



Natural Wonders of Ecuador & Galápagos

Classic Tour | 17 Days | Physical Level 2

Quito (2N) — Otavalo (2N) - Cotopaxi (1N) — Banos (1N) - Amazon (2N) —
Papallacta (1N) - Galápagos (5N) - Quito (1N)

Journey through Ecuador's spectacular contrasts, exploring the UNESCO-listed streets of Quito, the vibrant artisan markets of Otavalo, the dramatic volcanoes of Cotopaxi and the pristine Amazon rainforest. Then cruise the iconic Galápagos Islands, where extraordinary endemic wildlife and volcanic landscapes create one of the world's greatest natural wonders.

- Straddle the equator in Quito
- Explore the Amazon Rainforest and meet indigenous communities living within the jungle
- Experience the awe-inspiring Galápagos Islands

TOUR MAP:



WONDERS & WILDLIFE OF ECUADOR & GALÁPAGOS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

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

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Ecuador on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken

care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

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. 'Wonders & Wildlife of Ecuador & Galápagos' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. 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.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- The days spent on the mainland of Ecuador will be at a maximum altitude of 4000m
- Sightseeing will involve climbing several steps, often without handrails
- There will be some travel by boats required whilst in the Galápagos

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 17 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations.

Join the tour on Day 1 in Quito and end the tour on Day 16 in Quito. 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 maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive in Quito

Meals: D

Fly to Ecuador's equatorial capital, Quito, arriving later the same day after crossing the International Date Line.

You will be met at the arrivals section of the airport and transferred to your hotel for check-in. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure before your Ecuadorian-style welcome dinner this evening.



Today's altitude: 2850m

Please note: Early check-in is not included. If your flight arrives in the morning and you wish to arrange this, please speak to your reservations consultant.

Destination Information

Quito - A stunning Andean city sitting at an elevation of 2,850 meters (9,350 feet). It's the largest, best-preserved colonial city of America – declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. It features beautifully preserved colonial architecture, centuries-old churches, and a vibrant culture deeply rooted in both indigenous and Spanish traditions.

Day 2: Quito

Meals: B, L, D

Today, you will discover Quito through the eyes of a local. Wander through the narrow streets and admire iconic landmarks including the Golden Church, San Francisco Square and the Main Square. Visit Luis' "Cruz Verde" workshop, where his family has been preserving the tradition of crafting Quito's famous colaciones sweets for over 100 years, before enjoying a delicious lunch prepared with fresh local ingredients and flavours in the company of local hosts.



Continue north to the Mitad del Mundo Museum and finish your day with an immersive Ecuadorian chocolate tasting, learning about the journey from cacao bean to bar while discovering the rich traditions and craftsmanship behind one of Ecuador's most treasured exports.

Today's altitude: 2850m

Destination Information

Mitad del Mundo – The Ethnographic Museum Middle of the Earth, is about the indigenous people ethnography of Ecuador.

Day 3: Quito - Otavalo

Meals: B, L, D

Today, you will travel north to the picturesque town of Otavalo, home to one of South America's most renowned indigenous markets. Explore the vibrant stalls of the famous Otavalo Market, where you can browse colourful handmade textiles, traditional clothing, jewellery and artwork crafted by local artisans. Continue your cultural discovery with a visit to a traditional weaving workshop, where you'll take part in a hands-on experience, learning about ancestral techniques passed down through generations and gaining insight into the rich textile heritage of the Andes.



Today's altitude: 2530m

Destination Information

Otavalo - Otavalo is a town in the Andean highlands in the Imbabura province of northern Ecuador. It's surrounded by volcanoes including the Imbabura Volcano. It's known for its Otavalo Market in the central Plaza de Ponchos, where traditionally clad indigenous townspeople sell colorful textiles and handicrafts.

