

## A MESSAGE FROM WENDY



**GREETINGS...** I am excited to present this special issue of our magazine to you! As you can see we have given it a fresh look and a new name to better reflect what you'll experience on one of our award-winning tours. It's very much an escape and a discovery of new destinations and cultures.

We are also celebrating 20 years of providing extraordinary tours to our customers all over the world. I don't know where the time has gone but we all look forward to the next 20 years and helping you explore something new with Wendy Wu Tours. The incredible feedback we receive from our customers is the driving force behind what we do and we'll continue to develop new and inspiring tour experiences and offer new destinations to visit.

This issue is packed full of new travel experiences and fascinating stories. Read about our brand new tours for solo travellers (p27), where to go in 2019 in our travel Hot List (p18), journey along the Silk Road in the remarkable Gansu Province (p44) plus discover why Indonesia is new to our touring collection (p14).

Best wishes,

215 Wend





## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE OF ESCAPE...







 $10 \quad { \begin{array}{c} \text{Celebrating 20 years} \\ \text{The story of Wendy Wu Tours, 20 years} \\ \text{in the making} \end{array} }$ 

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Komodo Dragons, dramatic scenery and palm lined beaches

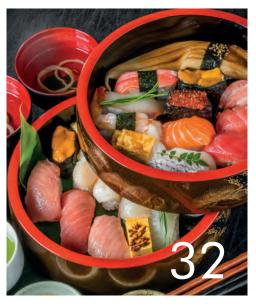
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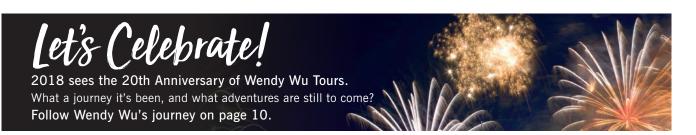


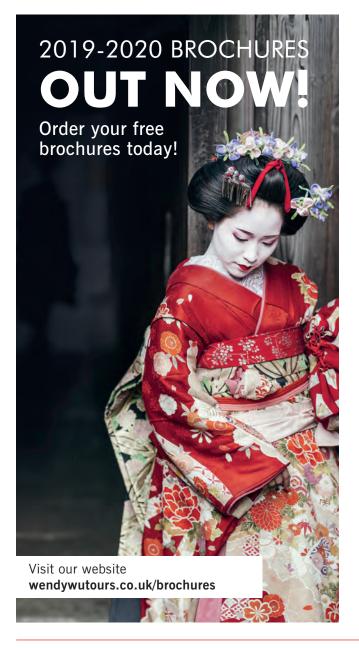


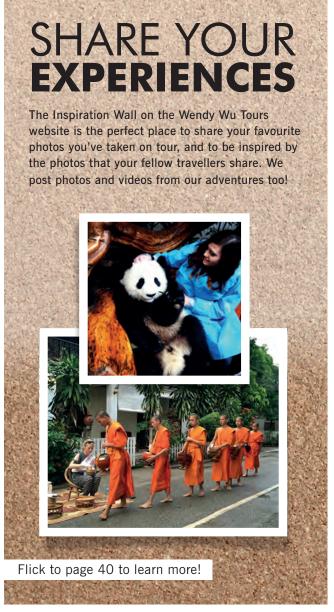


## WHAT'S NEW?

OUR EXPERTS BRING YOU THE LATEST NEWS FROM WENDY WU TOURS







## INTRODUCING INDONESIA

We're very excited to launch our brand-new destination, the incredible Indonesia!

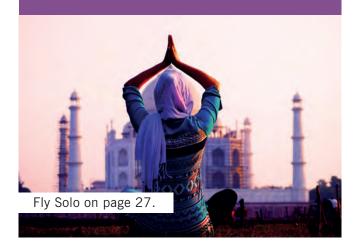
This tour spends time on the island of Java, the heart of the nation, exploring culture and natural wonders. It then hops over to Flores, the gateway island to Komodo National Park, where you can be sure that the immense beauty and infamous wildlife will give you the experience of a lifetime.



## SOLOS

## Our brand new Solos tours have landed!

With the perfect balance of group activities and free time, on these tours you can enjoy cultural experiences and magical sights without having to pay a single supplement.





## BUSINESS CLASS UPGRADE

From only £199PP

Let's be honest, when boarding a plane we'd all prefer to turn left instead of right. Well now you can with our incredible business class upgrade offer.

Book a selected tour to China, Japan or Southeast Asia travelling in 2019 and you could soon find yourself sipping champagne whilst stretching out in your fully-flat business class bed. Make the journey as extraordinary as the holiday itself.

