

March 2021



# WHISPERS

TRAVEL INSPIRATION FROM THE AWARD-WINNING TOUR SPECIALIST

## CHINA for first timers

Top ten sights in China as  
chosen by our guides

## Group getaways for solo travellers

See some of the inspiring itineraries  
you can find with dedicated solo departures

## Get to know Japan

Jaw-dropping scenery and mouth-watering food  
have made it the hot ticket for travel in 2021

TRAVEL SAFE WITH US IN 2021 AND BEYOND

Flexible Booking Guarantee | Low Deposits of just £99pp | Travel Safe Protocols



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Cover Image: Forbidden city in Beijing, China.

All holidays featured in this magazine are fully ABTA and ATOL protected and you will be provided with certification of this when you book. You'll find further information about financial protections on our website. All prices listed are per person and based on two adults sharing standard accommodation and return flights from London Heathrow on selected departure dates. Prices correct as of 1 March 2021 and are subject to change. Booking conditions apply, please see our website for details – [www.wendywutours.co.uk/help-and-advice/booking-conditions](http://www.wendywutours.co.uk/help-and-advice/booking-conditions)







## Welcome to the spring issue of Whispers magazine

In Asia this time of year is one of celebration as we mark the start of a Lunar New Year, as we say goodbye to the Year of The Rat and welcome in the Year of The Ox. I am certainly glad to be saying farewell to 2020, as I am sure are most of you.

A turbulent and troubling time, the like of which I have not experienced in all my 26 years of turning people's travel dreams into memories to last a lifetime.

Now we look forward with hope and optimism, as we can see a light shining through the endless cycle of lockdowns and restrictions on our lives. The impressive UK vaccination programme is leading the way in the West, whilst in the East stringent measure to control the virus, coupled with the commencement of extensive vaccinations across the region mean we enter the Year of the Ox with a genuine path back to normality.

The diligent Ox shares many admirable character traits, including honesty, loyalty and determination. These are traits I strongly believe in and they also reflect the values of Wendy Wu Tours. My fervent hope for 2021 is for you enjoy the thrill and excitement of travel once more, to journey with us to distant and mysterious lands, experiencing the unique cultural differences in a close and personal way, which has become the trademark of Wendy Wu Tours.

Our teams around the world have been working so hard to ensure your travel experience with Wendy Wu Tours is better than ever. We have further improved many tours, introduced many new and exciting destinations along with pioneering protocols to keep you safe whilst you travel as our guests. I can also assure you that our guides are longing to greet you and share their vast knowledge and love of their own countries to create unique and life-enhancing memories when you travel with us.

Wendy Wu

## BOOK & TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE



To help you book with confidence we are happy to offer some of the most flexible booking conditions around coupled with our Travel Safe protocols.

- Pay a deposit of just £99pp
- No need to pay the balance until 6 weeks before departure
- One free travel date change should you need it
- Travel with Confidence, pioneering protocols to keep you safe whilst travelling with us

At Wendy Wu Tours not only do we offer a fully-inclusive touring experience, giving you great value for money, we are also renowned for our exclusive special offers.

**From FREE Busines Class upgrade to FREE Flights! Visit [Wendywutours.co.uk](http://Wendywutours.co.uk) for our latest offers.**





# What's happening in the Wu Kingdom?

The latest developments from the world of Wendy Wu Tours



Whether it's the latest facts on developing stories in travel, brand new tours and destinations, or great news about awards and nominations, there's always something exciting going on in the Wu Kingdom.

Here are just a few of the stories that have been making waves in the world of Wendy Wu Tours. To keep up to date with all the latest developments, sign up for our Enewsletter, follow us on Facebook or visit [wendywutours.co.uk/about-us/wu-kingdom/](http://wendywutours.co.uk/about-us/wu-kingdom/) or Google – Wu Kingdom News



## Our Japan Tours are selling out fast!

11 Jan 2021

We may be locked down but that isn't stopping people booking their travel. Japan departures are already selling out in 2021 and 2022 and we've had to add more departures on two of our most popular tours.

The brand new, all-encompassing Japan by Rail tour takes you to the highlights of all three islands: Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido, travelling mainly by bullet train. Japan Uncovered is one of our most popular tours of the stunning country.

Featuring modern cities, historical sights and beautiful landscapes, Japan Uncovered ensures you get the most out of your trip.

## Staysure™

### Save on Covid Cover Travel Insurance

10 Jan 2020

Our customers' safety and wellbeing will always be our number one priority, that's why we're delighted to offer a 20% discount on Staysure's award-winning travel insurance. Including a host of benefits, as well as COVID-19 cover for cancellations, medical expenses and repatriation if you or a family member are diagnosed with coronavirus, Staysure has been voted the UK's Best Travel Insurance Provider in the British Travel Awards for four years in a row.



## Wendy Speaks to the BBC

8 Dec 2020

Wendy is invited by the BBC again to hear her unique insight into the impact of coronavirus on the tourism industry. Wendy talked about how we weathered the initial impact of the outbreak and how we are seeing a surge in bookings following the recent positive vaccine news.

NEW FOR  
2021



## Say Kia Ora to New Zealand

4 Dec 2020

We're so excited to bring you two brand-new tours to New Zealand that unlock the hidden treasures in a way that only Wendy Wu Tours can.

New Zealand is a small country with a big heart. Its unique history and vibrant culture provides an incredible wealth of experiences, the scenery is just jaw-dropping and the wildlife encounters unique and unforgettable.



BEST ESCORTED TOURS  
HOLIDAY COMPANY



BEST HOLIDAY COMPANY  
TO SOUTHEAST ASIA



BEST HOLIDAY COMPANY TO  
EAST & CENTRAL ASIA

## Wendy Wu Tours Wins

14 Dec 2020

Wendy Wu Tours are thrilled to announce that we won three Gold awards at the prestigious British Travel Awards today.

**Best Escorted Tour Company**

**Best Holiday Company to Southeast Asia**

**Best Holiday Company to East and Central Asia**

Over 250,000 votes were cast so thank you so much to everyone who voted for us.



# Party online with Wendy Wu Tours

We have been so disappointed not to be able to take you travelling these last 12 months and meet you face to face that we decided to bring the world to you online. We're delighted so many of you have joined us for our online parties recently; meeting our expert panellists, enjoying tasty treats and taking advantage of incredible exclusive offers.



## VIP Customer Parties

November & December 2020

Throughout November and December, we caught up with our wonderful VIP customers for a series of fabulous virtual parties!

Every VIP received a delicious cream tea straight to their door and heard from a fascinating selection of panellists on a wide range of subjects. Wendy talked inspirationally about how the company had not only weathered the storm, but had been looking forward to make sure we come back better than ever. We've been working on improving existing tours, creating exciting new itineraries and even branching out into new destinations in Central Asia, South America and the Middle East.

We also heard from the Editor of Wanderlust Magazine, received a moving message from our China team and there was an incredible exclusive offer for all attendees.

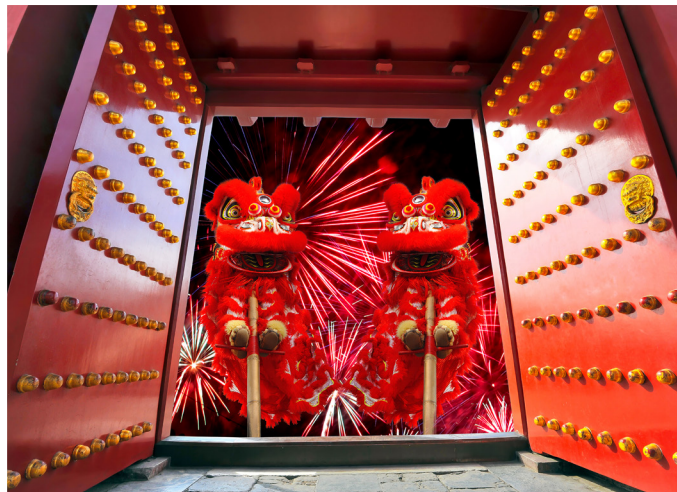


## Virtual Destinations Travel Show

15 & 16 January 2021

With the Destinations Travel shows cancelled this year our team stepped into the breach to put on a thrilling FREE Virtual Travel Show to inspire, entertain and inform our customers who are desperate to get travelling again. Over two action packed days our destination experts gave eager attendees the inside track on where to go, what to see and what to do in some of the most exciting destinations for 2021 and beyond.

Discovering the iconic must see destinations and the hidden gems, the cultural highlights and the unmissable experiences, we were also delighted to welcome so many of our past travellers onto the online panels. It was wonderful to hear their experiences, many of whom we took care of as the pandemic broke. Their advice ... "As soon as the countries are open again, go for it!"



## New Year Celebrations

10-19 February 2021

We wished good riddance to the terrible year of the Rat and celebrated a return to exploring, in the upcoming year of the Ox, with our wonderful online parties celebrating the Lunar New Year.

Thousands of past customers and new friends joined us for a series of online events over 10 days to look forward with renewed hope and optimism. Our experts journeyed virtually to Japan, Indochina, China, India, Bhutan, Central Asia and South America showcasing the best places to travel in the year of the Ox and beyond.

We also enjoyed a fascinating exploration of what it takes to travel Solo in style.

The enthusiasm of attendees to get travelling again was palpable and our panels had a great time chatting with all who came along. We were so glad so many of you also took advantage of the exclusive show offer too!

## What You Said

*"Thank you for a lovely party, the box of Cornish treats was delightful, the chocolate was delicious and the mince pies and clotted cream were a lovely treat, what a lovely idea."*

*"My husband and I really enjoyed all the presentations and the party room afterwards. You have certainly taken our minds off our grey wintry weather and often gloomy news and whisked us away to some fascinating places."* Sheila

*"Just to say a huge thank you for such an uplifting afternoon! The time went so quickly and it was a real treat to be able to dream of getting back to travel. The cream tea was a brilliant and scrummy idea! Lovely to meet Wendy, her enthusiasm was like a tonic and with her and such a great team it is no wonder the company is so successful."* Gillian



# Group getaways for solo travellers



Travelling solo is a truly enlightening experience. You can choose to explore that one place you have always dreamed of without having to compromise to suit someone else's travel wish list. It is the chance to fully immerse yourself in an unknown culture, meet fascinating new people and embrace every moment with a completely open mind.

We also know that travelling solo can be a little daunting for those who have never done it before. Or, perhaps it is not the idea of travelling solo, but the thought of organising it yourself that worries you the most. Either way, we've got solo travellers completely covered.

For the first time, we've reserved dedicated departures on some of our most popular group tours especially for solo travellers so they can travel in a ready-made group of like-minded individuals. As always, we will look after you every step of the way, taking the hassle out of organising it yourself and supplying an experienced National Escort who will accompany the group throughout the entire trip.

