



Wendy Wu Tours

YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE
AND PHRASEBOOK
**SOUTHEAST
ASIA**





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YOUR SOUTHEAST ASIA HOLIDAY WITH WENDY WU TOURS

Southeast Asia is home to iconic sites and wonders of the world. To cruise between towering limestone cliffs in Halong Bay, stand in awe before Angkor Wat or revel in bustling Bangkok can be the fulfilment of a lifelong dream. Yet, these popular bucket-list experiences are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes exploring one of the world's most captivating continents. Expect lands of contrast, unique and compelling landscapes, incredible history, heritage and culture – all quite unlike anything you might have imagined.

Your Wendy Wu Tours journey begins before you travel, and we are there every step of the way until you return home. Our customers are our number one priority, and we will do all we can to ensure your holiday is one to remember.

This **Travel Guide** provides you with practical advice and cultural information to help you prepare for your holiday. We are aware that this can seem like a lot of reading material, but we ask that you take some time to familiarise yourself with this information prior to departure and refer to the contents within throughout your travels.

Your **Tour Dossier** provides a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in each day's sightseeing for your itinerary. If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the duration of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation in our more off the beaten track destinations; they will be explained in your Tour Dossier.

MORE ABOUT YOUR HOLIDAY

Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding. Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, please note that health and safety standards overseas can differ greatly from those we enjoy at home and are often of a lower standard. However, all of our suppliers meet local and national safety standards as a minimum.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, the sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in Southeast Asia requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to different standards of service. There is a low level of English spoken throughout Southeast Asia, so your National Escort/Local Guides will be indispensable during your trip.

At Wendy Wu Tours we are continually working with our suppliers to maintain and improve safety standards by seeking good practice in health and safety and we will do our best to

ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble free. Part of the enjoyment of travelling abroad is experiencing a different way of life and culture, but it may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those we are used to in the UK. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, pay attention to notices and follow the advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

Our tours feature a physical rating graded from levels 1 to 5, designed to help you select the right holiday. They are shown on the tour page of our brochure, on our website and in the Tour Dossier. For more information on the more active aspects of our tours, please refer to your Tour Dossier.

JOINING YOUR TOUR

Check-in Information: Most airlines allow online check in 24-48 hours prior to departure. Make sure you have your passport and airline reference number handy. Your airline reference number can be found on your e-ticket receipt. You will be able to select your seats and you must print your boarding pass. At the airport, go to the Bag Drop Area of your airline to check your luggage in. Please note that some airlines will allow you to pre-book seats outside the 24 hours but may charge you a fee which needs to be paid to the airline directly by phone or via their website. However, some airlines do not allow online check in. Please refer to the airlines website for further information. We recommend you arrive at the airport 3 hours prior to departure, even if you have checked in; this is due to the increased security measures now in place at all airports.

If you do not have access to the internet, we again recommend you arrive at the airport 3 hours prior to departure and you may either use one of the available check-in desks or use the self-service kiosks and take your luggage to the 'drop-off' area.

Baggage Information: 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 have a luggage allowance of only 20kgs. As a guide, your main baggage should not exceed the following dimensions: 90cm x 75cm x 43cm (35.5ins x 29.5ins x 16ins), including the handle, pockets and wheels, and your cabin baggage should not exceed 55cm x 40cm x 20cm (22ins x 16in x 8ins), maximum weight 5kgs. For further information please refer to the airline website.

Terminal Information: This is shown on your e-ticket.

On arrival in Southeast Asia, you will be met by your National Escort or Local Guide.

WHILST ON TOUR

Entrance fees are included at all paid attractions on your itinerary. However the order in which you visit each site can change depending on weather, traffic, last minute changes or any other unexpected event that may arise. If you wish to visit places that are not included in the itinerary, you may do so at your own cost, please check in advance with your National Escort. After a day's sightseeing, you may sometimes be taken directly to dinner rather than heading to the hotel to shower and rest first. Whilst out sightseeing, western toilets are difficult to find in remote areas.

NATIONAL ESCORTS

Should there be less than 10 people in total within the group, you will NOT have a National Escort; however, you will be met by the Local Guide on arrival and you will have one in each city you visit on the tour. If you do have a National Escort they will meet you upon arrival and stay with you throughout your tour.

On multi-country tours, you will have a different National Escort for each country you visit.

Our National Escort/Local Guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

FESTIVALS

Tet Ngoyen-Dan, or Tet, also known as the Vietnamese New Year, is Vietnam's most significant and eagerly anticipated festival. Tet marks the beginning of the lunar calendar and usually falls in late January or early February. Cambodia, Laos and Thailand also have their own unique New Year celebrations, which take place in mid-April. Experiencing these festivals in person can be a wonderful and joyous experience, but please be aware that tourist areas can get very busy, and many businesses are closed at these times.

TIPPING

Tipping is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry today and Southeast Asia is no exception. We strive to establish trust with our guides who rely on and expect tips from passengers. If the guides are keen to work with our passengers regularly, they become familiar with our itineraries as well as the Wendy Wu Tours' philosophy and expectations we have of their work.

Many passengers are often uncertain of how much to tip, so we have established a tipping system whereby every passenger

gives a set amount (in US Dollars) to the National Escort who will distribute the amount appropriately throughout your trip. On multi-country trips, this amount will be paid in stages on arrival in each country. All group tour passengers are expected to contribute to the tipping kitty. (If there is no National Escort, please give the money directly to your Local Guides – the tipping amounts for each city will be shown in your final itinerary).

The amount for the kitty is calculated for each tour depending on the length, group size and services used during the trip. Your final documents and invoice will specify the exact tipping amount for your group. The tipping kitty will cover local guides and drivers in each city/province, local and/or site guides and your National Escort. Portage to your room is not included.

For independent travellers, or group passengers with pre/post tour arrangements, please follow the below tables for suggested tipping amounts per person per day:

Country	Tour Guide	Drivers	Boat drivers	Hotel Maid
Thailand/Vietnam/ Cambodia/Laos	\$8-\$10	\$3-\$5	\$2	\$2

Country	Driver	Boat/Jeep
Borneo	MYR 15	MYR 15



All optional excursions include return transfers and are accompanied by an expert local guide. These excursions are not included in the cost of your tour. Payments will need be collected locally by our representative upon your arrival, once you are happy with your choice of tours.

If you do not wish to take part in any optional excursions, please make arrangements with your guides to enjoy some free time at leisure or to return to the hotel.

Please note that these optional tours are subject to local conditions and might be cancelled at short notice, for example if the weather is very poor or minimum numbers for participation are not achieved. Your national escort will be very happy to assist you with more information if required.

You will also need to consider additional discretionary tipping for any local guide/vendor/driver who is involved in such activities.



EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The cost of all meals is included in our Classic Group tours. You may like to order beer or soft drinks with your meals – please note that drinks are not included in your tour price, so payment for these is made directly to the restaurant staff.

On Go Beyond or Private Collection tours, meal inclusions are listed in your itinerary.

Breakfast is served in the hotel and usually includes western dishes. As is traditional across Southeast Asia, lunch and dinner consists of small, local dishes, which are prepared and brought out to the table for everyone to share, so you can experience a variety of speciality cuisine. We aim to cater to the tastes of the majority of people and so the food is not too spicy or unusual in taste.

The cuisine across the countries of Southeast Asia share many similarities – simplicity, the perfect balance of spicy, sour, bitter, salty and sweet, plenty of fresh herbs and spices and, of course, lots of rice. Each place, though, has its own unique influences; be it from afar, like France and the UK, or their near neighbours, for example

India and China, or from the ethnic minority groups that live in each country. Street food is also huge in all Southeast Asian countries, a great chance to pick up a delicious, freshly-cooked snack as you explore. Here's a little about each country's cuisine:

Vietnam – One of the world's most popular cuisines thanks to its simplicity, richness of flavour and healthiness, Vietnamese food uses minimal but plentiful fresh ingredients to achieve maximum taste. Be sure to enjoy a steaming bowl of 'pho', a delicious noodle soup with a rich broth and thinly sliced meat, and the Franco-Viet 'banh mi', a crusty baguette filled with pate, coriander, cucumber and pickles.

Cambodia – Although it shares much in common with neighbours Thailand and Vietnam, the most common flavour in Cambodian cooking is prahok, a fermented fish paste, or kroeung, a paste of lemongrass and galangal. Of course, these are perfectly balanced with other flavours. Freshwater fish is a big part of Cambodian cooking and is the star of the country's most famous dish, 'amok', a steamed coconut milk and kroeung curry.