Day 4: Otavalo (Cuicocha Lake & Cotacachi town)

Meals: B, L, D

Discover the spectacular beauty of Cuicocha Lake, a striking volcanic crater lake nestled at the foot of Cotacachi Volcano in the Ecuadorian Andes. Take in sweeping views across its deep blue waters and lava-formed islands, with time to stroll along the crater rim and learn about the region's fascinating volcanic landscapes and unique Andean ecosystems. Continue to the charming town of Cotacachi, renowned for its rich indigenous heritage and exceptional leather craftsmanship, where you'll have time to explore its colourful streets, artisan workshops and traditional shops.



Today's altitude: 3068m

Day 5: Otavalo - Cotopaxi

Meals: B, L, D

Journey for approximately 20 minutes to the Andean village of **Pijal** for an authentic cultural experience with the women of the Sacha WarmiKuna ('Women of Nature') community. Gain a fascinating insight into their sustainable way of life as they share generations of knowledge in agriculture, traditional cuisine and handicraft making. Roll up your sleeves to prepare ají, the region's signature hot sauce, before sitting down together to enjoy a traditional farm-to-table lunch made with fresh organic produce harvested from the surrounding fields. Learn about daily life in the Andes, try your hand at local handicrafts and browse a selection of beautifully crafted souvenirs, with the opportunity to support the community by purchasing their handmade creations, before continuing to the spectacular landscapes of Cotopaxi, a journey of approximately 2 hrs 30 mins.

**Today's altitude: 3400m****Destination Information**

Pijal – A rural Indigenous community in the Imbabura Province of Ecuador, located just south of Otavalo and Lake San Pablo. Famous for its Andean culture, it offers immersive agrotourism, hiking trails to the Yana Pacha waterfall, and sweeping views of the Imbabura and Cotacachi volcanoes.

Day 6: Cotopaxi – Baños

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the breathtaking landscapes of Cotopaxi National Park, dominated by the majestic Cotopaxi Volcano, one of the world's highest active volcanoes. Journey through the sweeping Northern Andean páramo, keeping an eye out for wild horses and other native wildlife, before visiting the tranquil Limpiopungo Lagoon, where the volcano's snow-capped peak is often reflected in its still waters. Later, travel towards the Amazon (a journey of approximately 2 hrs 30 mins) stopping overnight in the vibrant town of Baños which is nestled between the Andes and the rainforest.

**Today's altitude: 3400m**

Destination Information

Northern Andean paramo – An ecoregion containing páramo vegetation above the tree line in the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador. In the past, when the climate was cooler, the tree line and the páramo units were lower and the units were connected.

Day 7: Baños – Amazon

Meals: B, L, D

Today, you will begin travelling along Ecuador's famous Waterfalls Route from Baños, one of the country's most scenic roads, as you journey between the Andes and the Amazon. Discover a series of spectacular waterfalls, enjoy breathtaking viewpoints and learn about the diverse landscapes and ecosystems that make this region so unique. Continue to your Amazon rainforest lodge, where you'll experience the magic of the jungle after dark on a guided night walk, keeping watch for nocturnal wildlife and discovering the fascinating plants and creatures that come alive after sunset. Today you will be travelling for approximately 4 hours, including stops.



Today's altitude: 1800m

Day 8: Amazon (Wildlife Rescue Centre)

Meals: B, L, D

Visit an Amazon wildlife rescue centre dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of native species, where you'll learn about important conservation efforts and the challenges facing the region's unique wildlife. Continue to a local Amazonian community, where you'll meet the people who call the rainforest home and gain insight into their traditions, daily lives and deep connection with the natural world. Discover age-old customs passed down through generations and learn how local communities continue to live in harmony with the incredible environment that surrounds them.

