to the Killing Fields (to be paid for locally; approximately US\$10 – US\$15pp). This particular killing field is the site of the brutal executions of more than 17,000 men, women and children. Many who had first suffered interrogation and torture at S21 and buried in mass graves. The large pits have all but gone, but a stupa filled with skulls and bones is a chilling memorial.

You will be transferred to the airport according to the departure time of your international flight. Fly to New Zealand, arriving home the same or 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.

LAOS AND CAMBODIA TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Laos and Cambodia - Entry visas are required by all visitors. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork if applicable and submit the visa application on your behalf. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

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. Currently a visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

Cambodia Entry Requirement - Effective 01 July 2024, all guests travelling to Cambodia must complete a mandatory online e-immigration application within 7 days prior to their arrival. You may complete the form via the mobile phone app called Cambodia e-Arrival (CeA), or the form can be completed online at <https://arrival.gov.kh/>. The app and the registration process are free of charge.

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. 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.

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 some 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.

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

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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 New Zealand. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in 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 National Escort or 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:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable.

PORTERAGE:

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

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 in Thailand and Laos. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Thailand and Laos however other currencies such as New Zealand Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are undamaged. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series (2013 onwards) to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange.

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

PERSONAL EXPENSES 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:

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.

Updated: November 2024