As a solo traveller we know how important it is for you to feel safe and at ease whilst travelling, so we meticulously plan every aspect to ensure your trip goes without a hitch. Your National Escort will be with you from the moment you land to the second you leave, even enjoying sociable dining with the group. It is their passion to show you the wonders of their homeland and they will provide you with the warmest welcome – it'll soon feel like a home from home. And, of course, as they speak the local language, should you need anything or in the unlikely event of itinerary changes, your National Escort will take complete care of everything so you can just sit back and enjoy the journey!

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## Exclusive perks of dedicated solo departures

- Room of your own with no single supplement
  - Free chauffeur transfers to and from UK airport
  - Free UK airport lounge access
  - Group size of just 18
  - Free welcome drinks reception
-



Here's a look at just some of the inspiring itineraries you can find with dedicated solo departures...



## Inspiring India

14 days | **Classic Group Tour** from £3,090pp

Get ready to experience the kaleidoscope of colour that is India. This tour takes you to India's most revered spots and more, showcasing elaborate palaces, fragrant spice markets and wonderful wildlife encounters. From the chaotic charm of rambunctious Delhi to the chiming of Pushkar's blue-washed temples, you'll see the magnificent Taj Mahal shimmer in the light of sunrise, and even go in search of majestic Bengal tigers in Ranthambore. Try your hand at traditional artstries like carpet weaving and block printing, and of course indulge in the sensational cuisine India is celebrated for.



## Magnificent China

22 days | **Classic Group Tour** from £4,690pp

If you've never been to China and want to see as much of it as you can, this is the tour for you. This all-encompassing journey takes in the very best of this marvellous destination, from the ancient treasures of Xian to the rural splendour of Guilin. Soak up the sublime scenery which surrounds China's legendary Great Wall, uncover the story behind the famous Terracotta Warriors and meet the nation's most loveable mascot – the giant panda! Topped off with a three-night cruise on the mighty Yangtze and the bright lights of Shanghai, and you have the ultimate trip to China.



## Discover Japan

13 days | **Classic Group Tour** from £7,390pp

The perfect introduction to Japanese culture and the country's many fascinating sights, on this tour you'll journey from Tokyo to Osaka taking in splendid castles, modern cities and traditional arts along the way. Ride Japan's iconic bullet train to see snow-capped Mount Fuji emerging from the city below, stroll amongst the traditional wooden farmhouses of UNESCO-listed Shirakawago and learn gold leaf artistry before visiting a geisha house. Explore Japan's ancient capital Kyoto, discover the centre of Shingon Buddhism and capture photos of the vibrant orange torii gates which make up the iconic Fushimi Inari Shrine.



## Angkor to the Bay

17 days | **Classic Group Tour** from £3,590pp

One of our most popular tours of Southeast Asia, this adventure begins amongst the majesty of the Angkor temples – Cambodia's most famous and awe-inspiring sight. You'll find yourself quickly adjusting to Southeast Asia's laidback pace as you traverse between the cities of Phnom Penh, Saigon and Hanoi, and unwind even further whilst exploring the lush, fertile lands of the Mekong Delta. As you journey to the far-most corners of Vietnam's Halong Bay by boat, soak up the spectacular natural grandeur seen in every direction and end your trip watching the sun set behind the imposing limestone peaks.

Want to travel on one of our dedicated solo tours?

**Speak to our solo travel experts**

Our solo travel experts will be more than happy to discuss our dedicated solo tours so you can ensure you are choosing the right itinerary for you. They'll talk you through everything step by step so you know exactly what to expect and have all of your questions answered, meaning all that's left for you to do is countdown to your adventure with nothing but excitement!



# Our Travel Safe protocols

## Keeping you safe on tour

*We know how important it is, now more than ever, for you to feel completely safe whilst on tour. As always, our customer's wellbeing is our utmost priority, which is why every Wendy Wu tour now features our pioneering Travel Safe protocols featuring stringent COVID health and safety measures to ensure you can travel with ease and enjoy your adventure to the full.*



As we continue to monitor the situation in each destination, we develop our protocols to ensure our customers and staff are protected at all times whilst following local guidelines. Here is a summary of the steps we have implemented to ensure you will be safe, secure and satisfied when travelling with us.

### Guides and National Escorts

Our National Escorts and local guides will conduct a Health and Safety briefing before the tour begins and will help everyone ensure that adhere to social distancing, hygiene practises and local regulations.

They will carry a supply of face masks and hand sanitiser for you to use free of charge and will, of course, observe the highest level of personal hygiene at all times.

Should anyone on your tour fall ill, your National Escort will ensure the individual receives swift medical attention and can only return to the group once cleared to do so.

### Transport and sightseeing

Vehicles will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each excursion, overnight and between different groups.

You will always have at least one seat between you and your fellow travellers. Hand sanitiser will be given to the group on each embarkation and vehicles will be thoroughly ventilated prior to passengers boarding.

Drivers will always embark vehicles after clients, disembark the vehicle prior to customers disembarking, and maintain social distancing and a high level of personal hygiene at all times.

Your guides will assess the situation on the ground to avoid large crowds – where possible, alter timings and potentially split the group into smaller sizes.

### Accommodation

Wendy Wu Tours will only offer hotels and accommodation that have undergone a detailed hygiene assessment, have specific COVID-19 protocols in place and comply with government standards.

We will ensure these protocols include staff adhering to social distancing and wearing appropriate PPI, regular cleaning, and disinfection of high frequency touch points in all areas and food safety.

### Dining

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

All waiting staff will wear face masks and gloves, and shared self-service buffets will be avoided in favour of a la carte dining, waiter-served meals or waiter-assisted buffets.

Hand sanitiser will be provided to the group before and after every food and beverage service.





# Spotlight on: Peking Duck

There are many things that can be associated with China's capital: the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Summer Palace and even the traditional Hutongs but, for me, nothing lifts my spirits and takes me back to this magical place more than Peking Duck.

by Reema Shah, Senior Product & Commercial Manager – China, Japan, Taiwan & South Korea

## History

Many believe the dish owes its origins to the roast goose popularly eaten on many western festive occasions, introduced by the first western explorers to enter the country like Marco Polo.

There is, however, another school of thought based upon historical records that show the invention of Peking Duck has a much longer history dating back as far as the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420 – 589).

Up until the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), the dish was a popular local delicacy in the area around Jinling, today's Nanjing. Around 600 years ago the Ming Dynasty made Peking the capital city of China and it was then that cooks from all over the country travelled to the city to cook for the Emperor. Competition to create the best dish was fierce and gained the chef great prestige as only the best chefs could enter the palace kitchens. It is believed that the Peking Duck recipes were subsequently smuggled out of the palace kitchens onto the back streets of Beijing and then introduced to the masses during the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911.

## How to cook the Peking Duck

It has taken hundreds of years to perfect the roasting of a Peking Duck and includes an interesting step where air is pumped into the duck as it helps to separate the skin from the fat. The duck is then hung up to dry in the open air before being roasted in an oven until it is crispy on the outside and succulent on the inside. The roasted duck is then served in thin well-cut slices and accompanied by small light pancakes, sliced cucumbers and a variety of sauces, which complement the dish perfectly.

According to a Chinese saying, no visit to the city is complete without walking on the Great Wall or dining on roast duck. More than just a tasty meal, Peking Duck is a window into ancient Chinese cuisine, culture and customs. Tick off both on the 14-day Majestic Yangtze tour as you tuck into a delicious feast of Beijing's best-known dish after exploring the Great Wall.



## Majestic Yangtze

14 days | **Classic Group Tour** from £2,890pp

Including: International flights, 4\* accommodation, touring with guides and entrance fees, all meals, visa fees, all transportation.



# Top ten sights in **CHINA** as chosen by our guides

As the number 1 specialist tour operator to China in the UK, we value our outstanding guides for their expertise and knowledge in their local towns, cities, and regions. In order to constantly improve our product, we regularly consult with our local and national guides, to hear what we can do to ensure we are taking our customers to the most impressive and least visited spots around.

Since China closed its borders over a year ago, their number of Covid cases have been amongst the lowest in the world. So whilst our guides haven't been able to welcome visitors, they have been able to get out and discover more of their home country. Here's their Top Ten must do's...

## **Chengdu Panda Base**

### **– Simon**

Chengdu Panda Base is the first choice for most panda-lovers, not only for watching these adorable creatures but also to enjoy the charming environment inside the base, a great harmony of pretty nature and man-made landscapes. Unaware of the problems we are facing caused by the pandemic, the pandas enjoy their happy life as usual and will welcome your visit when the situation changes for the better. See it on our *In Pursuit of Pandas* tour.

## **Shanghai Pudong**

### **– Addison**

Pudong is the site of the futuristic skyscrapers in Shanghai, the super metropolis of China. You won't understand what an amazing city it is until you see it for yourself. Come here, see the Bund, and be sure to bring your camera to capture new and old Shanghai. The speed of development is amazing! Come and discover how a small fishing village rose into a super mega-city. See it on our *A China Experience* tour.

## **Bike Ride along the Yulong River**

### **– Frank**

After a nice breakfast at your hotel in Yangshuo, the best way to enjoy the natural beauty of the area is to rent a bicycle and

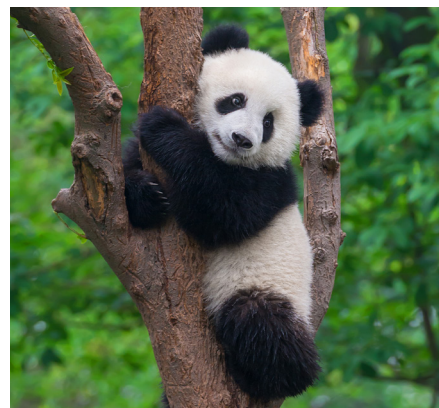
enjoy a leisurely 2-3 hour cycle ride through the countryside along the picturesque Yulong River, especially the 15 kilometres between Gongnong Bridge and Yulong Bridge. In order to provide a better environment and experience for visitors, a beautiful and well-paved trail has been built along the river and connects villages nearby. People can take a bicycle ride or walk on the trail, but vehicles are forbidden. Taking a ride on the trail alongside the rice fields, orange orchards and flowers like calliopsis and lavender, you may enjoy the amazing view, stop anywhere you want for a picture, or walk into a café for a coffee or beer while sitting on the bank of the river.

Experience it on our *China Trailblazer* tour.

## **High Speed Railway**

### **– Addison**

I recommend all visitors to China experience the modernity of the country's cutting-edge technology and the impact on people's lives. China has the longest high speed railway network in the world, with a total length of 25,000 kilometres, connecting all the major cities within its boundary. The average speed on the network is over 300 kilometres an hour. Experience it on our *China in Style* tour.