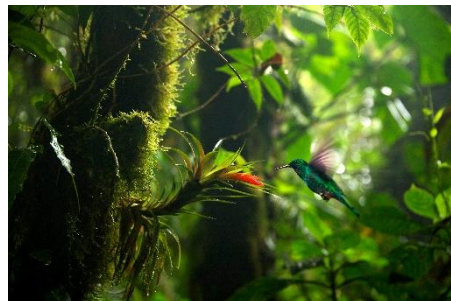


Today's altitude: 600m

Day 9: Amazon - Papallacta

Meals: B, L, D

Journey east from Quito through the spectacular landscapes of the Andes towards the cloud forests of Papallacta. Visit Guango Lodge, a renowned birdwatching haven on the edge of the Cayambe-Coca Ecological Reserve, where you'll explore lush forest trails and look out for colourful hummingbirds, tanagers, mountain toucans and other unique Andean species. Continue to the nearby Papallacta Hot Springs, where you can relax in naturally heated thermal pools surrounded by dramatic mountain scenery, with waters enriched by minerals from the region's volcanic landscape. The journey time is approximately 2 hrs 30 mins.

**Today's altitude: 3300m****Day 10: Papallacta – Galápagos (La Lobería)**

Meals: B, L, D

Today, embark on the next unforgettable chapter of your Ecuadorian adventure as you fly from Quito to the legendary Galápagos Islands, the inspiration behind Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Arrive on San Cristóbal Island and head to Puerto Baquerizo Moreno before exploring La Lobería, a beautiful coastal reserve and home to a colony of playful Galápagos sea lions. Stroll along the shoreline, spot unique wildlife including marine iguanas, frigate birds, yellow warblers and Darwin's finches, and enjoy time to swim, snorkel or simply relax on the beach surrounded by the incredible natural beauty of the islands.

**Today's altitude: 2850m (Quito), 0m / sea level (La Lobería, Galapagos)**

Day 11: Galápagos (Isla Lobos)

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, take a short boat ride from San Cristóbal Island to Isla Lobos, keeping watch for marine life as you travel across the crystal-clear waters. Explore the island with your guide and discover its incredible wildlife, from magnificent frigate birds and blue-footed boobies to playful sea lions, manta rays and, if you're lucky, sharks in the surrounding waters.



Return to San Cristóbal to relax on its beautiful white coral beaches before visiting the Interpretation Centre and walking to Frigate Hill and Punta Carola, where you'll enjoy spectacular views and a beautiful Pacific sunset.

Complete your day with a unique culinary experience, discovering the traditional Canchalagua ceviche, a local speciality prepared with a rare mollusc found only in the Galápagos. Learn about the importance of this endemic ingredient, its harvesting traditions and the island's culinary heritage before tasting this distinctive dish, prepared with fresh local flavours.

Destination Information

Canchalagua ceviche - A local delicacy native to the Galápagos that's made from an endemic black marine mollusk. It has a firm, octopus-like texture and a clam-like flavor, and is marinated in lime juice, orange juice, tomatoes, red onions, and coriander.

Day 12: Galápagos (Santa Cruz)

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, take a scenic speedboat journey across the Pacific to Santa Cruz Island, one of the most vibrant islands in the Galápagos archipelago. After settling into your hotel, head out to explore Academy Bay, where you'll have the opportunity to swim and snorkel among colourful marine life, encounter curious sea lions gliding through the water and spot the iconic blue-footed boobies along the coastline. Continue to Playa de los Perros, a beautiful coastal area known for its sunbathing marine iguanas, dramatic red rock formations, towering cacti and sparkling turquoise waters, offering incredible opportunities for photography and wildlife encounters.



Day 13: Galápagos (Bartolomé Island)

Meals: B, L, D

Set sail early this morning to Bartolomé Island, one of the most iconic destinations in the Galápagos, renowned for its dramatic volcanic landscapes and breathtaking coastal views. Follow a wooden trail to the island's famous viewpoint overlooking Pinnacle Rock, learning about the unique volcanic formations and resilient plant life that have adapted to this extraordinary environment. Later, take to the crystal-clear waters for a snorkelling experience where you may encounter colourful tropical fish, playful sea lions, marine turtles, rays and, if you're fortunate, Galápagos penguins. Enjoy lunch onboard before relaxing on the return journey, taking in the spectacular scenery and remarkable biodiversity of this unforgettable archipelago.