Laos – Sticky rice is at the heart of Laos' cuisine and is eaten at all meals as the centrepiece – all other dishes are just sides. Meals include plenty of local, fresh vegetables, meat and fish are grilled and steamed, and dishes tend to be dry and spicy – galangal, lemongrass and padaek (fermented fish sauce) are often used. There's also still plenty of French influence here, with baguettes and croissants available everywhere.

Thailand – Thai cuisine is a sensation all over the world, famous for its light dishes with strong aromatic flavours. Herbs, spices and fish sauce are common ingredients across the country, but from region to region local foods vary depending on climate and geography – for example in the north there's lots of sticky rice and chilli paste, whilst in the south there's plenty of coconut milk and turmeric.

Borneo – In Bornean cuisine, flavours tend to be vibrant and intense thanks to locally grown spices such as turmeric and lemongrass, whilst fresh seafood, exotic fruits and vegetables often feature. The foods of both Sabah and Sarawak reflects each state's culture uniqueness, the cuisine being particularly influenced by its diverse population, with each ethnic group bringing their own cooking styles and ingredients to the mix.

Any food/diet requests should have been specified at the time of booking and you should mention it again to the National Escort/Local Guides when you meet them – they will do their utmost to cater for any special requests, such as vegetarian meals or food to be avoided in case of allergies. Please bear in mind that dietary intolerances and choices are quite unusual in Southeast Asia – patience and understanding will go a long way when dealing with people who might not understand your requirements. Whilst travelling away from major cities, it is

highly recommended that passengers with food intolerances bring their own additional food items, as dietary requests can't always be met due to the limited foods available.

Please be aware that on some days where a lot of sights are Please be aware that on days where a lot of sites are covered, dinner times may be earlier than usual (around 5.30pm) and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing.



TRANSPORT

We use a variety of transportation to operate your itinerary at the best pace and to give you an authentic travel experience so you are not always 'removed' from the locals. Travel through Southeast Asia requires patience as schedule changes are common and the road conditions are poor in some rural areas.

Domestic Flights

The domestic airline flight schedule in this region changes frequently, hence all domestic flights that appear in your itinerary are subject to change. Please ensure that all valuables and any medications you may need for the rest of the day are taken on board with you. The luggage limit is 20kg per passenger with 5kg hand baggage, and all seats are economy class. Airlines currently do not allow liquids (alcohol, spirits, wine, water, perfume etc) or sharp objects to be carried on-board the aircraft and these will be confiscated. Wendy Wu Tours issues all internal domestic flight tickets in Southeast Asia and they will be handled by your National Escort/Local Guide and given to each passenger just prior to their flight.

Coaches

Our coaches are comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles, although they may be less spacious than coaches in the UK. Please note – in many parts of the world, seatbelts are not compulsory by law and local people largely choose not to wear them. Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee that vehicles will be fitted with operable seatbelts. Where available we recommend seatbelts should be worn at all times while travelling. Please Note: Mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).

Boats

Your tour could include taking a ride in a wooden boat on the Mekong, in modern river cruising ships between Phnom Penh and Can Tho or on a cruise on Halong Bay. To access the boat, you may need to cross between moving pontoons or other boats that have be moored together (particularly at Halong Bay and Nha Trang), climb steps and disembark onto makeshift docks – sometimes without assistance or handrails; or onto muddy riverbanks.

Bicycles / Motorbikes / Jeeps

If at any time you undertake an independent activity including a bicycle, 4x4, tuk-tuk or motorcycle ride, you must bear responsibility for yourself. Health and safety standards will not be at the same standard as your own country. You are responsible for checking that your own travel insurance will cover this form of activity.



ROAD CONDITIONS & TRAFFIC

Although road conditions are improving, there are rough roads covering vast areas of rural and mountainous regions across Southeast Asia which can result in existing road surfaces being affected by heavy or monsoonal rains.

The number of vehicles in Southeast Asia is increasing. Please keep in mind that major events or holidays and new construction projects create traffic that can interfere with your tour and meal times. Your National Escort/Local Guides will do their utmost to avoid possible delays, changes or in rare cases, cancellations to sections of your itinerary.



ACCOMMODATION

Hotels

Group tour hotels are mainly 3½ – 4 star, located conveniently in the city, near markets or shops. Double beds are not common; please note that we cannot guarantee their availability. All beds in Southeast Asia have hard mattresses.

Hotel rooms will usually have private western bathroom facilities, television, air-conditioning and a telephone (unless stated otherwise). Some hotels may have hot water restrictions, operating for only a few hours at a time, usually in the mornings/evenings. It is not customary for hotels in Southeast Asia to have in-room fridges, tea/coffee making facilities and a safe deposit box. Most hotel rooms do not have irons or boards, but most will offer a laundry service that can wash your clothes (typically in 24hrs).

Most hotels throughout Southeast Asia are still required to register all guests with the local police. Reception staff will collect your passports each time you check-in and the hotel will keep them safely for a few hours or overnight. Please keep this in mind if you need to exchange money or get a credit advance at the bank.

In Southeast Asia, check-out time is usually 12 midday and check-in time is usually 2pm. Please keep this in mind on the days when you are travelling between cities as it may result in a delay of access to your room or a change of itinerary. Hotels in this region cannot guarantee late check-out. At many hotels, the reception staff speak very little English. If you require help, please contact your tour guide.

Hotel Ratings

Worldwide star ratings identify the standard of quality for hotels, however not all star rating systems are created equally. Countries throughout the world adopt various classification systems for hotels in accordance to their chain name and the type of hotel. No international classification system exists. Typically, a three-star Southeast Asian rated hotel cannot be compared to a three-star UK rated hotel. Attempts at unifying the classification system

have been made so that it becomes an internationally recognised and reliable standard. However, differences do exist in the quality of accommodation which plays an integral part in defining which hotel category the specific accommodation fits into. Please be advised that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our operators so that high standards of quality and safety are maintained.

Please be aware that hotels in Laos and in regional areas of Vietnam and Cambodia may not always have the same quality standards and infrastructure that you will find in the bigger, more developed areas. In these regions, Wendy Wu Tours endeavours to provide the best quality available within the 3½ – 4 star range.

Halong Bay Cruise

Accommodation is in a twin berth cabin with private western facilities. Single cabins are available at a supplement on request.

Mekong Delta Homestay – Vietnam

Your river view accommodation is at the home of a local farmer. Your bedding is an individual soft camp bed with a mosquito net in a dormitory that can sleep up to ten people. There are showers and western toilets in an outside block; similar to caravan parks. Usually there is only cold water for showers but most people do not mind this at all due to the hot weather all year-round in the Mekong.



ELECTRICITY

There is an electricity supply of 220 volts throughout Southeast Asia, in the cities and most towns. 240-volt appliances will work safely with this supply. However, there is no universal power point; they vary not just from one country to the next but from one hotel to another. You can buy adaptors, also known as conversion plugs, from hardware, department and duty free stores.

In Vietnam – vertical two-pin (US) plug or round two-pin (Europe) plug.

Cambodia – round two-pin (Europe) plug or flat three-pin (UK) plug.

In Laos – vertical two-pin (US) plug.

In Thailand – vertical two-pin (US) plug or round two-pin (Europe) plug or round three-pin Old British plug.

In Borneo - the electricity supply is 230 volts and the plugs have three square prongs like British ones.

US Plug



Europe Plug



Old British Plug



In some areas there is a lesser electricity supply of 110 volts, which is available only a few hours each day from the town's supply or from a diesel generator. Whenever there is limited electricity supply this will also mean limited hot water supply. Remote and village areas also experience power surges or outages, both of which can make re-charging electrical appliances very difficult. We advise you to bring a supply of batteries (bought in the UK) with you to allow for days when you cannot recharge.

LUGGAGE

All passengers are limited to two items of luggage each:

- 🧳 One suitcase or backpack, with a maximum weight of 20kg. Your main luggage must have a lock on it.
- 🧳 One piece of hand luggage, with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is advisable that your hand luggage consist of a 'daypack' – a small bag which you can access during the day and carry items like your camera, bottled water, toilet paper, hat etc.

We have included suggested packing lists and climate charts at the back of this travel guide.

MONEY

Here is a reference table of approximate exchange rates (for up to date exchange rates, please check before you travel):

	Vietnam	Laos	Cambodia	Thailand	Borneo
	VND	Kip	Riel	Baht	Myr
GB£1	31,000	24,600	5,500	43	6
US\$1	23,600	19,200	4,000	34	4.5

(Correct at the time of printing)

Vietnam

The local currency is the dong and is written as “đ” or “VND” (Viet Nam Dong). It is available in notes of 200đ up to 500,000đ although the lesser notes are rarely seen and larger value notes are being converted to plastic. Shop keepers will sometimes quote a price in USD, but it may be better to ask for price in VND.