*"If you want to ask me, where is the safest place to visit in 2021, my answer is China. At the outbreak of the pandemic world-wide in 2020, the Chinese government did a great job to control the pandemic and it is now quite safe to travel around China. I hope to welcome you all from the middle of this year so please join me and tour around China."* – George

## Forbidden City

### – Raymond

The best-preserved ancient building complex, the Forbidden City was the Chinese imperial palace from the Ming dynasty to the end of the Qing dynasty. It is located in the centre of Beijing, and now houses the Palace Museum. It served as the home of emperors and their households as well as the ceremonial and political centre of Chinese government for almost 500 years. Built in 1406 to 1420, the complex consists of 980 buildings and covers 180 acres. The palace complex exemplifies traditional Chinese palatial architecture and has influenced cultural and architectural developments in East Asia and elsewhere. The Forbidden City has been under the charge of the Palace Museum, whose extensive collection of artwork and artifacts were built upon the imperial collections of the Ming and Qing dynasties. If you want to ask me where the best-preserved ancient building complex is in China, I will point you to the Forbidden City.

See it on our Wonders of China tour.

## Sichuan Hotpot

### – Simon

Hotpot, an indisputable delicacy in Sichuan, shows the social philosophy in China, which means every eater can choose various ingredients they like and boil them all in one pot together, representing the idea of harmony well. Very few Chinese dislike the hotpot. We, as Chengdunese, cannot wait to share the gourmet culture with you in the near future.

Experience it on our Yunnan and Sichuan tour.

## Great Wall

### – Raymond

Visualize the 5,000 year-long continually recorded history and come and put your feet on the biggest man-made structure on Earth – the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall was built over a 2,000 year period to protect China from the nomadic tribes to the north. The wall winds its way from the Pacific Ocean to the Gobi Desert, measuring 13,000 miles in total length, longer than the length of North America and South America combined. See it on our China: The Big One tour.

## Terracotta Warriors

### – George

Come to Xian and learn about the man who made China what it is today and his underground army – the Terracotta Warriors! Find out how the Chinese civilisation lasted continuously for more than 3,000 years. Discovered in 1970 by a local farmer, these guys are on duty day and night, safeguarding emperor Qin for 2,200 years.

See it on our Glories of China tour.

## Zhangjiajie

### – Frank

The movie Avatar was inspired by this UNESCO Heritage Site, and it is one of the most beautiful places on the planet! Pictures don't do it justice, it's somewhere you need to go to, to see the awe-inspiring scenery, which looks like something out of a sci-fi film.

See it on our Dreams of Nature tour.

## Xian Muslim Quarter

### – George

As a change to the China you may be used to seeing, the Muslim Quarter is a must-see for all visitors. Located in the centre of the Xian Muslim community, here are streets lined with market stalls, street food and unique souvenirs. So atmospheric and a great place to experience the distinctive cultural traditions and history of the merchants of the Silk Road!

See it on our Magnificent China tour.





# China for first timers

China is diverse, complex and rich, a place where incredibly old and state-of-the-art rub shoulders. They say to have experienced China, you must leave no stone unturned so cue the pressing questions we all ask when planning our first trip. What are the must sees, what's the best way to get around, where are the hidden gems and when should I go? Most importantly, the one that scares us all, how on earth will I cope with chopsticks?

Who better to help you than the UK's No.1 China tour operator? Here are our top four tours to make your first-time visiting China one of the most unforgettable experiences of your life. With flights, meals, guiding, sightseeing, experiences and even visas included, all you'll have to do is turn up and enjoy an adventure of a lifetime.



## A China Experience

If you are short on time but want the true China experience, this is the tour for you. This introductory tour offers a glimpse of China's glorious past, fascinating present and bright future with visits to the exceptional and contrasting cities of Xian, Beijing and Shanghai. Starting in Shanghai, experience where east and west collide on streets lined with futuristic skyscrapers and 10th-century temples. Fly to the ancient former capital, Xian, where you will spend time walking through the atmospheric alleys of the Muslim Quarter, lined with Islamic food stalls. Hop aboard a bullet train to Beijing where you will stroll through the traditional hutongs, climb the Great Wall and meet a local family before returning home.

### Shanghai – Xian – Beijing 10 Days from £2,390 per person

Including: International flights, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides, entrance fees and visa.



## Majestic Yangtze

Do you want the iconic highlights plus the chance to meet the renowned giant pandas? Then this tour is perfect.

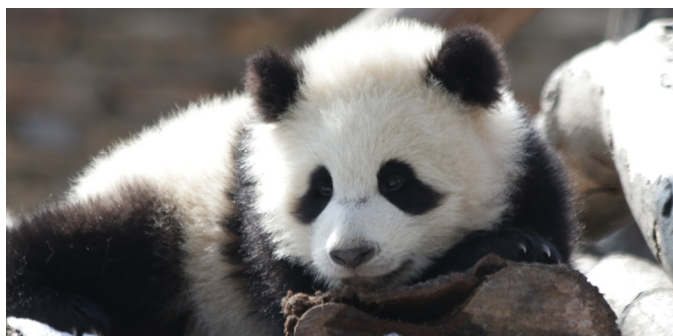
An undoubted highlight of this adventure will be experiencing the natural grandeur of the Three Gorges on a relaxing Yangtze River Cruise – just one part of a wonderful tour that also includes China's enthralling cities of Shanghai, Xian, Beijing, and of course the unforgettable giant pandas of Chengdu.

Land in Shanghai and begin your exploration of the great metropolis, from the classical Yu Garden, to a panoramic cruise on the Huangpu River. Fly to Yichang and board your Yangtze River Cruise for the next few days. Discover the dramatic scenery lining the river before arriving in Chongqing to disembark.

Enjoy a traditional Sichuanese meal after wandering down Ciqikou's narrow streets. Meet the pandas of Chengdu before visiting the famous Terracotta Warriors in Xian. Uncover the gems of the city as you head to the bustle of Beijing. Walk along the Great Wall and savour the local delicacy, Peking Duck.

### Shanghai – Yangtze River Cruise – Chengdu – Xian – Beijing 14 Days from £3,290 per person

Including: International flights, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides, entrance fees and visa.







## Wonders of China

Our best-selling tour of China and our number one recommendation for first timers. This itinerary encompasses the best of China's natural and man-made wonders, from the magnificent Great Wall to the mighty Yangtze River. You will take a comprehensive journey through China's most iconic sights, both ancient and modern, experiencing everything that the fast-paced bustling cities and the relaxing rural countryside have to offer.

Begin your tour in Imperial Beijing with a stroll through the Forbidden City admiring the locals as they practice Tai Chi and dance. Fly to Xian and enjoy a dumpling feast and Tang Dynasty Dancing show. Continue to Yichang to board your Yangtze River Cruise, spending the next few days soaking up the sights along the river.

Greet the pandas when you disembark in Chongqing before heading to Guilin by bullet train. Explore the cobbled streets of Yangshuo before finishing in Shanghai.

**Beijing – Xian – Yangtze River Cruise – Guilin – Yangshuo – Shanghai**

**16 days from £3,490 per person**

Including: International flights, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides, entrance fees and visa.



## Magnificent China

If you have the time and are looking for an all-encompassing tour that leaves no stone unturned, look no further.

China is home to a great number of magnificent and world-renowned sights. This tour incorporates them all – cruise along the mighty Yangtze and languid Li Rivers, visit the adorable pandas and admire the astonishing Great Wall and Terracotta Army.

Begin your exploration in Beijing, through Tiananmen Square and the magnificent Forbidden City. Walk the Great Wall and visit the Temple of Heaven before paying a visit to the Terracotta Warriors of Xian. After walking the ancient City Wall, board a bullet train to Chengdu and meet the pandas at the reserve.

Board your cruise along the Yangtze and spend the next few days floating down the serene river. Head over to Guilin and gaze in awe at the rural scenes of lush greenery and grazing buffalo.

Step out to the countryside of Yangshuo before ending your tour in Shanghai. Travel to Suzhou, a town renowned for its beautiful gardens before heading back home.

**Beijing – Xian – Chengdu – Yangtze River Cruise – Guilin – Yangshuo – Shanghai**

**22 Days from £3,890 per person**

Including: International flights, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides, entrance fees and visa.

We have 26 incredible fully escorted tours to China, taking in a mixture of iconic and lesser-known sights, and all including authentic experiences giving you a true taste of this fascinating destination. Find them all in our 2021-22 China brochure. Order your free copy at [wendywutours.co.uk/brochures](http://wendywutours.co.uk/brochures)



# Get to know Japan

Dazzling Japan's beguiling combination of ancient traditions, jaw-dropping scenery and mouth-watering food have made it the hot ticket for travel in 2021. As the UK's Number One Tour Operator to Japan we know that it can be difficult to know where to start. Here's our handy guide to the top attractions.



## Golden Route

Combining Tokyo, Mount Fuji and Kyoto, the Golden Route encapsulates Japan's must-see attractions.

Tokyo blends the ultimate futuristic cityscape of soaring glass towers and neon with tranquil pockets of history, whilst just a short journey away on the bullet train, Hakone National Park boasts incredible natural beauty, famed for its bubbling volcanic hot springs and picture-perfect views of Mount Fuji.

The image of classical Japan, Kyoto was Japan's capital for over 1,000 years and is home to no less than 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites, whilst Nara, Japan's first capital, remains full of historic treasures including magnificent temples and adorable semi-tame deer.

The Golden Route is featured on almost all of our Japan tours but if you really want to immerse yourself in Japanese culture along the way our new **Off-Beat Japan** tour is for you.

**Visiting: Tokyo – Mt Fuji – Nagano – Yudanaka – Takayama – Kyoto – Koyasan – Himeji – Osaka.**  
**13 Days from £5,690pp**



## Nagano

Nagano is a popular gateway to the Japanese Alps and Jigokudani Yaen-Koen, home of the adorable Japanese macaques, or snow monkeys, that take advantage of the region's natural hot springs to bathe and escape the chilly mountain air. Other local highlights include Zenkoji Temple, built in the 7th century and thought to contain the first Buddhist statue brought to Japan, and the magnificent 16th-century Matsumoto Castle, the oldest wooden castle in Japan.

Discover Nagano on our **Experience Japan** tour.

**Visiting: Osaka – Nara – Kyoto – Nagano – Matsumoto – Mt Fuji – Kamakura – Tokyo.**  
**11 Days from £5,590pp**



## Japanese Alps

Running along the spine of Honshu, the Japanese Alps are home to spectacular mountain scenery and provide an idyllic taste of rural Japan. Nestled amongst the peaks, Shirakawago is a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its traditional Gassho-Zukuri farmhouses, some of which are more than 250 years old.

Kanazawa, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture, is renowned for its beautiful samurai and geisha districts, as well as its stunning 17th-century Kenrokuen Garden, one of Japan's 'Three Great Gardens'. At the heart of the city, Higashi Chaya Street is a traditional Japanese street with historical rows of houses offering visitors delicious treats and tea.

Experience The Japanese Alps on our **Discover Japan** tour.