**Day 14: Galápagos (Santa Cruz)**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, discover the remarkable wildlife of Santa Cruz Island with a visit to Primicias Ranch, a highland reserve home to the legendary giant Galápagos tortoises. Wander through the beautiful surroundings, observing these ancient creatures in their natural habitat, and explore fascinating underground lava tunnels formed by the island's volcanic past. Continue your exploration with a visit to a family-run coffee plantation, where you'll learn about sustainable farming practices, organic growing methods and the process of transforming locally grown coffee and cacao into delicious products. End your Galápagos adventure with a truly memorable farewell dinner, dining 60 feet underground inside a natural lava tunnel at one of the islands' most exclusive culinary venues.



Day 15: Galápagos (Charles Darwin Centre) - Quito

Meals: B, L, D

Continue your Galápagos discovery with a visit to the Charles Darwin Research Station, where you'll learn more about the unique endemic species found across the islands and the important conservation efforts helping to protect this fragile ecosystem. Later, transfer to Baltra Airport for your flight back to mainland Ecuador. Upon arrival in Quito, you'll be met and transferred to your hotel, with the remainder of the day at leisure. Dinner is included this evening.

**Today's altitude: 2850m****Destination Information**

Charles Darwin Research Station – *A biological research station in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos, Ecuador. The station is operated by the Charles Darwin Foundation which was founded in 1959 under the auspices of UNESCO and the World Conservation Union.*

Day 16-17: Depart Quito

Meals: B

Today marks the final day of your Ecuadorian adventure. After breakfast, prepare to check-out and be transferred to the airport for your overnight departure flight.

Today's altitude: 2850m

WONDERS & WILDLIFE OF ECUADOR & GALÁPAGOS: TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

British citizens do not need a visa to enter Ecuador for tourism of stays of up to 90 days.

INSURANCE:

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

ALTITUDE:

On this tour you will be spending several nights at altitude, and this will be marked on your day by day itinerary. At these sort of altitudes, Altitude Sickness is a risk. Symptoms may include dizziness, fatigue, nausea and shortness of breath. It is recommended that travellers utilize their first day in high-altitude destinations to acclimatise. To help you acclimatise we have designed our tours to be at a slower pace with more convenient stops and more free time, during the first few days. Staying hydrated, eating light meals and following a very light schedule will all help. We recommend that any symptoms that are unusual should be brought to the attention of your guide. Your guide will be extremely well-trained in dealing with its effects – taking it easy and taking some time to acclimatise are the best ways to prevent and combat it. Serious cases, meaning that you must descend immediately, are rare. We have adapted the itinerary to make sure that your time at these heights is as relaxed and easy as possible.

There are no specific factors, such as age or fitness, that can cause you to suffer from Altitude Sickness. It can affect anyone at any time and symptoms may vary. In some instances, a short spell on oxygen can help enormously. All the hotels that we have selected to use on our programmes provide oxygen free of charge, please ask to use this. There is medication - such as Diamox, that can help treat and prevent symptoms. Consult a doctor before taking any of these medications, before engaging in strenuous activity at high altitude, and regarding any necessary vaccinations in plenty of time before travelling.

EATING IN ECUADOR:

Ecuador's cuisine reflects the country's remarkable diversity, with each region offering its own distinct flavours and culinary traditions. From the cool Andean highlands to the lush Amazon rainforest and the Pacific coast, dishes are shaped by locally grown produce, fresh seafood and ingredients that have been cultivated for centuries. Potatoes, maize, plantain, rice and beans feature prominently, alongside fresh herbs, tropical fruits and locally produced cheeses, while favourites such as ají (a traditional chilli sauce) add flavour to many meals.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to the authentic flavours of Ecuador, from traditional family-run eateries to locally sourced farm-to-table experiences. All meals (excluding drinks) are included on our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your group's arrival until breakfast on your day of departure. Throughout your journey, you'll enjoy regional specialities that showcase the unique character of each destination, whether dining in the Andean highlands, sharing a meal with a local community or sampling fresh produce from the Amazon.