SALE ENDS 30 SEPT 2018





## What do you love about being a Wendy Wu Tours guide?

"I really enjoy the travelling aspect. It's great to be able to explore my own country in such depth. I love the challenge of meeting a new group every few weeks and making sure every single person in that group is enjoying themselves - it makes me feel like I've accomplished something every time I drop a happy group off for their flight home.

I also really enjoy exploring and getting to uncover new destinations in China."

## Tell us about the most memorable moment you've experienced as a guide:

"Flying kites with my lovely tour guests on the Yangtze River cruise - it really was an amazing experience."

## What's your top sight to see in China?

"My top highlight has to be the incredible Zhangjiajie, a National Forest Park in Hunan Province. The scenery here was actually the inspiration behind 'Pandora' in the movie Avatar. Every time I visit it, I'm blown away."

## What made you want to be a guide?

"I wanted to be a guide for a number of reasons, but mostly to meet different people from across the world."

## HERE'S WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY ABOUT SOPHIE...

"Nothing was too much trouble for Sophie to deal with."

From tedevans1, Tripadvisor

"One of the friendliest, most organised, knowledgeable and professional people I have ever met."

From Rwdlan2017, Tripadvisor

"Sophie Jin lead the tour impeccably, she coordinated the transport and local guides seamlessly."

From Travelwithfriends60, Tripadvisor

"The extra effort Sophie put in was the difference between having a good tour and a grand one."

From wylmorro, Tripadvisor

## HEAD2JA3H

TWO OF SOUTH AMERICA'S MOST VIBRANT CAPITAL CITIES FIGHT IT OUT IN A CLASH OF CULTURE, FOOD AND HISTORY – WHICH ONE IS YOUR WINNER?









## **BOGOTÁ**

## **BUENOS AIRES**

## HISTORY AND CULTURE

The capital of Colombia formed in 1538, Bogotá now has a population of around 8 million people. It is the third most elevated capital city in the world and is surrounded by the Andes mountains. There are clear influences from many different periods of history and groups residing in Bogotá and its surrounds, from indigenous civilisations such as the Muisca, to Spanish colonial times, to modern day immigration. This manifests in an exciting variety of cultural output and a real inclusive, multicultural feeling to the city.

Argentina's most well-known city and its capital, Buenos Aires was established in 1536. Approaching 500 years later and the city is a diverse, bustling yet still enchanting metropolis. The mixture between the influence of colonial grandeur and Latin American, Buenos Aires culture is characterised by art, fashion and music, with the tango dance particularly synonymous with it and often cited as an emblem of the city. Buenos Aires also has more theatres than any other city in the world, leading to its name as the world capital of theatre.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Whilst in Bogotá, give Colombia's national dish - bandeja paisa - a try. This food platter, traditionally served on a large tray, constitutes a combination of a wide variety of components such as beans, rice, meats, egg, plantain and avocado. Apart from food, no visit to Colombia is complete without enjoying its globally renowned coffee made with local Arabica beans famed for a delicious, rich taste.

An absolute must-do when in Buenos Aires is to feast on some of the best steak in the world. Argentina is also known for its fantastic red wine, so make sure you take every opportunity to sample some, especially the delicious Malbec from the local vineyards in the wine region of Mendoza.

## **ATTRACTIONS**

Numerous museums, art galleries, libraries, theatres and parks are prolific throughout Bogotá, and there will always be something interesting to discover. Start exploring at Plaza de Bolivar, dedicated to Simon Bolivar, whose image is reflected in the form of a bronze statue in the middle of the square; and be sure to also visit the fascinating Museo Nacional and Iglesia de San Francisco.

Buenos Aires is home to many galleries and there is an extensive street art scene too. There are also many sites of historical and architectural importance such as Plaza de Mayo, the Cementerio de la Recoleta and Palacio Barola amongst many others. Take a walk through the centre of the old city to really appreciate the abundance of beautiful buildings and rich history apparent throughout Buenos Aires.



## CONCLUSION

Both Bogotá and Buenos Aires share a common theme in their cosmopolitan vibes, art and culture scenes, trendy neighbourhoods and plenty of historical architecture so we're sure you'll have a incredible time in either. Perhaps it all comes down to whether you would prefer a delicious glass of Argentinian Malbec or a tasty Colombian coffee after a fun-filled day of exploring one of these wonderful cities!



# Customer CCRNER

Receiving feedback from our customers is something that means a lot to us at Wendy Wu Tours so we're always encouraging you to send us your stories! It means that we can continue to create extraordinary trips again and again.

Douglas and Rosemary Hawkins travelled on their third Wendy Wu tour, Angkor to the Bay, which also happens to be our most popular Southeast Asia tour. We asked Douglas to tell us about their experience, what they enjoyed most and things that they will never forget...

> I would commend the tour for showing the amazing contrast between ancient and modern.