**Visiting: Tokyo – Mt Fuji – Suwa – Takayama – Kanazawa – Kyoto – Nara – Koyasan – Osaka.**  
**13 Days from £5,690pp**



## Hokkaido & Northern Honshu

Hokkaido is Japan's second largest yet least developed island and its unspoiled vistas draw outdoor enthusiasts from far and wide. The food is excellent, the capital city Sapporo is one of the most vibrant in the country and the cultural remnants of the island's indigenous people, the Ainu, unique. Northern Honshu boasts old samurai strongholds, relaxing hot springs resorts and coastal scenery so pretty it has inspired poets for centuries.

Experience Hokkaido & Northern Honshu on our **Journey through Japan** tour.

**Visiting: Sapporo – Shiraoi – Noboribetsu – Hakodate – Hirosaki – Kakunodate – Tsunagi – Hiraizumi – Sendai – Nikko – Tokyo – Mt Fuji – Kyoto – Osaka.**  
**14 Days from £6,390pp**





## Fully Inclusive Touring

All Wendy Wu Tours of Japan include: flights, accommodation, meals, touring and amazing guides!



### Hiroshima

A vibrant, wealthy and forward-looking metropolis, Hiroshima is best known as the first city in the world to feel the power of the atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. Emerging from the ashes a cosmopolitan and peaceful place, it sits on the coast of the Inland Sea, and is the gateway to a number of beautiful islands, including Miyajima with its famous, water-bound torii gate. At Hiroshima's heart is the immense and tranquil Peace Park, the perfect place to learn about and reflect on the past, before enjoying a city that looks towards an even brighter future.

Experience Hiroshima & Miyajima on our **Jewels of Japan** tour.

**Visiting: Tokyo – Mt Fuji – Kyoto – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Himeji – Osaka.**

**11 Days from £5,290pp**



### Kyushu

Japan's third largest island, gorgeous Kyushu is renowned for its breath-taking natural beauty, rejuvenating hot springs, superb food and unique history. This verdant subtropical island boasts dramatic volcanoes, powerful waterfalls, lush forests and the vast Kumamoto Castle, one of the finest castles in all Japan. As one of the few places open to foreign traders historically, you'll notice a fascinating mix of influences from China, Korea and Europe and the island is renowned for its incredible seafood.

Experience Kyushu on our **Japan & the Scenic South** tour.

**Visiting: Fukuoka – Kumamoto – Mt. Aso – Beppu – Hiroshima – Himeji – Kyoto – Mt Fuji – Tokyo.**

**13 Days from £5,890pp**

## Wendy Wu Recommends

We are often asked "If I had a little more time in Japan and really wanted the best experience, which tour would you recommend?" Well here they are, our most comprehensive tours of this fabulous nation in just over two or three weeks.



### Japan Uncovered

Our most popular tour of Japan includes all the classic sights and key cultural activities, featuring modern cities, historical treasures and beautiful landscapes. If you were a fan of Joanna Lumley's Japan this is as close as you can get to following in her footsteps.

**Visiting: Osaka – Nara – Himeji – Hiroshima – Kyoto – Kanazawa – Shirakawago – Takayama – Matsumoto – Nagano – Yudanaka – Mt Fuji – Tokyo.**

**17 Days from £6,990pp**



### Japan by Rail

An all-encompassing journey through Japan, travelling mainly by bullet train and taking in the highlights of all three main islands: Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido. Experience ancient traditions and modern Japan's unique charm.

**Visiting: Fukuoka – Nagasaki – Hiroshima – Miyajima – Himeji – Osaka – Kyoto – Kanazawa – Takayama – Yudanaka – Matsumoto – Mt Fuji – Tokkyo – Matsushima – Sendai – Hakodate – Sapporo.**

**21 Days from £8,990pp**



# THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

# NEW ZEALAND

By Paul Dymond (Managing Director NZ)

To view all 3 of our  
New Zealand tours visit  
[wendywutours.co.uk](http://wendywutours.co.uk)



The 'land of the long white cloud', New Zealand is a small but spectacular country with a big heart. Its unique history and vibrant culture provide an incredible amount to see and do – much of which is outdoors where you can enjoy its renowned scenery and natural beauty. Inspired by the ancient traditions and pioneering adventures this wonderful destination has to offer, we're thrilled to be taking you to New Zealand for 2021 and beyond – an exciting first for Wendy Wu Tours!

Our expert team in New Zealand have spent the past six months carefully handcrafting three thrilling new tours which showcase the hidden gems of their homeland. Choose from each of the North or South Island tours or combine the two experiencing them back-to-back for one unforgettable adventure.



NEW for 2021

## Hidden Gold of the South Island

13 days | **Classic Group Tour** from £5,290pp

Including: International flights, accommodation, visa fees, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides and entrance fees.





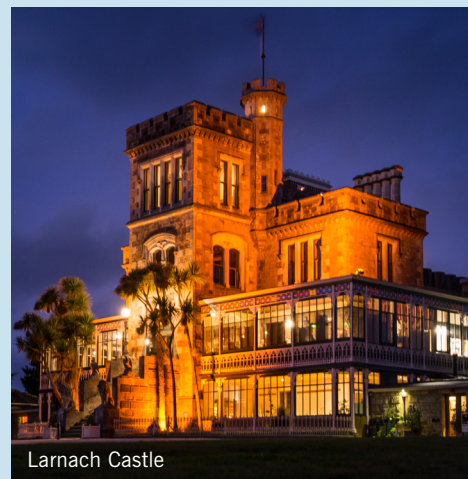
Fiordland

## 1 Overnight on a Fiordland Cruise

This wilderness cruise is perfect for travellers who want to dive into a remote corner of New Zealand. The scenery of the Fiordlands is nothing short of spectacular and you'll experience it first-hand as you meander through the still waterways encountering the wildlife and nature found in serene seclusion away from the tourist trail.

## 2 Dinner at Larnach Castle

Discover New Zealand's fascinating Scottish heritage at the only castle in the entire country. Built in 1871 by merchant baron and politician William Larnach as a gift to his beloved wife Eliza, here you'll enjoy a delicious meal surrounded by the history of the castle's grand dining room.



Larnach Castle



Queenstown



Mount Cook

## 3 Queenstown

Best known as a winter wonderland thanks to its world-class ski slopes, this adventure playground caters for all seasons and is home to some of the best culinary experiences in New Zealand. Admire the views in every direction as you explore this lakefront town surrounded by often snow-capped peaks.

## 4 Mount Cook Glacier Tour

You'll want your camera ready for this one. After hiking through the gorgeous alpine plains of Mount Cook National Park, enjoy a gentle boat ride amongst the thousands of jagged icebergs which decorate the crystalline waters as you journey to the face of a glacier.



Yellow-Eyed penguins

## 5 See Otago Peninsula's Penguins

The endangered Yellow-Eyed penguin is amongst the rarest in the world. Its name is derived from the yellow iris and distinct yellow band which crosses its head, making them easy to spot as you traverse the Otago Peninsula.







Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, China – Yunnan & Sichuan tour



## Japan by Rail

An epic rail journey across Japan's three main islands – Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido – for the ultimate insight into a country like no other! Travelling from south to north on local trains, express trains and the famous 'shinkansen' (bullet trains that travel up to 320 kilometres per hour) this unique itinerary encompasses all of Japan's key highlights and many lesser-known places too. Best of all are the chances along the way to get 'hands on' with Japan's unique cuisine, from baking traditional momiji manju buns to preparing your own sushi – plus sampling traditional Nikka whiskies and Sapporo beers of course!

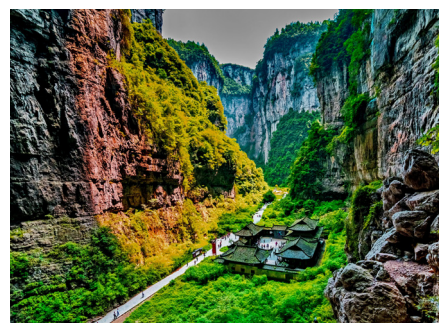
**21 days from £8,990pp**



## Journey through Central Asia

An epic journey straight from the golden age of exploration, this extraordinary tour encompasses the '5 Stans'. Crossing the mountains, desert and the vast steppe of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, you'll discover the unique culture of the area, from the architecture and ideas of the ancient Silk Road, to the influence of the Soviet era. In each new 'Stan' you'll delve into the national psyche, exploring both cities and sights and the incredible culture. Unmissable experiences include meeting traditional eagle hunters, spending the night in a traditional yurt camp and a visit to a stud farm of the famous Akhal Tekes.

**27 days from £6,690pp**



## Yunnan & Sichuan

The big highlights of China – the Great Wall, Xian's Terracotta Warriors, cruising the majestic Yangtze and stunning Shanghai – are all sensational, but on a second visit to this kaleidoscopic country why not get off the beaten track and explore its two most fascinating and picturesque provinces: Yunnan and Sichuan? Walk in Yunnan's UNESCO-listed Stone Forest, explore the extraordinary 3,000 metre-deep Tiger Leaping Gorge, soak up the views of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and wander among the dramatic limestone karst scenery of Wulong. Plus, you'll get to dine on delicious cuisine along the way, including authentic Sichuan hotpot!

**16 days from £3,590pp**





# 5 EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES FOR 2021 & BEYOND

Peter Crane's pick of our most unique tours

After nearly a year of travel on pause we have been thinking hard about that next big getaway, that very first escape to distant lands and into exhilarating new cultures – we've got to make it special! Often the trips we remember best are the ones which get off the beaten track, where you can find unexpected gems and enjoy memorable, once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Head of Global Product at Wendy Wu Tours, Peter Crane, is the expert when it comes to unique and memorable experiences, particularly to lesser-known destinations off the usual tourist trail, and he has shared his top five extraordinary tours for 2021 and beyond.



## Georgia, Armenia & Azerbaijan

This tour explores three nations with a rich and complex shared history but numerous charms of their very own. With plenty of dramatic landscapes to feast your eyes on as you go, the delights of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan come from their perfect balance of enigmatic, old world allure and vibrant, modern sensibilities, plus their wonderfully friendly locals. Experiencing traditional life in the mountains of Azerbaijan, sampling the delicious food and wine of Georgia and discovering the beauty of Armenia's spectacularly-located churches and monasteries are just some of the reasons to visit this captivating region.

**23 days from £4,260pp**



## Mongolia & the Naadam Festival

The size of Western Europe but with a population of just over 3 million, Mongolia is famous for its extraordinary landscapes: from the snow-capped mountains of the north to the Gobi Desert in the south, with vast rolling steppe-lands stretching in between. This adventurous journey takes in the Gobi's dramatic 'Flaming Cliff' mountains, Genghis Khan's 13th century capital at Kharkhorin and the serene monastery of Erdene Zuu, plus the pristine beauty of Lake Khovsgol in the north – then to cap it all the annual Naadam Festival showcases the very best of Mongolia's unique cultural heritage including competitive horse racing, archery and wrestling.