Dining in Ecuador is generally relaxed and sociable. Meals are typically served individually rather than shared, although family-style dining is common in some local communities and traditional restaurants. Expect fresh soups, hearty main courses and delicious tropical fruits to feature regularly, with lunch often being the largest meal of the day. While Western-style cutlery is used throughout the country, you'll also have opportunities to discover local customs and traditions through memorable culinary experiences included in your itinerary.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Ecuadorian cuisine, including advice for travellers with dietary requirements.

DEVELOPMENT IN ECUADOR:

Ecuador is a developing country with significant investment being made in infrastructure and tourism facilities, particularly in the main cities and popular tourist regions. However, standards may differ from those you are accustomed to in the UK, and facilities, roads and public areas may not always meet the same levels of accessibility, maintenance or safety. For example, uneven paths, limited lighting or unmarked changes in terrain may occasionally be encountered. All our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum.

We want you to have an enjoyable and memorable holiday, so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, pay attention to local signage and follow any advice provided by your guide.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to rainforest lodges. 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 may exist between United Kingdom and South America. All group tour hotels have private bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your 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 needs.

PORTERAGE:

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

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 Ecuador 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.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Within South America flights are often changed multiple times before departure, both timings and flight numbers. The utmost care will be taken to ensure that your final documents will have the latest information, however your local guide will confirm this in destination. Boarding passes can be collected directly at the airport. The flights booked as part of your itinerary will always reflect the best timings to suit the touring itinerary, with direct flights wherever possible, however due to limited schedules some flights may require an early departure or late arrival.

SOUVENIRS:

There are plenty of interesting bits and pieces to buy as souvenirs in all the visited destinations, such as indigenous textiles in Ecuador, handicrafts and artworks. There will be some opportunities during your tour to pick up souvenirs.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by National Escorts. There will usually be no more than 16 travellers in each group.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

TIPPING POLICY:

Local tipping is customary in Latin America; 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 and 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 recognise that it may not suit everyone. 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. Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and South America is no exception. We will provide suggested tipping amounts with your final documents for your convenience; however, tipping is entirely at your own discretion.

PACKING LIST AND CLIMATE:

On this tour, you will be travelling through various regions of Ecuador with quite diverse climates especially in those places with higher altitude. It is recommended to bring lots of layers including the following: T-Shirts made of breathable materials, hiking trousers (with the option to turn into shorts), a fleece jacket for colder parts and the evenings, a waterproof jacket as shell layer or a light rain jacket, a scarf and hat and warm socks. We recommend packing a light fleece jacket for those colder afternoons. A small backpack that fits into your main hand luggage to carry your daily essentials should also be taken.

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com.

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 10kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

EXCHANGING CASH:

The unit of currency in Ecuador is the United States Dollar (USD). We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Try and keep some small notes and coins on you, as on street stalls and in small shops they may not have the change to break up a high denomination note. Please make sure your US dollars are in a good state (not ripped etc) or they will not be accepted. ATMs are common across Latin

America and we recommend using an ATM inside a bank where possible. Most major credit cards are widely accepted across the continent; please bear in mind the charges of your provider. Debit cards are also widely accepted but may have a limit to the amount of cash you can withdraw, so consult your bank about this before travelling

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 at an additional cost. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact your GP for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Wendy Wu Tours is committed to always providing a safe and healthy environment for all passengers. Please follow the below link for more details on our travel health policy:

<https://www.wendywutours.co.uk/help-and-advice/travel-health/>

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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 before departure.

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