From: Douglas & Rosemary Hawkins Subject: Holiday to Cambodia To: magazine@wendywutours.co.uk

### Dear Customer Corner

Our daughter is an intrepid traveller who insisted that we should visit Cambodia and Vietnam. We chose the tour 'Angkor to the Bay' because it seemed to us that it had the depth and breadth to give us a true impression of the region and so it proved.

Cambodia was inspiring. The cruise of Tonle Sap Lake showed a totally different way of life to any we had seen before and we were able to see dozens of cranes spiralling on a nearby thermal. The Angkor complex was every bit as impressive as our daughter had said it was and it was fascinating to see how the tree roots had enveloped many of the buildings and terraces. Phnom Penh was a lovely city with boulevards bordered by old colonial buildings. On visiting the Wat Phnom Temple my wife wrote a wish for the health and happiness of our family. It was then lifted up to the roof to join hundreds of others.

On our travels through Vietnam we became more aware of the transition between ancient and modern and saw many relics of the war. I was struck by the old streets with modern buildings which were flanked by telegraph poles with so many wires that they looked like tangles of knitting wool.

The traffic was also a true experience. In Saigon, we were helped across a busy street like school children by an elderly gentleman because of the mopeds rushing in all directions. We saw one carrying a whole family – 2 adults and 3 kids! I also particularly enjoyed my experience of being a farm worker at Ben Tre Community Farm near Hoi An; whilst I certainly looked the part, I don't think I met the required standard!

Despite misty weather, the drive from Hanoi to Halong Bay was beautiful. The boats we boarded there befitted the location and provided every comfort to us. Overall it was a lovely experience made more fascinating by being able to explore the interiors of the islands via the caves.

This trip was our first experience of Indochina and I would commend the tour for showing the amazing contrast between ancient and modern. One should bear in mind that it is likely that the changes will accelerate which will be to the detriment of old traditions.

Kindest regards

Douglas & Rosemary Hawkins







The Angkor complex was every bit as impressive as our daughter had said it was...





Hoi An and Halong Bay.

This year, Wendy Wu Tours is celebrating it's 20th anniversary. It's been quite a ride since Wendy Wu Tours was founded in Sydney, Australia in 1998. Over 20 years all of the challenges, successes, innovations and celebrations have made the company what it is today; an award-winning global tour operator with a future that's looking brighter than ever!



Hosts first escorted tour from the western world to Lhasa, Tibet - Tibetan Dreams.

Sichuan's remote Nine Villages Valley and the glorious Zhangjiajie National Park.

Launches tours to Vietnam.

Eclipse' tour of China. Wins Escorted Tour Company of the Year.

Welcomes 'tailormade' holiday experts to create bespoke tours, alongside group tour programme.

## THE WENDY WU STORY...



Born in Tibet, Wendy spent her childhood living in Sichuan, Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, and travelling extensively with her parents.

"When I was a child, travel was frequent to say the least," says Wendy. "My parents were always travelling and I went with them. Ever since I was born I was travelling all the time. One of my most memorable trips was to cruise down the Yangtze River from Chongqing through the Three Gorges to Shanghai long before it was on the tourist map. It was mostly cargo ships in those days."

With this intimate knowledge and experience of her home country, it seems only natural that Wendy should have a career in the travel industry. But it wasn't until she lived in Australia for a few years and visited much of the country that she really got the travel bug, "Having seen so much of Australia I decided that I really wanted to go back and explore again the country of my birth," Wendy confides. "And after a lot of research I put together an itinerary that included all of the essential sights as well as some of the hidden gems. Through my knowledge of China, I could visit many fascinating places that were unknown to the western world."

Wins two
prestigious awards
at the British
Travel Awards.

Introduces 'Exclusive Collection' deluxe touring range and immersive adventure tours range.

Wen Britis

Wendy is inducted into the British Travel & Hospitality Hall of Fame, alongside Richard Branson and Thomas Cook.

Launches tours to South America.

Introduces Solos Tours range.

Wins Escorted Tour Company of the Year for the 7th year in a row.

2018

2013

YEARS
AND COUNTING

Here are just a few of wonderful groups from over the last 20 years enjoying their Wendy Wu tour,



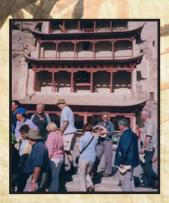








Wendy decided to advertise her itinerary in a local newspaper and she was inundated with calls, showing her that there was a huge demand for travel to China and a big gap in the market; the idea of starting a travel company was born. Wendy approached a travel agency in Sydney and instigated a partnership in which she developed and promoted her own tours through the agency. In 1998, Wendy left the travel agency and started her own company and the rest, as they say, is history...



What a 20 years it's been for Wendy Wu Tours!

> We'd like to thank you for making it extraordinary.