**21 days from £6,390pp**



# SILK ROAD SENSATIONS

An extensive network of ancient trade routes, the Silk Road has long stirred the imagination with tales of camel caravans and swashbuckling adventurers. Following in the footsteps of Marco Polo and Genghis Khan, discover extraordinary landscapes and legendary towns and cities that once were the envy of the world.

Here are some of our favourite sites along the old Silk Road.



## Bukhara, Uzbekistan

An architectural marvel and one of the most famous cities along the world's most famous trade route, Bukhara is peppered with a stunning collection of madrasahs, mosques and minarets. Highlights include Labi-Hauz, a plaza where local men gather to chat, play dominoes and drink pot after pot of Persian tea, and the Ark of Bukhara, the fortified residence of the former ruler of Bukhara that houses palaces, barracks, a mint, a prison and a museum. Out of town the summer residence of the former Emir is a fascinating mix of Islamic and Soviet styles.



## Registan Square, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

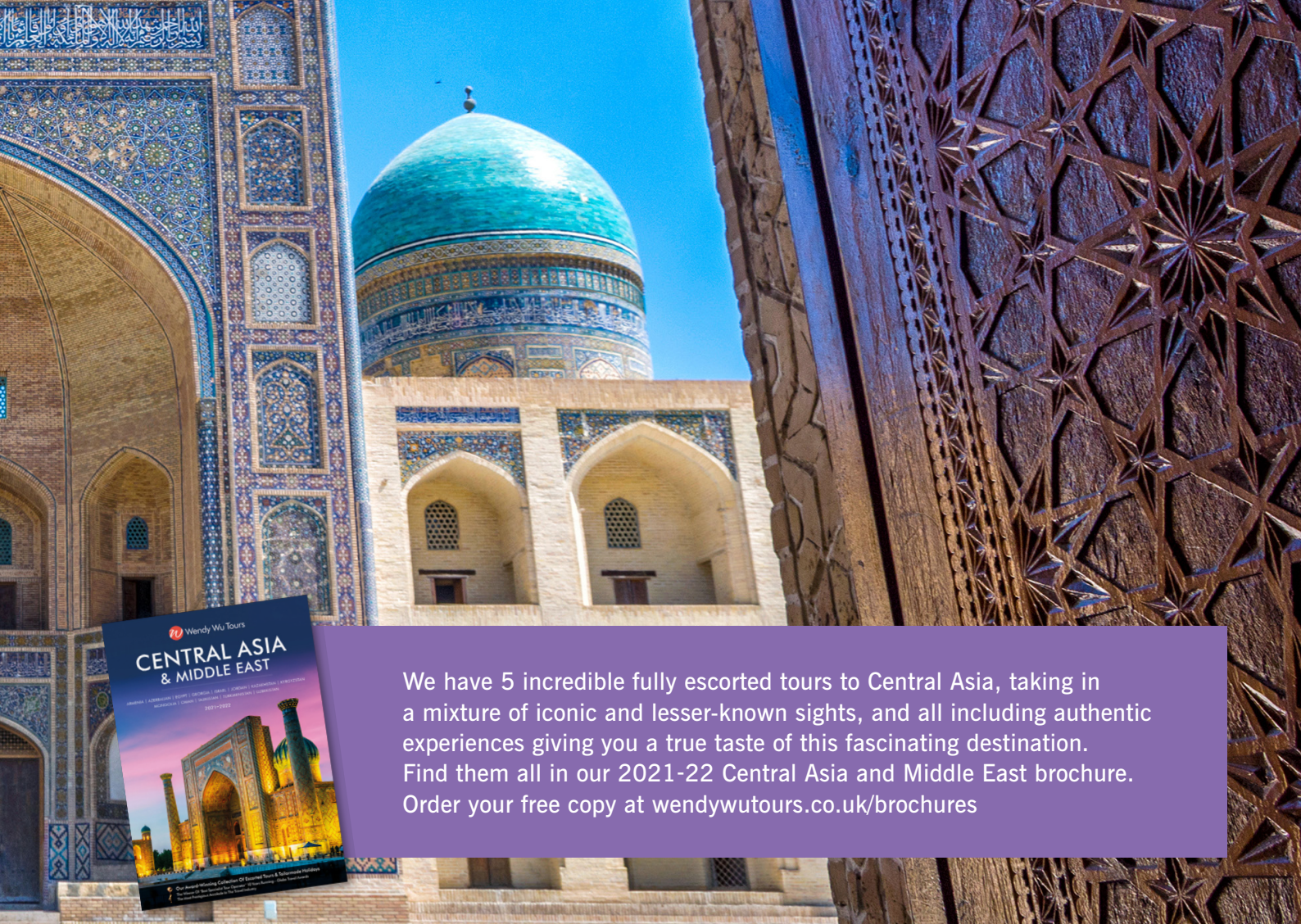
Vying with Bukhara as the most evocative city along the Old Silk Road, Samarkand is home to some of the most intricate and beautiful Islamic architecture in all of Central Asia and the Sogdian Empire, Alexander the Great and the hordes of Genghis Khan have all left their mark. At the heart of the city, the spectacular Registan Square is encircled by three towering golden madrasahs. A hive of activity during the day, the square truly comes alive at night with lighting beautifully illuminating the turquoise domes and the meticulously-carved patterns of the facades.



## Darvaza Gas Crater, Turkmenistan

The infamous 'Door to Hell' is a 230ft wide, 60ft deep crater within Turkmenistan's Karakum Desert lit by eternal flames. In the 1970s, Soviet scientists drilling for oil in the area broke beneath the thin crust of earth here and found a massive pocket of methane gas bubbling underneath. In a rather ill-advised attempt to disperse the gas, the scientists set fire to it and the flames have been burning ever since! Arguably the best time to visit this crater is at sunset as the flames licking the night sky can be seen from miles away and makes for a truly otherworldly experience.





We have 5 incredible fully escorted tours to Central Asia, taking in a mixture of iconic and lesser-known sights, and all including authentic experiences giving you a true taste of this fascinating destination. Find them all in our 2021-22 Central Asia and Middle East brochure. Order your free copy at [wendywutours.co.uk/brochures](http://wendywutours.co.uk/brochures)



## Lake Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan

After Lake Titicaca in South America, Lake Issyk-Kul is the world's largest mountain lake. Beyond its crystal-clear turquoise waters, the rugged Tian Shan Mountain Range forms a rugged barrier to China to the east. Sheltered by the colossal mountains the lake never freezes and the caravanserai here would have bustled with merchants passing through on their arduous journey from Europe to China. The area is also particularly rich in flora and fauna, boasting close to 300 species of bird and over 30 types of fish.



## Charyn Canyon, Kazakhstan

Nestled in the southeast corner of Kazakhstan, the Charyn Canyon comes as a complete surprise after travelling across the vast flat plains to the east of the capital Almaty. Carved over a million years by the mighty Charyn River, the canyon stretches for over 150km and is nearly 1,000ft deep in places. With its flaming red sandstone cliffs, rushing rivers and incredible panoramic views, it's no wonder the Canyon has earned itself the nickname as the 'Grand Canyon's little brother.'



## Journey through Central Asia

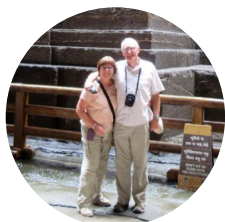
**27 days | [Go Beyond Group Tour](#) from £6,690pp**

Travel from Bishkek to Ashgabat on this 27 day 'Five Stan' cultural experience. This in depth tour will see you visiting the Silk Road gems of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, colourful markets, fascinating villages and dramatic Alpine scenery.

Including: International flights, 3\*+ to 4\* star accommodation, visa fees, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides and entrance fees.



## Grand Tour of India



Wendy Wu Tours customer Maureen Rae gives us the inside track on her and husband John's unforgettable trip on the 29-day Grand Tour of India – an all-encompassing journey from the deserts of Rajasthan in the north to the peaceful backwaters of Kerala in the south.

Growing up in the last village in England (Sennen) I would never have believed that when I was seeing other parts of the world on huge scroll down charts at school, that I would ever visit some of them.

Roll on many years, work, marriage, children and retirement, and two years ago I mooted the idea to my husband to visit India. We had done our own road trips to the USA, New Zealand, the Rockies and lots of package holidays but, for my 70th I wanted somewhere more exciting – so I picked India!

Lots of research proved fruitless as my chosen list of 'must-sees' were only partly covered by other companies – until that is I found the 29-day Grand Tour of India with Wendy Wu. That was it, with only one place missing from my extensive list, little persuasion was needed. We booked.

We booked over a year in advance but it gave us something to plan and look forward to. Amazing how quick it all comes around, and how many give their advice; what to wear, what NOT to do, "You'll like it", "You'll loathe it". In the end we ignored it all.

From the minute we were picked up at the door to go to the airport, to the dropping off four weeks later, it was the most amazing holiday ever.

### Welcome to India

No one can prepare you for the heat, the sights, the colour of India and most of all the friendliness and warmth of the people. It makes India what it is – a truly amazing country.

A gentle first few hours were spent soaking up India from a hotel window watching monkeys and pinching myself to check we were really there. Our surprise came hours later meeting our fellow travellers, all 17 of them came from either Australia or New Zealand and we knew then we were in for a fun trip. Our guide MK, who was with us for most of the holiday, was the best guide ever. Informative, sometimes firm and often funny, but at all times we felt completely

safe. Our drivers were also great especially given the traffic and road conditions in many of the places we visited.



### So Many Highlights!

Delhi was a gentle introduction to a totally different country and culture, and the rickshaw rides – somewhat scary – foretold of the wonders to come. Our first experience of 'real India' came a few days in when visiting Varanasi, which had always been on my must-see list. MK did try to warn us of the impact it would have, not just the pungent smells, cows in the streets, the first sighting of the morning ablutions in the Ganges, and the Ghats, but also the spiritual side of the most holy place in India. Words cannot express how overwhelmingly special it was to everyone.

Then the calm of the Khajuraho temples, after the hectic bustle and noise of Varanasi, was a great welcome and contrast. Such intricate beauty in the often exotic/erotic carvings was unforgettable.



A manic India train station and ride to Agra was followed by a very early morning wake up call to be the first tour into the Taj Mahal, but it was worth every lost minute of sleep. The colours change in minutes and it was magical to see the incredible structure under the early morning light and before the crowds!

Jaipur was high on my 'top favourite places' bringing to life the books I had read on India, the palaces majestic and beautiful and the wealth of the past – unbelievable.

Pushkar, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur were all very different and equally stunning but a camel ride into the Thar Desert for the view of the sunset was simply unforgettable.

Then it was onto the Ajanta and Ellora Caves – nothing could prepare you for these, they are truly impressive and provide a fascinating glimpse into India's past.