We recommend that you take mainly cash which can be exchanged at hotels and banks, but you will need to check with your Local Guide before travelling to smaller towns. USD can be exchanged everywhere so if you have any left over from another trip, you can bring this also. US dollars should be from the new series from the year 2003 onwards. Old series notes can be difficult to exchange, with the exception of some national banks in Vietnam, such as Vietcombank. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US dollars are from the new series to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. When exchanging, the largest note usually given is 100,000đ so you will have a huge wad of notes. Please only carry what you will need each day to avoid unwanted attention.

The most reliable ATMs are at the ANZ banks in Hanoi (near Hoan Kiem Lake) and Saigon (opposite side of roundabout from the Renaissance Riverside Hotel). There are also Vietcom Bank ATMs in major towns including Hue, Hoi An, Danang, Nha Trang, Can Tho and Vung Tau. ANZ and Vietcom ATMs accept Visa and MasterCard, enabling you to withdraw directly from your debit account in the UK if your card has these symbols. Try to withdraw as few times as possible because overseas withdrawal fees are very high. Check with your bank before departing the UK. All ATMs in Vietnam dispense VND notes only.

Cambodia

The local currency is the riel, and is written as “r” – however the economy runs on USD. Usually you will be given riel as change for amounts under US\$1. You will need to have a supply of USD notes of US\$20 or less, as the locals often do not accept notes above that value.

We recommend you take cash as there are only a few locations in Cambodia (i.e. hotels) where you can exchange sterling currency into USD. It is easier and you will get a better conversion rate if you buy USD before leaving the UK. There are ATMs in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap and at each of their international airports (next to the visa issuing stations). Try to withdraw as few times as possible because overseas withdrawal fees are very high. Check with your bank before departing the UK. ATMs in Cambodia dispense USD notes only.

Laos

The local currency is the kip, however the economy runs on USD and Thai baht. It is available in notes of 1,000kip up to 20,000kip. Usually you will be given kip as change for amounts under US\$1. You will need to have a supply of USD notes of US\$20 or less, as the locals often do not accept notes above that value.

We recommend you take cash in USD which can be exchanged at major (Thai) banks in Vientiane, or at upmarket hotels in Vientiane and Luang Prabang. It is easier and you will get a better conversion rate if you buy USD before leaving the UK.

There are only a small handful of ATMs in Laos, mainly in Luang Prabang. The most convenient are those found at the airport and the bank near the post office. Only a few upmarket hotels and tourist shops in Vientiane and Luang Prabang accept American Express, Visa and MasterCard (but will charge high commission).

Thailand

The Thai unit of currency is the baht, where 1 baht is divided into 100 satang. Notes are in denominations of 1,000 (brown), 500 (purple), 100 (red), 50 (blue), 20 (green) and 10 (brown) baht. Coins consist of 25 satang, 50 satang, 1 baht, 5 baht and 10 baht.

Most major currencies can be changed easily at hotels, tourist shops, all provincial banks, shopping centres and money changers. Rates of exchange at banks or authorised money changers are better than those at hotels and department stores. Travellers leaving Thailand may take out no more than 50,000 baht per person in Thai currency. Most outlets take all major credit cards and ATM machines are readily available, where the exchange rate is automatic. Some carry a sizeable surcharge per withdrawal so check with your credit card company beforehand. Not all ATM machines take all kinds of cards; many will not take Visa or MasterCard, or will take one but not the other. Please ensure that you look for the credit card logos on the ATM signs.



Borneo

The currency of Malaysia is ‘ringgits’, written MYR and represented by ‘RM’. One ringgit is divided into 100 sen. Notes come in denominations of RM1, RM5, RM10, RM20, RM50 and RM100 whilst you’ll find coins come as 5, 10, 20 and 50s.

It is extremely easy to change money throughout Malaysia, and the exchange booths generally accept all major currencies. It is also best to change all your money on arrival in Malaysia as you will get a better exchange rate here than at home. You can change your money at the bank, or try one of the many moneychanger kiosks that are found in bigger towns – they tend to have a slightly better exchange rate. Hotels do often offer currency exchange, but the rates will not be as good as the banks and moneychangers. Ripped, damaged and scruffy notes will not be exchanged.

Whilst the use of credit and debit cards is becoming more widespread, particularly in the cities, Malaysia is still a cash-based society, so it’s better to have the cash to pay for everything. ATMs are easy to find in the cities and tourist spots – try Maybank or Public Bank. Please note you are likely to be charged for using your debit card overseas and it is always a good idea to let your bank know you are travelling abroad.

MORE ABOUT MONEY & TRAVELLING

Spending Money: We recommend you take local currency as well as sterling and/or US dollars. We also recommend taking a debit and/or credit card. Please ensure you have sufficient funds to pay for personal expenses such as drinks, snacks, souvenirs, additional tipping and optional extras. On an average two week tour, we would recommend approx. £300-£400 per person spending money depending on your needs.

Outside of major cities, local banks do not have any ATMs and are not licensed to exchange foreign currency.

Please ensure that you organise your spending money before you leave a major town and take enough cash in local currency or USD to exchange or spend during your stay.

Plan ahead: Be prepared with enough cash in hand for the next few days. Once you have started your tour, you will quickly get a sense of how often or how much you need to exchange money. Try not to leave this to the last minute: exchange desks can close, ATMs can run out of cash and your group could be scheduled to leave your hotel at 7am tomorrow morning!

Keep some of your exchange receipts: You can convert any unused notes into USD at the international airport exchange desks when you depart. You will need to present your passport, airline ticket and some receipts of the money exchanged/withdrawn in Southeast Asia. Some banks in the UK may be able to convert your money back into sterling, however please check before departing the UK.

Counterfeit Cash: This is a problem in Southeast Asia so shop owners and clerks at banks or exchange desks are very cautious and can refuse to accept notes in bad condition. When purchasing cash in the UK or when exchanging during your holiday – it is a good idea to stand at the desk to count and check the condition of each note. Do not accept any notes which are torn, very faded, a different shade, have ink stamps or any writing on them. If you accept the notes and sign the exchange receipt, then notice a problem, you will not be able to exchange them.

Outside of major towns banking becomes less reliable and requires you to plan ahead. If you are travelling to remote areas, you should take cash in USD as sterling currency is not always recognised.

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend taking any travellers cheques to Southeast Asia.

Credit/Debit Card

Taking one credit/debit card is recommended in case of emergency and can also be used for large purchases in most hotels, department stores and souvenir stores. The most widely accepted



credit cards include Visa, MasterCard and American Express. However, please do not rely on a credit/debit card as your only source of spending money and keep a photocopy of your card(s).

We always recommend that you have access to more than one source of money – bringing a combination of cash and a credit/debit card will give the most security and flexibility while travelling.

SHOPPING

Shopping can be a fun and entertaining component to any travel adventure, and Southeast Asia has a vast array of shopping opportunities for those who love to seek out a bargain. From hand carved elephants to local silk products or bamboo woven conical hats – the variety and choice can seem endless.

In keeping with most people's interests whilst on holiday, your tour will include a reasonable number of opportunities to shop for local goods and souvenirs. We have included visits to establishments that not only provide an opportunity to purchase a locally produced, great-value souvenir; but you'll witness first-hand how these local products are made, their history and how they support the local economy. We are aware that people like to take home souvenirs, so we endeavour to ensure the shops you visit have a reputation for quality, honesty and authenticity – we do our best to ensure that you don't get ripped off. Most establishments will also have somewhere you can buy refreshments and take a break.

Wendy Wu Tours, our staff, National Escorts and Local Guides are not qualified nor permitted to guarantee the quality or value of any goods purchased during your holiday. All passengers who make purchases during their holiday must accept responsibility for their decision regarding the item's value, authenticity, as well as the risk and process of credit card purchase and/or shipping.

It is recommended that you double check any items purchased before leaving the store (the item and any credit card receipts) and if you are having a large item shipped, make sure you take a photo of your purchase and the contact details of the store.

We encourage all passengers to enjoy their local shopping expeditions but to take care and buy wisely.

We cannot assist in returning or refunding goods in any circumstances, including purchases made at shops or factories which you may visit as part of your tour with us.

Tailors in Hoi An

For centuries the cloth and silk merchant trade flourished in this small port and over the last decade tourism has revived the local tailor trade. There are hundreds of tailors in Hoi An, all competing for your business, but not all of the same quality. Check their work and the quality of their material, hemlines, sewing, etc and always compare their work and price with other tailors. Be specific about everything you want (e.g. buttons, pocket designs) and that your tailor understands these requests. There are no guarantees so it's best to keep it simple and not to let these shops detract you from your visit to one of Vietnam's most charming towns.