## INTRODUCING

## ndonesia



## **TAKE ME THERE**

Incredible Indonesia 16 days fr £3,490pp

Discover Java, an island bursting with fascinating traditions that have remained strong through the ages, before journeying to the island of Flores, gateway to Komodo National Park, where you'll embark on an adventure in search of the infamous Komodo Dragon.

An archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, Indonesia is an explosion of culture, with over 300 languages and a unique and fascinating blend of people calling it home. Stretching 5,120 kilometres and encompassing miles of incredible scenery, from the dramatic peaks of smouldering volcanoes to the blissful stillness of palm-lined beaches, Indonesia is like 100 countries combined into one.



## **HERITAGE AND CULTURE**

With places such as cultural hub Yogyakarta, on the island of Java, fiercely protective of their customs, much of Indonesia is a unique combination of old and new, making it easy to hop from a shiny shopping centre to traditional batik village. Over 300 ethnic communities live in both urban and rural settings, each with their own set of customs; whilst those in the city have modernised their way of life, if you travel out to the more remote villages you'll find that they uphold all aspects of their daily customs to their modes of transport. Home to eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Indonesia has a wide spread of historical treasures too, the most famous of which is the jaw-dropping Borobudur, the world's largest Buddhist temple.

## **NATIONAL PARKS**

Indonesia's national parks protect a diverse and spectacular range of landscapes, from volcanoes to oceans, to rainforest. The most popular of these national parks is Komodo, which encompasses Komodo, Rinca, Padar and many more smaller islands. Established in 1980, the park protects an area of huge biodiversity, with not only a rich marine ecosystem within its boundaries, but many species of animal, including the infamous Komodo Dragon, one of the oldest animal species in existence. Java's most well-known national park is Bromo Tengger Semeru. Covering a massive area of 800 square kilometres, it is named after two volcanoes and the Tengger people, an ancient community who have long inhabited the area. Here vou can look across one of Indonesia's best-known panoramas, with Mount Bromo and its continuous plume of white smoke nestled at the centre of the Segara Wedi (Sea of Sand).

## **FOOD**

Like many Asian countries, at the heart of Indonesia's cuisine is rice. This staple is served with delicious and vibrant dishes, full of intense flavours and many varieties of vegetables, tropical fruits and spices. Among numerous regional specialities, nasi goreng (fried rice) is the national dish of choice, usually served with sambal, a fiery chilli-based condiment, whilst rendang curry and chicken satay are dishes you have to try! Indonesia is the world's fourth-largest coffee producer; the island of Java has become so closely associated with coffee that the term java is a moniker for this much-loved hot beverage! Introduced by the Dutch, the country has excellent coffee-growing conditions, and produces a wide variety of exports, with its most prominent being the Robusta coffee. What better way to start your day than locally grown coffee whilst exploring this glorious country?





## WELCOME TO YOUR CLUB WORLD

There's business class and then there's the enhanced Club World experience from British Airways, on board from bedding to breakfast, sleep to service. Gradually being rolled out across their long-haul network, which already includes India but will soon include other Asia routes, the new service takes the flying experience sky high.



## **REST**

Feeling sleepy? Snuggle down underneath your luxurious bespoke duvet or super-soft woven blanket, rest on the padded mattress topper, and sink into the soft 100-per-cent cotton, 200-thread-count pillow, all designed exclusively by sleep experts, The White Company. What's more, in your exclusive Club World amenity kit you'll find a range of soothing products from The White Company's Restore & Relax Spa collections. Your Club World seat can manoeuvre into a number of positions including - when you're ready to sleep - a fully flat bed.



## **REFUEL**

Whether you're in the mood for a full three-course gourmet dinner and great wines, or you just fancy a bite to eat and a cup of tea, our expert chefs have created a menu to suit all tastes and diets. Offering a taste of Britain in the sky means you can expect great British produce on the menu, from delicate Loch Fyne smoked salmon, and Cornish Dover sole, to creamy Somerset brie, all paired with the perfect wines.



## **RELAX**

Your Club world is your own personal space while travelling. Whether it's your private office to do business, a cinema to catch up on the latest movie releases, an excellent restaurant with our gourmet meal service, or as a great hotel for getting some well-deserved sleep.



### TAKE ME THERE

Wendy Wu Tours have access to the best airfares in the market. Ask about upgrading your flights with British Airways when arranging your tour.



## DID YOU KNOW?

With the diversity, cultural riches and variety of landscapes of an entire continent, a holiday to India is one incredible experience! With each city boasting a culture of its own and breath-taking sights and panoramic landscapes at every turn, there are so many reasons to journey across India with Wendy Wu Tours.

WHILST CONSTRUCTING THE

## MAHA

FROM 1632-1653, OVER 1,000 **ELEPHANTS WERE USED AS** TRANSPORTATION FOR SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS.