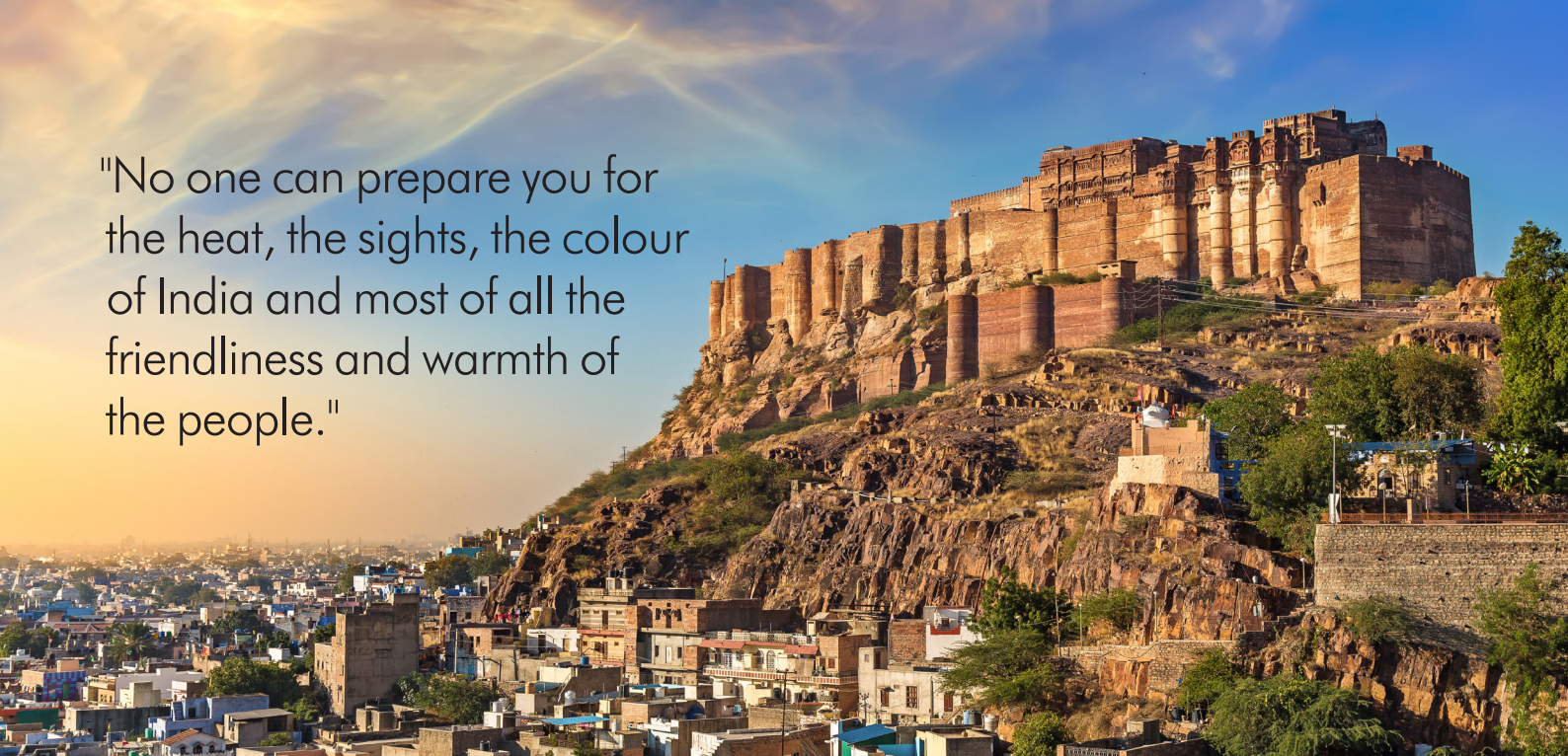
### Farewell to MK

At Mumbai, after a half-day sightseeing, we finally had to bid farewell to MK. A very sad moment for us all. He had been the focus of our days, encouraging us to go out when we could to meet the people and see the real India, and we did. Lots of unscheduled stops too, a sick cow hospital, local markets to taste local snacks, or buy decals or fireworks for Diwali. Visiting a cotton and millet farm meeting the brothers and family that ran it, the list is endless.

Kerala and the South and the last few days didn't feel like the same country, and



"No one can prepare you for the heat, the sights, the colour of India and most of all the friendliness and warmth of the people."



although lovely and more relaxed, we actually preferred the hectic bustle of Northern India with its cows on the road – that felt more real somehow.

### My Verdict

The food was excellent, everywhere, with mostly curries of course, lunch and dinner, but lots of different choices and varied in each region we visited.

We had cultural shows too, dance/theatre which I think the women enjoyed more than the men! But the accommodation, which we were a little worried about, was wonderful and it just seemed to get better! The top two in our minds were a Summer Palace in Pushkar which was simply stunning, and a 500-year-old fort which we stayed at in Khismar. Eating our dinner here at night on the ramparts as the sun went down was such a special moment.

Yes there are some very early mornings, and some long days of travel but there is so much to see and learn from the scenery beyond the windows. MK told us about not just the places we were to visit but also snippets of Indian culture, heritage, religion, and what it meant to him to be part of the country.

Our days on the road were often broken up by stories, and 'open mic' sessions so they were never dull and our fellow travellers all helped to make each day a trip to remember. There was little down time to relax by a pool or read, but we were there to see India – to spend every minute possible soaking it all up!

Any minor issues, transport delays, etc, were dealt with by MK and he worked so hard behind the scenes to ensure the whole trip was faultless. We didn't take hundreds, but thousands of photos, a holiday never to be forgotten, and now that we have had time to reflect on it we're turning our best snaps and memories into a photo book. We have already regaled our family and friends with some of the stories of our adventure that makes it all come alive once more.

If you are hesitating over a future holiday in India, don't, just do it. Go with an open mind, and an open heart. The warmth of the people, the colour and culture of the country is so vast and unique that you really need to go and experience it for yourselves. An amazing holiday and one I will remember forever.

*Maureen travelled with us on the Grand tour of India in 2019.*

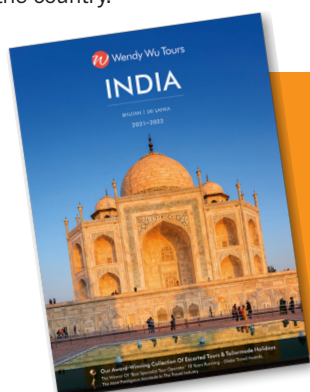


### Grand Tour of India

29 days | **Classic Group Tour**  
from £6,190pp

An all-encompassing epic trip through the best that India has to offer. This itinerary showcases the rich history, culture, and natural wonders throughout this fantastically varied country.

Including: International flights, accommodation, visa fees, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides and entrance fees.



We have 12 incredible fully escorted tours to India and Sri Lanka, taking in a mixture of iconic and lesser-known sights, and all including authentic experiences giving you a true taste of this fascinating destination. Find them all in our 2021-22 India brochure. Order your free copy at [wendywutours.co.uk/brochures](http://wendywutours.co.uk/brochures)



# Tick off your travel wishlist with these multi-country tours

If there's one thing we've learnt from the past 12 months, it's not to take the opportunity to travel for granted. In fact, the curiosity of our inner explorer has just piqued further, and we know you feel the same with more and more travellers coming to us in search of that once in a lifetime adventure. So here are just a few to whet your appetite. Extensive, fully inclusive tours for those who want to see it all, do it all and experience it all in one unforgettable trip.

## Ancient Empires of China & Japan 20 days from £6,690pp

### China

From the imperial treasures of historic Beijing, including the peaceful Temple of Heaven and UNESCO-listed Forbidden City, to cosmopolitan Shanghai with its tranquil temples nestled alongside soaring skyscrapers, 10 nights in China gives you a taste of what this mesmerising country has to offer. Of course, highlights include the magnificence of the sprawling Great Wall with its gorgeous natural surroundings, and the ancient city of Xian where the gaze of the Terracotta Army await. Then, head south to lesser-known Guilin and Yangshuo to soak up China's rural splendour with a cruise amongst the dramatic karst peaks of the spectacular Li River.

### Japan

Japan's 200-year isolation from the rest of the world has birthed a nation where ancient traditions run deep, undisturbed by the influence of other civilisations – there is nowhere else like it. Exploring Japan's largest island, mainly by bullet train, you will encounter the beauty of historic Osaka Castle and the immaculately manicured Korakuen Garden. A short ferry ride takes you to the holy island of Miyajima best known for its 'floating' torii gate, before time in Hiroshima to reflect on the city's tragic past and appreciate the thriving hub it is today. Experience the tranquillity of the Golden Pavilion in the ancient capital Kyoto, and learn the age-old rituals of a traditional Japanese tea ceremony before travelling to Hakone for breath-taking views of Mount Fuji.

## Ultimate South America 29 days from £8,990pp

### Peru

Steeped in ancient history and tales of long-lost settlements high in the Andes Mountains, Peru's rich and complex heritage makes it one of South America's most intriguing countries. Bustling capital Lima is littered with fascinating archaeological sites and museums, and at its heart you'll find the UNESCO-listed historic centre adorned with beautiful colonial buildings. In Cusco, the continent's oldest continuously inhabited city, the legacy of the Incas somehow sits in perfect harmony with the 21st century, and from here you'll explore the famous Sacred Valley and head higher into the mountains to uncover the mysteries of spectacular Machu Picchu.

### Bolivia

The landlocked heart of South America, Bolivia is a destination of hugely diverse, rugged natural landscapes and rich Indigenous heritage. From the hum of the markets where the Aymara women tend stalls in their delightfully colourful garbs and bowler hats, to the magnificent sights of the city from the surrounding mountains, La Paz feels a world away from the imposing rock formations of Moon Valley which you'll visit next. Of course, Bolivia's star attraction is the Salar De Uyuni – the world's largest salt flat, and you'll get to explore this geographical phenomenon in all its glory.

### Chile

The journey from Bolivia to Chile is nothing short of spectacular as you cross the Atacama Desert stopping at lucid emerald lakes, steaming geysers and lagoons dotted with flamingos. Admire the changing red and orange hues of San Pedro's most famous landscapes as the sun illuminates Death Valley, and rise early to watch the El Tatio Geysers dance between volcanoes in the morning light. Then on to Santiago, nestled in a great bowl-shaped valley this city has many personalities, with sparkling skyscrapers, Spanish colonial squares and Bohemian corners.

### Argentina

Argentina's excellent wine region is the perfect introduction to this fabulous country. Visit Maipu Valley's most important vineyards to sample the local delights before heading to the flamboyant capital, Buenos Aires. Here you'll explore the vibrant districts of La Boca, San Telmo and Recoleta and enjoy a quintessential Argentine experience in the evening – a tango show! Beyond the city lies the fertile grasslands of The Pampas where you get a glimpse at life as a Gaucho, then there's Iguazu Falls – set in lush rainforest, nothing can prepare you for the magnificence of the powerful, cascading waters and the beautiful nature which surrounds it.