HAGGLING OR BARGAINING

In local shops, markets and street stalls all over Southeast Asia, haggling is the accepted way to agree on a selling price. It can be a great way to save money, as well as a wonderful way to interact with some local people you may not otherwise meet. However, some foreign visitors find it too confronting and prefer to shop in the more upmarket tourist shops or department stores, where prices are set.

CUSTOMS & DUTY FREE

Vietnam

You can bring up to 200 cigarettes or 20 cigars or 250g tobacco, 1.5L of spirits over 20% volume or 2L of fortified wines or liqueurs under 20% volume or 3L of other alcoholic drinks.

You can also bring other goods to the value of 10,000,000 VND. Vietnam's officials remain sensitive to what they call 'culturally damaging material that portrays the nation of government negatively'. They forbid things like films or books which are officially banned (including some guide books) and pornography.

Cambodia

No more than 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 200g of tobacco, 350ml of perfume & 2L of wine can be brought into the country. Exporting any Angkor period sculpture is illegal and these items will be confiscated. If you buy a souvenir that could be mistaken for a genuine antique, get an official receipt from the shop.

Laos

You can bring up to 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of Tobacco. 1L of spirits and 2L of wine, 50 ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette & goods up to the value of \$50 US. Exporting antiques such as old Buddha images or bronze drums is illegal and these items will be confiscated. If you buy a souvenir that could be mistaken for a genuine antique, get an official receipt from the shop.

Thailand

Up to 200 cigarettes and 1L of wine/spirits can be brought into the country. If you purchase any antiques or objects of art, you must obtain an export license through the Department of Fine Arts. Visitors entering Thailand are entitled to refunds of 7% of the value added tax (VAT paid on goods purchased at shops and department stores displaying the 'VAT Refund for Tourists' signs).

Borneo

Up to 200 cigarettes or 225g of tobacco, 1L of alcoholic drinks, food up to the value of RM 75, three new items of clothing and one new pair of shoes can be brought in. As can one portable electronic item for personal care and other goods up to the value of RM400..

Banned items- illicit drugs, counterfeit currency, indecent publications (books, films, paintings, etc), anything considered prejudicial to the interest of Malaysia. Piranha fish, turtle eggs, cocoa pods, daggers or flick knives, articles resembling syringes (e.g. pens or pencils), and poisonous chemicals.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Phone Calls

To call Wendy Wu Tours it is 00 44 800 630 0888.

Emergency 24-hour telephone (out of office hours) is below:

From	International Access Code Prefix	Wendy Wu Tours Emergency Number
Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand & Borneo	00 44	1888 288 288

(remember to omit '0' from the UK local area code)



International and national phone calls can be made from hotel rooms, or from central post offices for a charge. Phone cards bought in the UK or in Southeast Asia can be used in most public pay phones, but if you plan to use these to call from your room – always check the costs and procedure with hotel reception beforehand. If the hotel does enforce a call charge, you will be unable to refute it after making your call.

Mobile Phones

Vietnam & Cambodia

These countries use the GSM mobile network – the same as the UK. You will find great coverage in both countries; however, SMS and call rates can be expensive. We recommend that you contact your mobile phone network if you intend to use international roaming during your holiday and ensure you investigate all associated costs before you leave the UK.

Laos

Mobile phone coverage is available in cities and towns, however is not reliable in mountain and rural areas.

Thailand

Mobile phones are very popular in Thailand and should have coverage as long as you have activated global roaming. You may need to speak to your mobile provider prior to travel to organise this.

Malaysia/Borneo:

Both countries use the GSM mobile network- the same as the UK. Coverage is great; however, SMS and call rates can be expensive. We recommend that you contact your mobile supplier if you intend to use international roaming during your holiday and ensure you investigate all associated costs before you leave the UK.

Postage

We recommend that you use the Post Offices, rather than your hotel to post items. There are no regulation envelope or package sizes in Southeast Asia; as long as you take it to the P.O. unsealed. All packages need to be inspected (also forms completed and fees paid) beforehand. Posting DVDs, CD ROMs, etc is not allowed. From capital cities or major towns, airmail letters and postcards take 10-20 working days to arrive and from smaller towns, they will take over a month. We advise you to use a courier service (e.g. E.M.S from Post Offices) to send anything valuable or important.

Internet & Email

Internet cafes can be found in all major cities and even in some small towns. This is often the easiest and cheapest way to stay in touch. Most hotels have a business centre with internet access, but at a slightly higher rate.



TIME DIFFERENCE

Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos are 7 hours ahead of the UK during the winter and 6 hours ahead of the UK during the summer.

Thailand is 7 hours ahead of UK time year-round.

Borneo is 8 hours ahead of UK time year-round.

INSURANCE

It is a condition of booking a holiday with us that all travellers take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure you have the appropriate cover for your holiday as overseas medical costs are expensive. Please inform our office of your relevant policy number and keep details of the policy in your travel documents including policy number, 24 hour emergency number and next of kin details.

If you are taking out travel insurance with your credit card company, you need to investigate the policy's inclusions and conditions fully. You should receive a policy number, an international access phone number to contact them in an emergency and a copy of full conditions.

All travel insurance providers require you to contact them ASAP in the unlikely event that you need medical treatment, hospitalisation or change travel plans, to inform them of your situation. They will then decide the best course of action in regards to further treatment and/or repatriation and make appropriate booking arrangements. Our staff in Southeast Asia will be able to assist you in contacting your travel insurance company.

It is essential you inform your insurance company of all pre-existing medical conditions.

SAFETY & SECURITY

All travellers should maintain a high level of personal security. Although Southeast Asia is considered safe for travellers, please keep in mind that cash or wallets in pockets, obvious jewellery, swinging handbags etc may attract unwanted attention. Keep your belongings with you at all times and beware of pickpockets in market areas and at train stations.

Do not leave any valuables unattended in your hotel room or on the coach. Lock away cash you do not need during the day/evening, credit cards, airline tickets, passports, jewellery etc either in your room's safe or at reception; as not all hotels will have an in-room safe deposit box. Likewise whilst travelling each day, do not leave any valuables unattended on the bus.

It is your own responsibility to ensure that you carry your money and valuables on you at all times.

Wearing a money belt under your clothing is strongly recommended. We advise you not to bring valuable jewellery etc with you to Southeast Asia and keep a photocopy of your passport and debit/credit card(s).

LANDMINES

Some remote areas of Cambodia and Northern Laos have not been cleared of Unexploded Ordnance (U.X.O.). All areas within our group itineraries are cleared and considered very safe. If you are travelling independently through remote areas, keep to marked paths and roads regularly used by the locals. Do not pick up metal objects.

TRAVEL HEALTH

A health certificate is not required for entry into Southeast Asia.

Visit a doctor before travelling.

We strongly recommend that you see a doctor for the latest health advice at least six weeks before your holiday to allow time for any necessary vaccinations etc. Remember to take your itinerary with you to the appointment. For the very latest travel advice, please check www.fco.gov.uk before you depart the UK.



	Recommended
Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos & Thailand	Covid-19, Tetanus/Diphtheria/Whooping Cough – within last 5-10 years. MMR, Hepatitis A – complete course, Meningococcal – if relevant for age. All travellers should seriously consider having influenza vaccine. Shingles and Pneumonia vaccines are recommended for travelers over 65 years of age. It may be advisable to take malaria tablets.
Borneo	Covid-19, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, MMR, DTaP & it may be advisable to take malaria tablets.

This information is given as a guide only and no responsibility can be taken for any errors or omissions. Always seek your doctor's advice.

Source: www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Drinking Water

We strongly recommend you do not drink the tap water, and avoid ice in your drinks. There will usually be a kettle or flasks of boiled water in your hotel room and on board trains. Boiled water is suitable for drinking and cleaning teeth. Safe, bottled drinking water is readily available for sale everywhere – from small shops, supermarkets, restaurants and hotels. It is not customary for hotels to provide complimentary bottled drinking water. Always ensure that the seal is unbroken.

Toilets

Toilet facilities are very basic throughout Asia and it is rare that you will find a 'western' style toilet (except in hotels). 'Squat' toilets are very common in public places and toilet paper is never supplied. We suggest that you carry toilet paper in your day backpack, and don't turn down the opportunity to use a 'nice' toilet when you see one!

TRAVEL ADVICE

We strongly recommend that you check www.fco.gov.uk for up-to-date travel information and advice from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office for Southeast Asia before departure.

PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT

Take all pharmaceutical products that you may require on your tour; do not rely on being able to purchase these during your holiday. You will see pharmacies all over Southeast Asia, but they stock local traditional medicine and many unregulated brands of western medicine. You are also very unlikely to find anyone who can speak English, nor any products with English writing. Consider taking a 'personal medical kit' containing any medication or medical equipment you may need during your time in Southeast Asia:

- 📱 All prescribed medication
(with a cover note from your doctor)
- 📱 Headache tablets
- 📱 Anti-diarrhoea tablets
- 📱 Cold and flu tablets
- 📱 Travel sickness tablets
- 📱 Lozenges
- 📱 Insect repellent and sunscreen
- 📱 Antibacterial hand wipes and/or hand wash
- 📱 Spare pair of glasses/contact lenses

If you need to purchase any pharmaceuticals or medical equipment while in Southeast Asia – you may ask your National Escort, Local Guide or hotel staff to help you locate a pharmacy, identify medication or to translate from the local language to English. If you need medical attention they will be able to arrange a call from a doctor, usually one who speaks English. However, the decision to purchase or take any non-prescribed (either western or traditional local medicine) is entirely your own.

The staff at Wendy Wu Tours (in the UK and in Southeast Asia) are not medically qualified. Therefore they are neither able, nor allowed to give any medical advice, recommendations or administer medications.

TRAVEL WITH CONSIDERATION

Wendy Wu Tours takes Responsible Tourism seriously. We are aware that tourism can impact the natural, economic and social environment and are committed to mitigating our impact wherever possible without compromising our customers' experience.

Gifts & Begging

Wendy Wu Tours does not condone the practise of giving gifts such as sweets, coins and souvenirs to local people while in Southeast Asia. Instead, we encourage our customers to donate to a responsible local charity.

Taking Photos

"Tourists stick their cameras in our faces and promise they'll



send photos back, but they never do." We encourage you to think about how you would like to be treated by camera-wielding tourists – always check that it is ok before taking a photograph of a local person. Simply indicate to your camera to ask and never take the photograph if someone gestures or says that they do not want you to.

Observe Local Rules

The laws, regulations and behaviour in Southeast Asia are affected by cultural considerations. For example:

- 📱 Avoid touching anyone on the head (or their hair)
- 📱 Try to avoid pointing the soles of your feet towards people/religious objects
- 📱 Always leave your shoes outside a temple, pagoda or anyone's home
- 📱 Cameras are not allowed in some sightseeing spots, particularly temples and pagodas
- 📱 Do not raise your voice as this can cause offense
- 📱 It is considered very rude to indicate for someone's attention by gesturing with your palm upwards. Instead, extend hand with palm downwards and wave by moving your wrist
- 📱 Thai people don't normally shake hands when they greet one another, but instead press the palms together in a prayer-like gesture called a Wai

In Buddhist countries, local people retain the most traditional culture. Their daily routine, religious beliefs and acceptable behaviour are all determined by Buddhism. As a guide:

- 📱 Try to keep your head lower than monks and Buddha images
- 📱 Women should never touch a monk, or their robes

Dress Appropriately

The locals in this region dress conservatively. According to their culture only very poor labourers would wear clothes which reveal their shoulders and legs, or go without a shirt. Brief shorts or skirts can be offensive – no matter how hot the weather. For men, full length cotton trousers or shorts that cover the knees are acceptable. For women, skirts or trousers that reach below the knee are ideal, worn with tops that cover the shoulders.

In temples and pagodas, at royal palaces and at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Hanoi, female travellers should wear modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders. A 'modesty shawl' – either a large shawl or sarong – can be useful to carry in your daypack while sightseeing. Covered shoes must be worn at the Angkor Wat complex.

READING LIST

Indochina:

- Brother Enemy – Nayan Chanda
- Mekong – Milton Osbourne
- The River's Tale (A Year on the Mekong) – Edward A. Gargan
- Highways to a War – Christopher Koch
- A Dragon Apparent – Norman Lewis
- Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma – Amitav Ghosh

Vietnam:

- Insight Guide Vietnam (2005 edition) – West & Rutherford
- The Quiet American – Graham Greene
- Vietnam: A History – Stanley Karnow
- Lonely Planet World Food Vietnam – Richard Sterling
- When Heaven and Earth Changed Places – Le Ly Hayslip
- Three Moons in Vietnam – Maria Coffey
- A Bright, Shining Lie – Neil Sheehan
- Shadows and Wind – Robert Templer
- The Girl in the Picture – Denise Chong
- Catfish and Mandala – Andrew X. Pham
- The Tunnels of Cu Chi – Tom Mangold and John Penycate
- Anatomy of a War – Gabriel Kolko
- Hanoi Adieu – Mandaley Perkins
- Down Highway One – Susan Downie

- Novel Without A Name – Duong Thu Huong
- Vietnam: The Australian Experience – J. Rowe

Cambodia:

- Angkor (Odyssey Guide, 5th edition) – Rooney & Danford
- Insight Guide Laos & Cambodia (2003 edition) – Clare Griffiths
- First They Killed My Father – Loung Ung
- Red Lights and Green Lizards – Liz Anderson.
- Cambodia Now: Life in the Wake of War – Karen J. Coates
- A History of Cambodia – David Chandler
- River of Time – Jon Swain
- Brother Number One – David Chandler

Laos:

- Insight Compact Guide Laos – Simon Robson
- A History of Laos – Martin Stuart Fox
- Stalking the Elephant Kings – Christopher Kremmer
- Ant Egg Soup – Natacha Du Pont De Bie
- Shadow War: The C.I.A.'s Secret War in Laos – Kenneth Conboy
- Voices from the Plain of Jars – Fred Branfman
- Short History of Laos: The Land In Between – Grant Evans





CUSTOMER HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

We Care

At Wendy Wu Tours we are continually working with our suppliers to maintain and improve safety standards by seeking good practice in health and safety and we will do our best to ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble free. Part of the enjoyment of travelling abroad is experiencing a different way of life and cultures, but it may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those we are used to in the UK. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow the advice from your National Escort and/or Local Guide.

At Wendy Wu Tours we are continually working with our accommodation and transport providers to endeavour to raise safety standards as much as possible and we will do our best to ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble free, but we do ask that you take that little bit of extra care whilst you are away.

Flight Safety

- Do not place flammable liquids, lighters, matches, gasses or aerosols in your suitcase
- Always carry medication in your hand luggage
- Keep your passport safe and have a photocopy with you just in case
- Pay attention and follow any in flight safety information
- To avoid DVT, drink plenty of water and follow simple exercises or occasionally move around the cabin

Transport Safety

- In vehicles always wear a seat belt if one is provided – though it is not compulsory in Southeast Asia to do so. We cannot guarantee that vehicles will be fitted with seat belts
- In minibuses never place luggage in the aisles or foot wells
- Ensure you know where your nearest emergency exit is.
- Check the location of the fire extinguisher, first aid kit and break glass hammer
- Follow any safety instructions provided by your driver/guide

Road Safety

- Car hire is also not recommended in most areas
- Traffic in most Asian countries travels on the opposite side of the road to the UK. Ensure you look both ways before crossing the road
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings
- Often paving can be uneven and loose with kerbs higher than in the UK. Please take more care whilst walking around cities and resort areas
- Crash helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes – we do not recommend you hire these vehicles

Fire Safety

- Ensure you know the location of your nearest fire exit
- Check the location of the nearest fire extinguisher
- Study the fire instructions in your room
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs
- Do not smoke in bed
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately, do not stop to collect your belongings
- Proceed to an assembly point well away from the building

Glass Safety

- Glass doors and windows may not be toughened glass
- Take care in bright sunlight, it may not be obvious doors/windows are closed
- Check to see if anti-collision stickers are in place at adult & child height

Balcony Safety

- Never lean over, sit or climb on the balcony
- Families with small children should request ground floor rooms whenever possible
- Do not climb or stand on balcony furniture
- Keep all balcony furniture away from the wall/railings

Pool Safety

- Familiarise yourself with the pool and its layout, deep and shallow ends
- Make note of the depth markings and any hazards
- Most pools do not have life guards, so please take care
- Shower before entering the pool
- Do not swim, if suffering from an upset stomach
- Observe pool rules and information signs at all times
- Do not swim at night, even if it is lit
- Do not swim immediately after a meal or when drinking alcohol
- Pool surrounds can be slippery, don't run around them
- Observe No Diving signs at all times
- Never jump or dive from raised pool features
- In the event of an emergency ensure you know how to raise help