**INDIA PRODUCES** 70%



## INDIAN RAILWAYS

IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST EMPLOYER, WITH OVER

## **LLION**

EMPLOYEES.





THE **HIMALAYAS** ARE HOME TO 9 OF THE 10 HIGHEST PEAKS IN THE WORLD AND GROW AN INCH, ON AVERAGE, EVERY YEAR.



122 MAJOR LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN IN INDIA, WITH OVER 1,500 OTHERS ALSO SPOKEN ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

MORE THAN 100 MILLION YEARS AGO, INDIA WAS AN ISLAND, UNTIL THE CONTINENTAL PLATE COLLIDED WITH ASIA FORMING THE HIMALAYAS!

CHESS WAS DEVELOPED IN INDIA, AND WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED

## **'CHATURANGA'**

MEANING 'FOUR MEMBERS' REPRESENTED BY ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CHARIOTS AND SOLDIERS.



## **INDONESIA**

A vast archipelago stretching across the Pacific Ocean, Indonesia is a string of lush, volcanic islands full of diverse cultures, beautiful beaches and incredible adventure. As much as we would love to say that our brand-new tour takes in all 17,000 of Indonesia's islands, the ones it does visit, Java and Flores (for Komodo National Park), offer some of its richest heritage and most magical nature.

## THE 2019 HOT LIST

The launch of our new brochure collection brings with it a host of exciting new destinations, sights and experiences. So, before you all get to planning your 2019 adventures, we'd like to present to you our favourites for the coming year. Prepare yourself for a head full of travel daydreams and an insatiable need to plan a holiday...

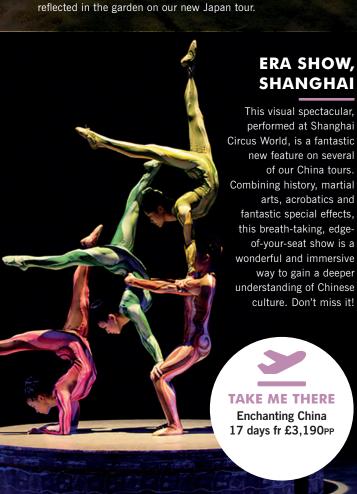
## TAMIL NADU, INDIA

TAKE ME THERE Incredible Indonesia 16 days fr £3,490pp

This southern Indian state is at the heart of a civilisation that has survived more than 2 millennia. Having long enjoyed the protection of ancient kingdoms, the rest of India has held less sway here, meaning that those old civilisations, with their unique religion and heritage, are still very much thriving today. Tamil Nadu's colourful, towering temples, ancient arts and charming cities sit amongst lush tea plantations, palm forests and paddy fields, making it a delight to explore. Our brand new southern India tour takes in all this and more!







how the traditional Japanese aesthetic and philosophy are

## TAKE ME THERE Vibrant Vietnam 15 days fr £2,490pp

## DALAT, VIETNAM

Sat in a spectacular landscape of lakes, waterfalls, forests and bountiful gardens, Dalat was founded as a colonial escape from the searing heat of Saigon. The town itself has some lovely French-style architecture and a lively market, and its surroundings are delightfully different to the rest of the country, with rolling hills, verdant farmland and coffee plantations. The best way to explore it? Vintage steam train, which chugs through the beautiful countryside to the rural village of Trai Mat.



Exuding a rare tranquillity, Lumbini, a sleepy stop in the west of Nepal, is the sacred birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, or Buddha. An area full of picturesque and peaceful temples, pagodas and monasteries, with more appearing all the time, there is plenty to slowly and easily explore. Take a moment to reflect before the beautiful simplicity of the World Peace Pagoda on our new India and Nepal tour, that pauses at Lumbini.

## INTRODUCING OUR Extraordinary new tours! It's only fitting that in our 20th year our collection of tours is the biggest and best we've ever done, and the 2019-2020 collection is just that! We'd like to introduce you to some of the brand-new holidays that appear in our latest brochures; it's time to start packing your bags! Tomaciococcoco COC