## Brazil

After exploring Iguazu from the Brazilian side – an entirely different yet equally as impressive experience, you'll head to Brazil's rambunctious beating heart, Rio de Janeiro. Pass through lush Tijuca Forest and ascend the peak from which Christ the Redeemer looms over the city, feast on authentic Brazilian barbecue and soak up the spectacular views of this oceanfront metropolis from the heights of Sugarloaf Mountain.

## Egypt, Jordan and Israel Explored 25 days from £6,990pp

### Egypt

A land where history can be traced back to the time of ancient Pharaohs, stories of Egypt's mysterious mummies, ingenious pyramids and majestic rivers are irresistible to the curious explorer. The adventure begins in Cairo where the famous Pyramids of Giza, The Sphinx and the fascinating Egyptian Museum, which houses all sorts of ancient treasures like Tutankhamun's Tomb, await. After a stop in seaport Alexandria and a first-class train to Luxor, you'll board a five-star cruise ship for four nights sailing one of the world's most legendary waterways, the River Nile – taking in sights of the East and West Banks and disembarking to get up closer to historic temples, impressive statues and the famous Valley of the Kings.

### Jordan

Traversed for millennia by merchants and crusaders, the influence of many an empire can be seen throughout Jordan, from ornate churches and Roman amphitheatres to desert castles, examples of which can be found in capital Amman. Mount Nebo is one of

the most important holy sites in Jordan, and that of Moses' Tomb, which you'll visit along with 'The City of Mosaics', Madaba, before journeying to Petra to explore the many caves and tombs hidden in a deep, narrow cleft of the imposing red mountains. The adventure continues into the barren beauty of the Wadi Rum, a stunning moonscape of ancient valleys and towering sandstone rising out of the desert sands, and where you'll spend the night in a traditional Bedouin camp sipping fragrant tea and admiring the exceptionally starlit sky.

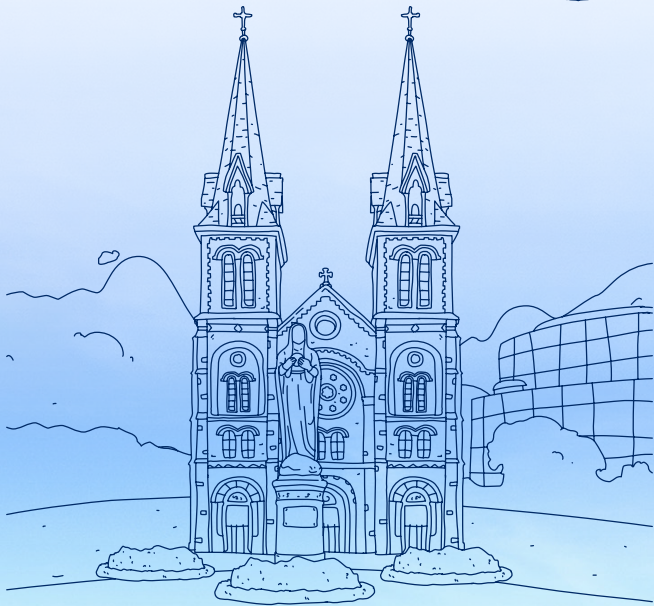
### Israel

With a soul sculpted by the beliefs of Muslims, Christians and Jews, Israel is a land of deep spirituality where ancient paths intertwine with modern buildings and cultures merge to create a destination that's simply magical. Capital Tel Aviv is a trendy port city with a metropolitan attitude and here you'll find Israel's finest restaurants, shopping and art galleries. Outside Tel Aviv lies the Roman ruins of Caesarea, Tiberias nestled on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and Tabgha, the site of the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Floating in the mineral-rich Dead Sea provides rejuvenation for the mind and body before ending in the world's most holy city, Jerusalem, with its sacred old town, fabled Western Wall and famous Dome of the Rock.



# Saigon

## CITY GUIDE



Saigon, now officially Ho Chi Minh City, exudes an energy like nowhere else; a vibrant pulse that begins with the dawn and goes on well into the night.

The horizon is a fast-evolving mishmash of glass skyscrapers and pastel-coloured apartment blocks, the latter swathed in flower-laden balconies and painted wooden shutters. As early as five a.m., bustling market stalls and pop-up cafés pepper the boulevards, and yellow apricot blossoms tumble from the trees as sandal-sporting scooter commuters whizz by. Come rain or shine, Saigon's rhythm never stops.

Yet the city has quiet nooks and hidden corners too. Wander down any side street; turn a corner, head up a staircase, and find yourself in an airy rooftop bar or coffee hangout, surrounded by potted palm trees and ochre-painted walls. It doesn't hurt to know that the beer is pretty cheap in Vietnam too – pick up a bottle of the local favourite, Saigon Red, for less than a dollar.





## Getting your bearings

The city is split up into 21 districts; it was 24 until late 2020, when the 3 districts on the east side of the river were merged to create Thu Duc, Vietnam's first city-within-a-city. It'll take time for maps to be updated, and the numbered districts weren't consecutive to begin with – so a guide is strongly recommended in Saigon! As a traveller, you can generally stick to the west side of the river, though it's worth crossing over for great restaurants like The Deck.

Begin in D1, the city centre – this is where you'll find much of the historic architecture (see Don't miss: Dong Khoi); there's plenty more in D3, such as the photogenic Pink Church. Head to D5 (Cho Lon) for Chinatown, brimming with busy markets, beautiful pagodas and tempting street eats. For now, you'll need to get around on foot, by bus or by taxi; a metro system is under development, but it'll be some time before completion.

## What's in a name?

The renaming of Saigon to Ho Chi Minh City is often somewhat misinterpreted as an anti-French statement; a backlash against the French, who took control of the region following the Cochinchina Campaign of 1859. The truth is that the area was informally called Sài Gòn long before the arrival of the Europeans, and Prey Nokor before that, when it was a Khmer fishing village in Lower Cambodia. The area was first 'Vietnamised' in the late 17th century, was later controlled by the French, and eventually became the capital of South Vietnam, a republic which existed from 1955 until the North's victory in 1975.

The new name of Ho Chi Minh City was chosen by northern politicians following the Reunification of Vietnam. It was intended both as an emphatic statement of their 1975 victory, and a commemoration of the north's former leader, who had died in 1969. At the time, the change was unpopular with some southerners. Nowadays, the distinction is blurred; the names Saigon and HCMC are used interchangeably across Vietnam without causing offence, although the locals still typically call it Saigon.

## When to go

Vietnam has multiple climates, divided between north and south. Hanoi and the north have a four-season cycle, whereas Saigon and the south have just two seasons; hot/dry from November to March, and hot/wet from April to October. For the best of both regions, travel between November and March; January and February are particularly popular. That said, the wet 'green season' from April to September is still a great time to be in Saigon; streets are quieter, and downpours tend to be heavy, but short and refreshing.

## Don't miss: Dong Khoi Area, District 1

Known as Rue Catinat during the French period, Dong Khoi lies in District 1 on the west bank of the Saigon River. Look out for nineteenth century French Colonial architecture, like the red-brick Notre-Dame with its stained-glass windows and two high bell towers, and the oversized pastel-yellow Central Post Office with its distinctive green shutters and hybridisation of Renaissance and Gothic influences.

Inside the grand Post Office, you'll find arched ceilings, historic maps and vintage public phone booths still in daily use. Just around the corner is the flamboyant Saigon Opera House, first opened in 1900 and designed in the style of Paris' Petit-Palais. Be sure to catch the AO Show here – an impressive fusion of artistry and acrobatics.

Modern Saigon has grown up around these buildings; spacious cafés and stylish boutiques abound. To get a true perspective of how the city has evolved, walk eight minutes from the Opera House to Bitexco Tower, where you can sip a cocktail from the 49th floor while taking in 360-degree views of Saigon's endless skyline.

## History lessons

Whatever your take on the Vietnam War, be sure to visit the War Remnants Museum. Spread across four floors, it pays homage to the victims of war through various poignant displays. One photo gallery is dedicated to those who were impacted by Agent Orange and napalm; another room presents, without comment, articles and photographs by American journalists of the period. Guides are forbidden; the museum is a place for quiet reflection and independent wandering.

## Where to eat: NOIR Saigon

'Giving back' while travelling is becoming more and more important. A Dining in the Dark experience at NOIR Saigon is the perfect way to do just that. Staffed by a team of visually-impaired waiters, this social enterprise restaurant invites you to experience a three-course dinner using only your 'other' senses.

Your experience begins with a 'sense-training session' in the (lit) side room; you'll be given a blindfold and a deceptively simple task, such as a wooden puzzle. Remove your blindfold and move on to the main restaurant next door; here, you'll navigate your way through a mysterious three-course menu in total darkness. Sounds, smells, tastes and textures are amplified, and you'll gain a new appreciation of the elegance of Eastern cuisine.

## Around Saigon: Cu Chi Tunnels

Saigon is a great base from which to explore the Cu Chi Tunnels, a 90-minute drive out of the city. Here, you can see part of the immense network of tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the war; discover trapdoors, underground kitchens, field hospitals and recreated bamboo traps that the Viet Cong used in their path to victory.

Alternatively, you're not far from the lush Mekong Delta region, the 'rice basket of Vietnam'. Consider a day trip here, or even a few days of cruising up the Mekong into Cambodia.

We feature 15 group tours to Vietnam and Saigon (HCMC) features on every one of them. The Classic Mekong is our most popular tour of the region; a glorious adventure from the temples of Angkor to the serene waters of Halong Bay via the delights of the Mekong Delta and Vietnam's charming towns and cities.

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## A tailormade trip to Asia



Wendy Wu customers Geoff and Charyl Cowles give us a glimpse at their incredible tailormade trip to Asia, answering our questions about their amazing adventures through Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Laos and Singapore!

### Tell us a little bit about why you chose a holiday to the destinations you visited.

We wanted to go somewhere overseas to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. We had tossed up between a few different destinations for weather or one reason or another, and we settled on our favourite, Asia, as a nice place to celebrate this important milestone.

As we started the planning stage, we wanted some new and familiar places in Asia. We settled on visiting Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Laos and Singapore over an 18-day period with Hong Kong and Singapore the familiar places and Taiwan, Laos and Macao completely new to us.

We were confident we could organise ourselves in Hong Kong, Macao and Singapore but felt that short, private tailormade tours organised by the experts at Wendy Wu would offer the best travel opportunities for Laos and Taiwan. We were familiar with Wendy Wu's huge travel reputation as we had previously had private tours with them to Vietnam (2016), Borneo (2017) and China (2018).