Food Safety

In order to avoid the possibility of stomach upsets

- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked
- Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold
- Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables, (notably those you can peel or shell yourself)
- Always drink bottled water and ensure the seal is intact when purchasing
- Use boiled or bottled water for brushing your teeth
- Avoid ice in drinks as this is generally made from unsafe tap water
- Exercise judgement when purchasing street food; we cannot vouch for the health and safety of the food and drinks they provide

Personal Safety

- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas
- Be aware, stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable
- Avoid carrying too much money and/or valuables
- Use of a money belt is encouraged at all times
- Ensure your room is left secure when you go out
- Place all valuables in a safety deposit box, where available or with reception (use of these are often a condition of your insurance policy)
- Never leave windows or balcony doors open
- Ensure your main luggage can be locked when left unattended in rooms, carriages, luggage rooms etc.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery on holiday with you
- Do not leave valuable items or money on coaches

Sun Care

- Ensure you have adequate protection for your type of skin, high factor sunscreens should be utilised initially
- Re-apply sunscreen frequently
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest time of the day
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration
- At the first sign of burning, cover up and get out of the sun
- Beware, you can still burn, dehydrate and get sunstroke in the shade or in the water
- Take a sunhat, sunglasses and lip salve

Insurance

- Ensure you have appropriate insurance for your holiday and that it covers any activity you intend to undertake
- If participating in any high risk activity, appraise yourself of the safety standards being operated by the supplier
- Avoid purchasing activities or excursions from anyone not connected to Wendy Wu Tours; they often lack public liability insurance and have unchecked safety standards
- Any accident or injury should be reported immediately to the National Escort or Tour Guide and a report obtained

Online Information

- For the latest Health & Safety information for travellers visit www.fco.gov.uk



CLIMATE

We recommend you check weather conditions before you depart. The region generally has a tropical climate with monsoon rains for part of the year. However, the word 'monsoon' should not deter you – travelling during the monsoon can be the most rewarding, with lower tourist numbers and lush growth of the landscape. Usually the monsoon involves a downpour late in the day, which is heavy but short lived. Freak weather conditions could result in delays, changes or in rare cases, cancellations to sections of your itinerary.

Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos

The countries of Indochina have a subtropical climate; the months of December, January and February are equivalent to their winter with it being the coolest time of the year. The months of April, May, September, and October enjoy warm temperatures, with April and May being their equivalent to spring; September and October being autumn. During June, July and August it is the wet season for most parts of this region; their equivalent to summer.

Thailand

Thailand's climate is tropical and humid for the majority of the country during most of the year. The southern region of Thailand really has only two seasons – the wet and the dry. These seasons do not run at the same time on both the east and west side of the peninsular. In northern Thailand the seasons are clearly defined.

Borneo

Borneo enjoys a typical tropical climate and is hot and humid throughout the year. Temperatures remain fairly constant year-round, between 27 – 32 degrees. The dry season runs more or less from April through to September. April tends to be the driest month of the year, receiving only 120mm of rainfall. May, June, July are the sunniest months of the year, all enjoying 10 hours of beautiful sunshine each day on average. Afternoons can get extremely hot this time of year, with a peak of 35 degrees on average in July. Wet season falls roughly between October and March. However, the number of sunshine hours never drops below 7 per day. A day without sunshine is rare in this gorgeous destination, making vacationing in Borneo pleasurable at any time of the year.



CLIMATE CHARTS:

Indochina:

Average Temperatures	January		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	21/ 31	MED	13
HANOI	13/ 20	MED	18
SAPA	5/ 11	MED	40
HOI AN	18/ 24	HIGH	96
HUE	17/ 23	HIGH	180
PHNOM PENH	21/ 31	HIGH	7
SIEM REAP	19/ 31	MED	2
VIENTIANE	14/ 28	MED	5
LUANG PRABANG	13/ 28	MED	15

Average Temperatures	February		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	22/ 32	MED	4
HANOI	14/ 21	HIGH	28
SAPA	6/ 12	MED	71
HOI AN	19/ 26	HIGH	33
HUE	18/ 24	HIGH	93
PHNOM PENH	22/ 32	HIGH	10
SIEM REAP	21/ 32	MED	10
VIENTIANE	17/ 30	HIGH	15
LUANG PRABANG	14/ 32	HIGH	18

Average Temperatures	March		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	24/ 33	MED	10
HANOI	17/ 23	MED	38
SAPA	11/ 18	MED	119
HOI AN	21/ 28	MED	22
HUE	20/ 27	HIGH	66
PHNOM PENH	23/ 34	HIGH	40
SIEM REAP	23/ 33	MED	20
VIENTIANE	19/ 33	HIGH	38
LUANG PRABANG	17/ 34	HIGH	31

Average Temperatures	April		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	25/ 34	MED	50
HANOI	20/ 32	HIGH	81
SAPA	13/ 21	MED	178
HOI AN	23/ 31	MED	26
HUE	22/ 30	MED	60
PHNOM PENH	24/ 35	HIGH	77
SIEM REAP	24/ 34	MED	60
VIENTIANE	23/ 34	HIGH	99
LUANG PRABANG	21/ 36	HIGH	109

Average Temperatures	May		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	25/ 34	HIGH	218
HANOI	23/ 32	HIGH	196
SAPA	16/ 22	HIGH	370
HOI AN	24/ 33	HIGH	62
HUE	23/ 33	HIGH	83
PHNOM PENH	24/ 34	HIGH	134
SIEM REAP	24/ 33	HIGH	140
VIENTIANE	23/ 32	HIGH	267
LUANG PRABANG	23/ 35	HIGH	163

Average Temperatures	June		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	24/ 32	HIGH	311
HANOI	26/ 33	HIGH	239
SAPA	17/ 22	HIGH	355
HOI AN	25/ 33	HIGH	87
HUE	25/ 34	HIGH	96
PHNOM PENH	24/ 33	HIGH	155
SIEM REAP	23/ 32	HIGH	170
VIENTIANE	24/ 32	HIGH	302
LUANG PRABANG	23/ 34	HIGH	155

Average Temperatures	July		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	24/ 32	HIGH	293
HANOI	26/ 33	HIGH	323
SAPA	17/ 22	HIGH	480
HOI AN	25/ 34	HIGH	85
HUE	25/ 34	HIGH	50
PHNOM PENH	24/ 32	HIGH	171
SIEM REAP	23/ 31	HIGH	200
VIENTIANE	24/ 31	HIGH	267
LUANG PRABANG	23/ 32	HIGH	231

Average Temperatures	August		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	24/ 31	HIGH	270
HANOI	26/ 32	HIGH	343
SAPA	17/ 23	HIGH	480
HOI AN	25/ 33	HIGH	103
HUE	24/ 34	HIGH	137
PHNOM PENH	26/ 32	HIGH	160
SIEM REAP	23/ 31	HIGH	200
VIENTIANE	24/ 31	HIGH	292
LUANG PRABANG	23/ 32	HIGH	300

Average Temperatures	September		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	24/ 31	HIGH	327
HANOI	24/ 31	HIGH	254
SAPA	16/ 22	HIGH	320
HOI AN	24/ 31	HIGH	349
HUE	23/ 31	HIGH	502
PHNOM PENH	25/ 31	HIGH	224
SIEM REAP	23/ 30	HIGH	260
VIENTIANE	24/ 31	HIGH	302
LUANG PRABANG	23/ 33	HIGH	165

Average Temperatures	October		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	23/ 31	HIGH	266
HANOI	22/ 29	MED	99
SAPA	13/ 18	HIGH	190
HOI AN	23/ 29	HIGH	612
HUE	22/ 28	HIGH	688
PHNOM PENH	24/ 30	HIGH	257
SIEM REAP	22/ 30	HIGH	230
VIENTIANE	18/ 29	HIGH	109
LUANG PRABANG	21/ 32	MED	79

Average Temperatures	November		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	22/ 31	HIGH	116
HANOI	18/ 26	MED	43
SAPA	10/ 17	HIGH	119
HOI AN	21/ 27	HIGH	366
HUE	20/ 26	HIGH	647
PHNOM PENH	23/ 30	HIGH	127
SIEM REAP	21/ 30	HIGH	80
VIENTIANE	18/ 29	HIGH	15
LUANG PRABANG	18/ 29	MED	31

Average Temperatures	December		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
SAIGON	21/ 30	MED	48
HANOI	15/ 22	MED	20
SAPA	7/ 13	MED	40
HOI AN	19/ 24	HIGH	199
HUE	18/ 23	HIGH	375
PHNOM PENH	22/ 30	HIGH	45
SIEM REAP	19/ 30	MED	10
VIENTIANE	16/ 28	MED	3
LUANG PRABANG	15/ 27	MED	13