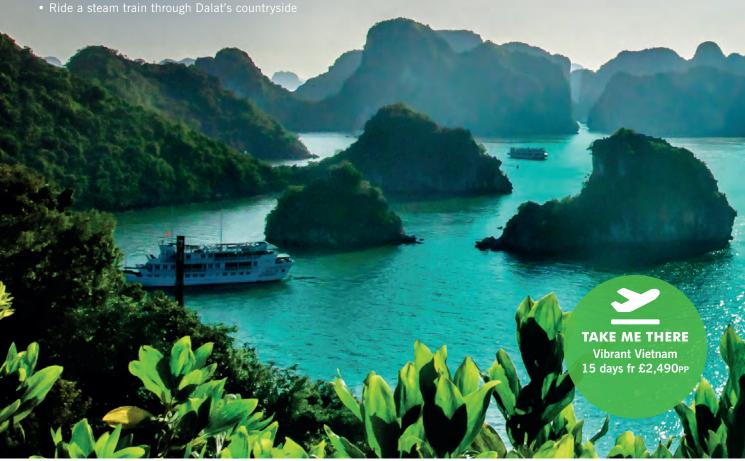


## NEW TOUR FOR 2019-2020

## Vibrant Vietnam

This tour is a more in depth journey through Vietnam that includes all the unmissable sights! Watch the sun rise over Halong Bay, experience the hustle and bustle of Hanoi and Saigon. You'll also be charmed by Hoi An, explore the highland town of Dalat and enjoy some beach time in Nha Trang in an incredible, fully-escorted, 15 day adventure.

- Explore Hanoi's old town by cyclo
- Cruise the breathtaking Halong Bay
- Try traditional farming techniques in Hoi An
- Unwind on Nha Trang beach





## Indian Adventure

Whilst this tour includes the bucket list sights of India's Golden Triangle (Delhi, Taj Mahal and Jaipur), its focus is getting you off-the-beaten-track in Rajasthan. Arguably India's most majestic and colourful state, Rajasthan is dotted with magnificent forts, desert villages and holy sights.

- Practice yoga in Jaipur, the 'Pink City'
- Explore the old streets of Udaipur by bike
  - Visit villages of rural Rajasthan
- Spend the night in a magnificent old fort
  - Prepare local dishes in a cooking class





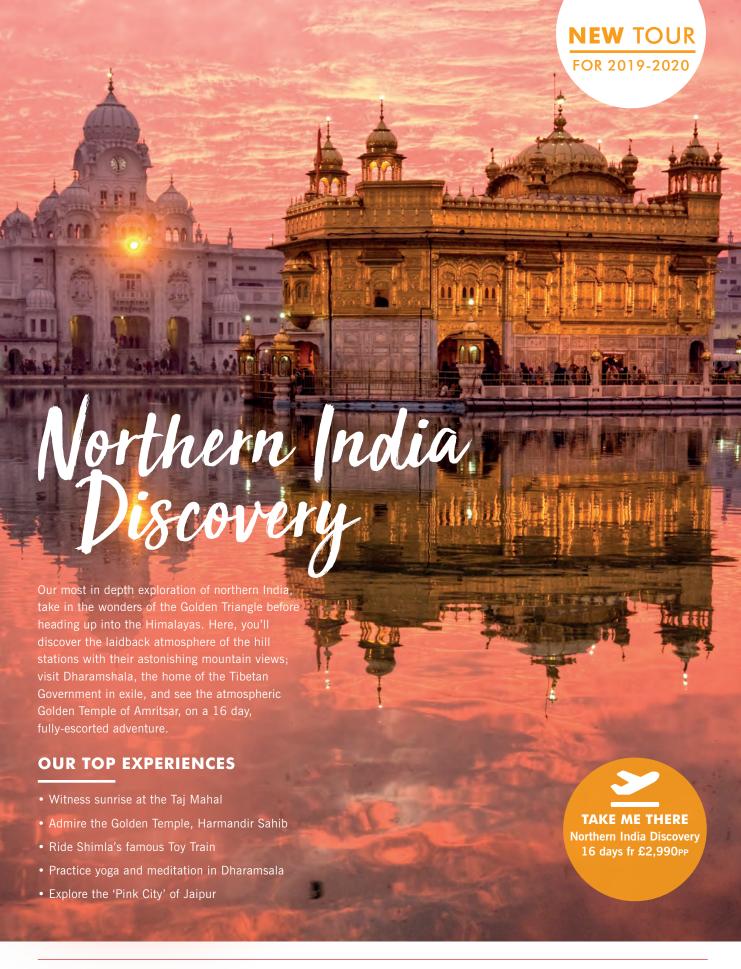
THE SECTION

## Classic South India

This journey through the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala incorporates beautiful wildlife, towering temples, lush tea plantation and dramatic coastline. A relaxed and colourful region, both states are laidback with a rich and magical heritage all of their own, which you'll discover exploring cities such as Pondicherry and Kochi and cruising on Kerala's celebrated backwaters.

- Examine the ancient rock carvings of Mamallapuram
- Explore Pondicherry by rickshaw
- Witness an atmospheric aarti ceremony
- Spot elephants in Periyar
- Cruise Kerala's peaceful backwaters









## TRAVELLING SOLO DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU HAVE TO TRAVEL ALONE

Our brand-new collection of Solo Tours are designed especially for those who want to travel with other, likeminded solo travellers, so together you can explore, discover and share your passion for adventure. The best part? There are no single supplements and a guaranteed room of your own!