### What was the highlight of your holiday?

While there were so many wonderful highlights to choose from on this trip, we would single out our visit to Luang Prabang from our Wendy Wu five-day Laos in Focus Tour as particularly memorable.

We stayed three nights in the magnificent, historic Victoria Xiangthong Palace Hotel, the last residence of the Laos Royal family. This is a boutique hotel and it's absolutely delightful and walking in the footsteps of former Royalty was a thrill in itself. It was completely magical and so memorable.

We enjoyed temple visits, the cascading Kuang Si Waterfalls, a visit to a Hmong

village, fascinating cultural shows, fantastic food, a trip on the mighty Mekong River, interesting night and day markets and the once in a lifetime experience of participating in the Buddhist ceremony of Takbat before sunrise. All this organised so splendidly by our fantastic guide Chia and his able driver.

Luang Prabang is a place we would love to come back to one day, particularly if we needed a place to just unwind and de-stress.



### What surprised you the most about Laos and Taiwan?

We were impressed with the beautiful people of Laos in particular. The Lao people are some of the gentlest people on Earth. As tourists and guests to their country we found the Lao people very friendly and respectful. These traits we believe are tied up in the Lao people's spirituality where the majority practice Theravada Buddhism. We came to realise that the people draw strength and inspiration from the self-sacrifice of the monks in the many village temples. To have participated in a Buddhist Takbat ceremony where the monks from the local temple parade for food alms, mostly rice cooked for them by the local people to go towards their only daily meal, was an unforgettable experience for us.

Laos also had some incredible scenery. Top of the list were the Kuang Si Waterfalls situated in the jungle near the Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre, 29 kilometres south of



Luang Prabang. The cascading tiers of the Kuang Si Waterfalls offer serene beauty. The vibrant blue waters travel down through three swimming pools and they take one's breath away. We doubted whether we would see more beautiful waterfalls anywhere else in the world.

Another great tour we did was to travel the Mekong River stopping off at villages selling a host of local crafts, including an interesting shop making paper-mache products, on the way to the renowned Pak Ou Caves – two linked caves crammed with thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues.

In Taiwan we were surprised just how mountainous the place is. This became apparent on day two of our Wendy Wu six-day private tour. On this day, leaving the impressive Taroko Gorge, where we stayed in classic mountain cabins at the delightful Taroko Village Hotel, we headed for the beautiful Sun Moon Lake as our destination. On the way we enjoyed the most exhilarating climb to the highest spot of Mt Hehuan at 3,275 metres above sea level traversing countless winding roads, so skilfully negotiated by our efficient driver/guide Willi.

### What was your experience of the food and meals you had on tour?

We never doubted the quality of the food we would consume in any of the places we visited leading up to the trip. Our confidence in the food stemmed from our previous Asian holidays with Wendy Wu to Vietnam, Borneo and China. To this end, travelling throughout Asia can be aptly described as a continuous moving feast.

Highly recommended is the Tien Hsing Lo Chinese Restaurant in the Landis Hotel in Taipei, Taiwan. This was our best dinner on the entire trip. The service at West Lake Cuisine was of the highest quality. We thanked the staff so much for a wonderful meal and the service. As a nice surprise the manager and the chef came out personally



to meet us at the end of the experience. We were also given a wonderful souvenir of a paper scroll with the menu we chose, written in Chinese characters by their resident calligrapher.

We loved the relaxed breakfasts on the three mornings at the Victoria Xiangthong Palace Hotel in Luang Prabang on the outside balcony overlooking the Mekong River. Ever so memorable was the lunch at a table overlooking one of the waterfalls at the Kuang Si Waterfalls. Finally, we of course could never forget the wonderful gesture of the local tourist operator in Vientiane in Laos in offering us a

Laos, Hong Kong, Macao and Singapore were generally the nice surprises.

### Any advice/suggestions for people who are thinking about travelling to Laos and/or Taiwan?

Once the current travel restrictions are lifted and the Coronavirus has subsided enough worldwide our advice is "just do it".

We consider that travelling with Wendy Wu to these places is a great option as the company is a market leader in Asian tourism.

Finally, for those who don't like group travel in coaches, why not consider doing what we



magnificent complimentary dinner due to our arrival plans at the airport not going to plan. They took us to the Khop Chai Due Restaurant, and we had a Laotian feast that was fit for a king including chicken, pork, and fish blended with delicious sauces, as well as vegetables, rice and soup.

### Is there anything you wish you knew before you travelled to Laos, Taiwan etc?

Not really. All the places visited are very much geared for tourism and make a point of ensuring tourists are well looked after during their stay. As such, we found wherever we went was well organised and easy to get around, whether we were with our guide or we ventured out on our own.

In addition, both my wife and I had researched our trip well before we left as to be well informed when we arrived. Wendy Wu Tours also provided a more than useful booklet of essential information which we found helpful before venturing forth. The things we did not know about Taiwan,

have done for a number of trips and go private and do a tailor-made holiday with one's own driver and guide. Yes, it does cost a bit more. However, for us it is the only way we would travel in Asia where language is an issue.

Another option, if time is of the essence, would be to do what we did and opt for short stays in these countries rather than tours that are 12 days or longer. In our view it is better to have seen a glimpse of a country than not at all.

*Geoff and Charyl travelled with us in January 2020.*

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"The cascading tiers of the Kuang Si Waterfalls offer serene beauty."



# Spotlight on: Wadi Rum, Jordan

Few places on earth compare with the rugged and dramatic beauty of Wadi Rum, Jordan's 'Desert of the Moon'. Lying 30 miles east of Aqaba, Jordan's only coastal city, this otherworldly, Mars-like desert encompasses an area almost the size of New York City, and has been inhabited since at least the early Stone Age.

by Sky Emery, Product and Commercial Development Manager

Despite its extensive history, Wadi Rum was first flung into the modern 'worldwide stage' by the 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia*. The film sees Peter O'Toole in the role of British liaison officer T.E. Lawrence, who worked together with the Hashemite Army during the 1916-18 Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire, which at that time controlled much of the Middle East.

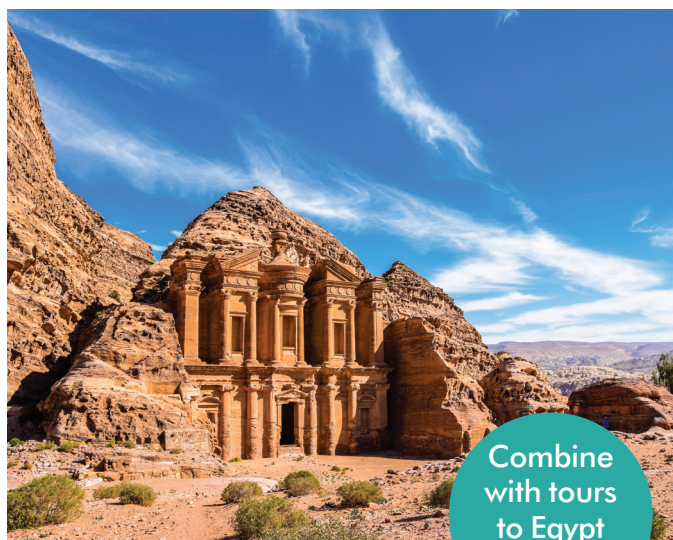
Although the film was wildly historically inaccurate, to the West, it was also a geographic eye-opener. Wadi Rum's reddish-gold sands, ancient ravines and towering sandstone cliffs inspired the imagination of viewers across the world. Nonetheless, relatively few people have been privileged enough to travel here in person.

For those who do journey to Jordan, few ever forget the exhilaration of zipping across Wadi Rum in a 4x4 with a Bedouin guide at the wheel. One moment, a vast sea of rose-gold dunes sprawl in every direction; the next, the sands give way to rocky bluffs and spiny foliage, and lofty rock formations towering against the horizon. The most iconic among them are the Seven Pillars of Wisdom – originally called Jabal Al-Mazmar, they were renamed after Lawrence's autobiography of the same name. These rough, coarse columns of sandstone and granite erupt dramatically from the sand, like fingers grasping at the sky.

For many travellers, the most intriguing aspects of the Wadi are its many siqs or canyons. One of the most famous is Khazali Siq, a tapered, hundred-metre gorge running dramatically through rocky cliffs. Its inner walls are emblazoned with ancient petroglyphs depicting people, camels, horses and footprints. Protected from the sand and wind for some two thousand years, these cryptic messages and waymarkers were left like signposts by the Thamūd, Nabateans and other nomads, who travelled through the Arabian desert in bygone millennia.

Most of the valley's modern Bedouins are more rooted and less nomadic; the desert is not simply a trade route, but a home. While most visitors visit the Wadi on a day trip before rushing on to Petra, our recommendation is to stay here overnight and enjoy a taste of 'diyafa', the world-famous Bedouin hospitality, which is considered part of the Bedouin code of honour.

Our 8-day Journey through Jordan itinerary includes a night at Memories Aicha Luxury Camp. Here, we stay in authentic yet luxurious Bedouin tents, sheltered beneath the high walls of a rocky canyon, and lavishly decorated with thick fabrics and scattered embroidered cushions. There are several contemporary creature comforts at the camp, including modern bathrooms and an impressive dining room. Yet as the sun dips below the red horizon, countless stars fill the unpolluted skies, and the sweet warmth of Arabic tea lingers on your tongue, it's hard not to feel somehow connected to the nomads of two thousand years ago.



## Journey through Jordan

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# 2020 Trophy Cabinet

2020 was no doubt a challenging year but it was not all doom and gloom. In fact, we had lots to celebrate here at Wendy Wu Tours, and although we were disappointed not to be able to take you to amazing destinations all over the world, we were delighted by your continued support making 2020 one of our biggest award-winning years yet!

Thank you to everyone who voted for us, you certainly helped to brighten our year!

## British Travel Awards

The British Travel Awards is largest and most influential poll of consumer opinion within the travel industry, and we are delighted to have won multiple times over the past few years including three top spots in 2020!

2020 Winner

**Best Escorted Tours Holiday Company**

2020 Winner

**Best Holiday Company to Southeast Asia**

2020 Winner

**Best Holiday Company to East & Central Asia**

## Globe Travel Awards

Celebrating its 43rd year in 2020, the Globe Travel Awards are the 'Oscars' of the travel world and we are absolutely thrilled to announce that we were awarded 'Best Long-Haul Specialist Operator' for the 11th consecutive year!

2020 Winner

**Best Long-Haul Specialist Operator**

## Silver Travel Advisor Awards

The Silver Travel Advisor Awards celebrates the best travel companies for the over 50s, and 2020 saw a new record with over 225,000 consumer votes cast!

2020 Winner

**Best Destination Specialist**

## TripAdvisor

Each year TripAdvisor comb through customer reviews and ratings to award the best services in the travel industry and we scooped a Travellers' Choice Award in 2020!

2020 Winner

**Travellers' Choice Award**







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