Thailand:

Average Temperatures	March – May (Summer)		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
BANGKOK	25/38	HIGH	70
CHIANG MAI	18/33	HIGH	60
PHUKET	23/31	HIGH	180

Average Temperatures	June – October (Rainy)		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
BANGKOK	23/31	HIGH	115
CHIANG MAI	21/32	MED	160
PHUKET	24/31	HIGH	260

Average Temperatures	November – February (Winter)		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
BANGKOK	20/30	HIGH	20
CHIANG MAI	13/30	MED	15
PHUKET	18/31	HIGH	40

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Borneo

Average Temperatures	November- January		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
KOTA KINABALU	30/23	Medium	287 mm
KUCHING	31/23	Medium	385 mm

Average Temperatures	February- June		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
KOTA KINABALU	30/22	Medium	97 mm
KUCHING	30/23	Medium	582 mm

Average Temperatures	July- October		
	Temp °C min/max	Humidity	Rain mm
KOTA KINABALU	31/23	Medium	249 mm
KUCHING	32/23	Medium	193 mm



SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Consider your packing carefully. You will need to bring clothing suitable for sun exposure and mild temperatures, as well as water/windproof clothing for the cooler, wetter weather. Generally, casual clothes are recommended for your holiday. Loose fitting, lightweight cotton materials are the most comfortable for humid weather. The dress code throughout the tour is casual however, it is important that all passengers dress conservatively. Smart casual clothes are highly recommended for evening banquets and shows.



Example packing list:

- 📌 Your travel documents and passport- including a photocopy of your passport in case it is lost or stolen while you are abroad. Keep one photocopy at home and take another photocopy on your trip with you.
- 📌 Main luggage & luggage padlocks.
- 📌 'Day bag' - a smaller bag to carry with you during the day, both while driving and sightseeing. E.g. drinking water, hat, sunscreen, toilet paper, insect repellent, camera and spare batteries, jacket.
- 📌 Money belt to carry passport, cash, credit cards, airline tickets, etc.

- 📌 Lightweight trousers or shorts/skirts (for women) – please remember to respect local customs (knee length is recommended).
- 📌 Shirts or long-sleeved tops of light cotton material.
- 📌 Light jumpers - great for layering.
- 📌 Thermals, thick socks, gloves and scarf - particularly if you are travelling during the winter months November – February.
- 📌 Walking shoes and socks, or sandals – it is important to have sturdy and comfortable shoes for sightseeing every day.
- 📌 Swimming costume.
- 📌 Sun protection – hat, sunscreen and lip balm.
- 📌 Personal medical kit including insect repellent.
- 📌 Antibacterial wipes or gel to clean hands before eating.
- 📌 Tracksuit/similar outfit of soft material is recommended for the overnight train journeys.
- 📌 A water/windproof jacket.
- 📌 Umbrella/raincoat/poncho - particularly if you are travelling during the rainy season June – October.
- 📌 A 'modesty shawl' or sarong to wear in Muslim or conservative areas (for women).
- 📌 Torch, conversion plug and spare batteries – batteries available to buy in Southeast Asia tend to be unreliable.
- 📌 Scarf or bandana – useful to protect your face against dusty winds at high altitude.
- 📌 Spare glasses – it is difficult to get any prescription lenses repaired or replaced in Southeast Asia.
- 📌 Small bath towel is useful for overnight train journeys.
- 📌 Snacks – tea bags/coffee, milk powder or sachets, instant soups or noodles, or anything else you can't live without!
- 📌 Camera and spare film/memory card – film available in Southeast Asia tends to be bad quality or sun damaged.
- 📌 Sleeping sheet & small bath towel – handy for home stays (although linen is provided, it may not always be clean).
- 📌 Toiletries (soap, shampoo, lotion) – for personal use during homestays.

In addition, if your tour visits the mountainous region of northern Laos, or northern Vietnam:

- 📌 Light jumpers or thermals
- 📌 A warm water/windproof jacket
- 📌 Thick and warm socks, gloves, scarf and a hat



YOUR PHRASEBOOK SOUTHEAST ASIA

GUIDE TO PRACTICAL VIETNAMESE

Vietnamese has been spoken by the inhabitants within the current day borders of Vietnam for millennia and today it is the national and official language of the country. It is the mother tongue of 86% of the inhabitants of Vietnam and is a second language spoken by the many small ethnic minorities within the country.

The ancestor of the Vietnamese language was originally based in the area of the Red River, in what is now northern Vietnam, and during the subsequent expansion of the Vietnamese language and people into what is now central and southern Vietnam.

It appears that the language has been heavily influenced by its location in the Southeast Asian region and much of the vocabulary has been borrowed from Chinese, especially words that denote abstract ideas in the same way European languages borrow from Latin and Greek. Although it was formerly written using the Chinese writing system, the writing system in use today is an adapted version of the Latin alphabet.

Through extensive contact with western countries over many hundreds of years, other languages have been in common usage within Vietnam and today English is widely spoken throughout the country.

With the use of English being commonplace you should have no difficulty in finding your way or visiting restaurants and shops during your visit to Vietnam. However, there may be occasions, especially in small towns, rural areas and in the many local markets, when you may find the ability to communicate in Vietnamese to be helpful and its also a great way to make friends with the warm and hospitable Vietnamese people.

To assist you in this we have prepared this brief phrase book, containing some phrases that you are most likely to need as well as a small dictionary of additional words that you may find useful from time to time. We have added space at the back of this book for you to write down any other words you may need; ask your National Escort or Local Guide for a word and then write it down and you are set to go.

For each word or phrase we have given the English followed by the Vietnamese and then a phonetic version that should make it easier for you to pronounce.

First though you need to know about the tones. Vietnamese is a tonal language with 6 tones. These tones are marked as follows:

1.	Level	ma	ghost
2.	High Rising	má	cheek
3.	Low/Falling	mà	but
4.	Drip-Rising	mã	tomb
5.	High Rising Glottalized	mạ̃	horse
6.	Low Rising Glottalized	mạ̣	Rice /seeding

Something else to help you is the Vietnamese alphabet, try these pronunciation exercises:

Aa	a	Nn	nar
Ăă	ah	Oo	or
Ââ	er	Ôô	aw
Bb	ber	Ơơ	er
Cc	ga	Pp	pa
Dd	zar	Qq	car
Đđ	dar	Rr	e-rer
Ee	air	Ss	s-ee
Êê	e	Tt	dar
Gg	gar	Uu	oo
Hh	har	Ưư	er
lì	Ling-an	Vv	va
Kk	ga	Xx	s-ee
Lì	e-luh	Yy	caw ret
Mm	m-mar		

GETTING STARTED

All phrases throughout this booklet are set out in the following order:

ENGLISH	hello or hi
VIETNAMESE	xin chào
PHONETIC	sin chòw

The first thing to know is the various forms of greeting:

Hello or Hi

xin chào
sin chòw

How are you?

bạn khoẻ không?
barn quair kong

If you are asked the same question then the answer is:

I am very good

tôi rất là khoẻ
doy zut là quair

If you ask the question first and ask 'How are you?' the response will probably be:

I am very good, and you?

tôi rất là khoẻ, còn bạn?
doy zut là quair, gon barn

To which the final response will be:

I am also good

tôi cũng rất là khoẻ
doy koong zut là quair

So the full conversation will be:

(You) barn quair kong?
(Them) doy zut là quair, con barn?
(You) doy koong zut là quair

Practice this with your partner or a friend.

Here are the words you have learnt:

You	Good; well; fine
bạn	khoè
barn	quair

Add to the end of a word or phrase to pose a question:

VIETNAMESE	không
PHONETIC	không

I; me	Very
tôi	rất là
doy	zut là

Here are some more greeting words that you can easily use:

Pleased to meet you
rất hân hạnh gặp bạn
zut hun hang gup barn

Good morning
chào buổi sáng
chòw boô-ee saँग

Good afternoon
chào buổi chiều
chòw boô-ee chee-oò

Goodbye
chào tạm biệt
chòw dam biet

Good evening
chào buổi tối
chòw boô-ee dóy

You (formal)
bạn
barn

Now you have learnt how to greet someone you may like to learn something about them, their name or where they are from or what they do for a living.

The following words and phrases should help you with that.