## ONE FOR ALL OR ALL FOR ONE

Whether travelling solo excites you or makes you feel a bit anxious, we've made sure these tours are perfectly balanced for both. Not only does travelling on a Solo tour mean no single supplements and a guaranteed room of your own, there's a bit of free time here and there, so that those who like a little time to themselves have the opportunity to do their own thing. There are also plenty of activities that allow the group to mingle and form friendships, along with seeing your destinations biggest and best sights and getting to share that experience with your fellow travellers.

## **SEE MORE OF OUR SOLO TOURS**

Turn over the page to find out more about our brand new Solo Tours range...



George Pu National Escort - China

## **ALL THE WAY**

From booking to returning home, we're here to help you every step of the way. Our team in the UK are on hand to answer questions and provide information right up until your day of departure when, on arrival at your destination you're passed into the reassuring hands of your National Escort. Your National Escort is with you throughout your tour making sure that all you have to do is soak up the sights and enjoy the company of your fellow travellers. As locals, they are also perfectly placed to offer suggestions and guidance for how to spend any free time, be it as a group or going solo.

## **CULTURAL IMMERSION**

Our Solo Tours include plenty of cultural activities. This way, you not only get to experience the culture of your destination, but to form connections and friendships with the rest of your group by sharing these experiences together. From meditation sessions in Japan to tango classes in Argentina, all the experiences are fun, exciting and immersive and will leave you with a genuine taste of a new culture.





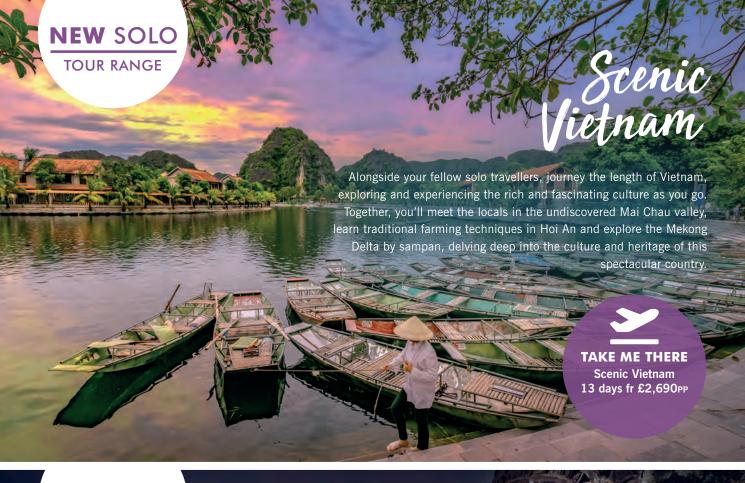


# An Indian Experience

This tour showcases the extraordinary sights of India's Golden Triangle. An addition to the classic Delhi, Agra, Jaipur route is Ranthambore National Park where you can spot majestic Bengal tigers, and there are plenty of opportunities to experience India's rich culture. There's also free time for you to spend as you wish, be it to relax or to delve a little deeper into the culture by yourself.

- Discover Delhi's spice markets
- Witness sunrise at the Taj Mahal
- Spot tigers in Ranthambore
- Prepare local dishes at a cooking class
- Try your hand at block printing and carpet weaving





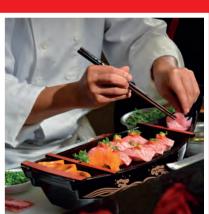




## WHIPPING UP A CULINARY FERVOUR

For many of us, our knowledge of Japanese food might not go much beyond the odd pack of sushi or bowl of ramen. Delve a little deeper and you'll find that Japan has slowly but surely overtaken France and Italy as the world's culinary mecca. With a traditional cuisine that is a quintessential part of its culture, and an innovative take on modern dining, Japan has become the place to eat and eat well, whether you're a fervent foodie or just like the occasional nibble on something new.











For a full-on foodie experience, why not create your own culinary Japan itinerary with one of our tailormade travel experts. Call them on 0800 988 8202 or visit wendywutours.co.uk

## JAPAN'S FOOD PHILOSOPHY

In 2013, 'washoku' (traditional Japanese cuisine) was added to UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a true demonstration of the love and craftsmanship that the Japanese put into their food. One of the biggest influences on cuisine is Zen Buddhism, a philosophy that runs through much of Japanese life. Treating your ingredients and tools with respect, cooking considerately, keeping the cooking space clean and tidy and always being creative are central pillars of the resulting food philosophy, whilst simple but elegant presentation and light flavours create a wonderfully balanced and harmonious dish. Add to this a pioneering attitude and a penchant for seasonal produce, and you can see why the food Japan is turning out right now is flawless.