May I ask your name?
cho tôi hỏi tên bạn là gì?
char doy hi den barn là zi

My family name is Brown, given name John
họ tên tôi là Brown, tôi tên là John
ho den doy là Brown, doy den là John

What's your name?
bạn tên là gì?
barn den là zi

Where are you from?
bạn đến từ đâu?
barn den du dow

If you are asked this question your answer would be:

I'm from	tôi đến từ	doy den du
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Australia
uc
ook

I am
tôi là
doy là

America
mỹ
mey i

You are
bạn là
barn là

China
trung quốc
chung quor

He is
anh ấy là
ang ay là

England
anh quốc
an guor

She is
cô ấy là
gaw ay là

New Zealand
niu zi nan
new zee lan

They are
họ là
họ là

What do you do?
What is your work?
bạn làm nghề gì?
barn lam nay zi

We are
chúng tôi là
júm doy là

Let us review the new words you have learnt:

May I ask?
cho tôi hỏi
char doy hi

I/me
tôi
doy

You/your (formal)
bạn
barn

He
anh ấy
ang ay

What
cái gì
gaí zi

She
cô ấy
gaw ay

Name (family)
họ tên
ho den

They
họ
ho

Name (given)
tên
den

We
chúng tôi,
júm doy

Here are some other words you may find useful

This
(cái) này
(guy) này

Theirs
của người kia
gor nooa gia

That
(cái) đó
(guy) đó

Both; all
cả hai
ga hi

Which
cái nào
cuy now

Friend
bạn
barn

Who
ai
ai

Male
người đàn ông
gooay dan ong

Mine
của tôi
guo doy

Boy friend
bạn trai
barn chai

Yours
của bạn
guo barn

Girl friend
bạn gái
barn guy

His/hers
của anh ấy / của cô ấy
guo ang a / guor gor a

No; not
không
kong

Want
muốn
morn

Today
hôm nay
hom nay

Hence
Don't want
không muốn
kong morn

Tomorrow
ngày mai
nay my

I Understand
tôi hiểu
doy hee-ow

Tonight
tối nay
dóy lay

Hence
I don't understand
tôi không hiểu
doy kong hee-ow

Hence
Do you understand?
bạn có hiểu không
barn hee-oo kong

Asking the whereabouts of something or someone

Where is the toilet?
nhà vệ sinh ở đâu?
nyà ve sing er doh

Where is John?
John ở đâu?
John er doh

Where is the dining room?
phòng ăn ở đâu?
fung an er doh

Where is the market?
chợ ở đâu?
cha er doh

I would like to buy water
tôi muốn mua nước
doy morn moer luac

SHOPPING

Do you have water?
bạn có nước không?
barn gor luac kong

Just looking
tôi chỉ nhìn thôi
doy chi nin toy

How much does this cost?
cái này bao nhiêu tiền?
guy lay bow nio dien

It is too expensive
cái này mắc quá
guy lay ma qua

Excuse me
xin lỗi
sin loy

Miss
cô ơi
gaw oi

I want
tôi muốn
doy morn

Thank you
cảm ơn
gam urn

Very good
tốt lắm
dort lam

Not good
không tốt
kong dort

No thank you
không cảm ơn
kong gam urn

CAFES & RESTAURANTS

Do you have coffee?
bạn có cà phê không?
barn go ga fay kong

I want coffee
tôi muốn cà phê
doy morn ga fay

We all want coffee
tất cả chúng tôi muốn cà
phê dut go chung doy morn
ga fay

No milk thank you
không sữa, cảm ơn
kong su er gam urn

I would like to drink beer
tôi muốn uống bia
doy morn uong bia

Please bring a knife and fork
làm ơn cầm dao và rĩa
lam ern gam zow va chia

Waiter!
bồi bàn!
boy ban

Do you have an English menu?
bạn có thực đơn bằng
tiếng Anh không?
barn go tuc dern bang dieng
an kong

Bill please
tính tiền làm ơn
ding dien lam ern

Let us review some more new words you have learnt:

Toilet
nhà vệ sinh
nyà ve sing

Dining room
phòng ăn
fung an

Water
nước
luac

Excuse me
làm ơn
lam ern

Want
muốn
muon

Good
tốt
dough

Milk
sữa
su er

Waiter
bồi bàn
boy ban

Beer
bia
bia

Where is
Ở đâu
ar dough

Market
chợ
cha

Looking
nhìn
nin

Miss
cô
gaw

Thank you
cảm ơn
gam urn

Coffee
cà phê
ga fay

Water
bồi bàn
boy ban

Cold
lạnh
lang

Menu
thực đơn
tuc dern

NUMBERS

ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE	PHONETIC
1	một	mort
2	hai	hi
3	ba	ba
4	bốn	born
5	năm	num
6	sáu	sow
7	bảy	bay
8	tám	dam
9	chín	chin
10	mười	moo ay
11	mười một	moo ay mort
12	mười hai	moo ay hi
13	mười ba	moy ay ba
14	mười bốn	moo ay born

And so on to 19 and then...

20	hai mươi	hi moo ay
21	hai mươi mốt	hi moo ay mort
22	hai mươi hai	hi moo ay hi

And so on to 29 and then...

30	ba mươi	ba moo ay
40	bốn mươi	born moo ay
50	năm mươi	num moo ay
60	sáu mươi	sow moo ay
70	bảy mươi	bay moo ay
80	tám mươi	dam moo ay
90	chín mươi	Chin moo ay

And so on to 99 and then...

100	một trăm	mort chum
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CAMBODIA VOCABULARY

Khmer or Cambodian is the language of the Khmer people and the official language of Cambodia.

Below is a list of the most common words and phrases you are most likely to need whilst in Cambodia in phonetic version to make it easier for you to pronounce.

ENGLISH	KHMER (Phonetic)
Hello	sues'day
Goodbye	sohm dtoh
Yes	baat (by male) or chaa (by female)
No	tei
Excuse me / Sorry	somtoh
My name is...	k'nyom tchmouh
How are you?	Tau neak sok sapbaiy jea te?
Thank you	awkun
I am British	k'nyohm mok pee pradeh Britain
Good	l'aw
Not good	akrawk
Beautiful	sraw (people) or saat (places / objects)
I would like...	k'nyohm jong....
Rice (plain)	buy
Rice (sticky)	bye domnap
Tea	tie
Postage stamp	ti'em
Cold beer	bia
(without) ice	(k'mien) dteuk goa
(without) chilli	(k'mien) ma tay
Mineral water	tuck
Boiled drinking water	teuk dam
Chopsticks	chawng kus
Bowl	muey caan
Plate	chan
Knife	kambut
Fork	sohm
Toilet	kun

LAOS VOCABULARY

Lao or Laotian is the official and national language spoken in Laos as well as north-east Thailand.

Below is a list of the most common words and phrases you are most likely to need whilst in Laos in phonetic version to make it easier for you to pronounce.

ENGLISH	LAO (Phonetic)
Hello	sa-bai-dee
Goodbye	la kawn
Yes	doi
No	baw
Excuse me / Sorry	kor thoad
My name is...	kway sue wa
How are you?	chao phen nell dai?
Thank you	kok chai
I am British	koi man kol Britain
Good	dee
Not good	bor dee
Beautiful	gnum
I would like...	khoy yak dai.....
Rice (plain)	kao
Rice (sticky)	kao niaw
Tea	num sa
Postage stamp	ka jum
Cold beer	beer yen
(without) ice	(baw sai) nam kawn
(without) chilli	(baw sai) phet
Mineral water	nam dumb
Boiled drinking water	nam thome
Chopsticks	mai thou
Bowl	tuay
Plate	chane
Knife	meed
Fork	soum
Toilet	hong nam

THAI VOCABULARY

Thai is the official and national language spoken in Thailand.

Below is a list of the most common words and phrases you are most likely to need whilst in Thailand in phonetic version to make it easier for you to pronounce.

ENGLISH	MALAYSIAN
Hello, Good morning	sawat-dee khrab (male speakers)
Hello, Good morning	sawat-dee kha (female speakers)
How are you?	sabai dee mai (khrab/kha)
I am fine	sabai dee khrab/kha
Thank you	khorb khun khrab/kha
Excuse me, Sorry	khon to:ht khrab/kha
My name is ...	pom/chan chue ...
What is your name?	khun chue arai
How old are you?	khun aa-yoo tao-rai
Where is the toilet?	ho:ng naam yoo nai (khrab/kha)
Do you speak English?	khun pood paa-saa angkrit bpen mai
I do not speak Thai	pom/chan pood paa-saa tai mai bpen (dai)
Do you understand?	khao jai mai (khrab/kha)
One ... beer please!	kho bia ... nueng kuat (khrab/kha)
Red wine, white wine, coffee	wai: daeng, wai: khao kafee ro:n
Can I see the menu please?	kho doo menoo noy khrab/kha
Not spicy (please)	(khor) mai phet