## JAPAN'S FOODIE DESTINATIONS

## **TOKYO**

Currently, Tokyo has 234 Michelin-starred restaurants making it, arguably, the culinary capital of the world. The city is the epitome of modern dining, offering a wide variety of foodie experiences from across Japan and around the world, from mouth-watering street food snacks to meticulous 12-course meals at a chef's table, and everything inbetween. The best part? This fabulous food doesn't have to be expensive - you can eat and drink well here on any budget. Tsukiji Market's outer market is a must for any foodie itinerary. Full of vendors selling essential ingredients and takeaway counters selling all sorts of delicious delights, it's the sushi, with its just-out-of-the-sea-fresh fish, that's a must.

## **OSAKA**

In Japan, it's no mean feat to earn the nickname 'the nation's kitchen', and what foodie wouldn't love a city where the motto is 'kuidadere' or 'eat til you drop'! There are plenty of brilliant places to eat; head to Dotonburi for amazing street food or try Kuromon Ichiba Market for a look at the freshest produce and ingredients in the city. A must taste is the delicious okonomiyaki, a batter-based pancake filled with whatever you fancy — it's one of Osaka's signature dishes. The infamous fugu (poisonous blowfish) also originated in Osaka and is the best place to it eat — don't worry, a chef has to have three years' training before earning a licence to serve it.

## **KYOTO**

Kaiseki, Japan's haute cuisine, is thought to have roots in 16th century tea ceremonies before becoming the dining style of choice for the upper echelons of Kyoto society. It's still said today that Kyoto-ites have a more refined and delicate palate, and once you've sat down to experience a true kaiseki in the city, you'll see why. Each small course of a rich, varied menu uses the freshest ingredients, is exquisitely presented and is in perfect harmony with the atmosphere, season and surroundings in which it is being consumed. Many Kyoto restaurants are dedicated to this culinary art form, and whilst it is expensive, you'll never have experienced anything like it.

We asked foodie experts Harden's, publishers of the famous Harden's Guides, to recommend their top 5 restaurants that give you a taste of Japan in the UK...



## THE ARAKI

£380pp

12 New Burlington St, London, W1S 3BH 020 7287 2481 www.the-araki.com

The UK's most expensive restaurant - the Mayfair home to one of Tokyo's most accomplished chefs.

2

### **UMEZUSHI**

£44PP

Mirabel Street, Manchester, M3 1PJ 0871 811 8877 www.umezushi.co.uk

Minuscule Japanese restaurant whose minimalist setting gives no hint of its marvellous cuisine.

3

## ISSHO

£62pp

Victoria Gate, George St, Leeds, LS2 7AU 0113 426 5000

www.issho-restaurant.com

Well-appointed and accomplished Japanese restaurant in the city-centre.



## ZUMA

£82pp

5 Raphael St, London, SW7 1DL 020 7584 1010

www.zumarestaurant.com

Squeeze past all the parked Ferraris to see how the other half live at this glossy Eurotrash favourite, with glam bar, off Knightsbridge.



## **EBI SUSHI RESTAURANT**

£41<sub>PP</sub>

59 Abbey St, Derby, DE22 3SJ 01332 265656

A stream of executives from the nearby Toyota Factory attests to the quality of this tiny Derbyshire Japanese.

Prices shown are estimated cost for dinner, per person



Tell us about your best foodie experience for a chance to win a copy of the Harden's Best UK Restaurants 2018!

Submit your entries to magazine@wendywutours.co.uk, or post it on our Facebook page.

## REFLECTIONS OF VIETNAM

Interview with John Ramsden, former British diplomat and author of 'Hanoi After the War'



John Ramsden joined the Diplomatic Service in 1975. In 1980 he was sent to Hanoi as Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy. He stayed in Vietnam until 1982.

John had little time to study the language and culture before setting off. At that time, there were very few westerners in Vietnam and almost no tourism. The country was isolated and very poor, after decades of war. The more open policies of the mid 1980s had not yet begun. We caught up with John to discover what his memories and recollections were of Vietnam during

this turbulent period and how he recently launched a collection of photographs from his time spent there.

When you discovered you were being sent to the British Embassy in Hanoi, that must have been a fairly daunting proposition.

Yes. I was working in Vienna at the time: Hanoi was quite a contrast! Hanoi, at the time, was considered one of the most 'difficult' postings in the world. Here is an extract from the notes I got from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO):

New arrivals should assume they will be able to buy literally nothing in Hanoi, except for fresh food and should come with three months' supply of anything else they need...
It is impossible, in practice, to import a private car. A bicycle is essential.

There were almost no conventional entertainments – like a swimming pool, tennis court, cinema or restaurants. Imported goods were unobtainable. We were cut off from the outside world. Exploring and taking photographs helped me to enjoy Hanoi, despite all the difficulties.

## What were your first impressions of Vietnam when you arrived?

I had not lived in a communist country before and was expecting a sort of Pyongyang – spartan and regimented, in line with war time stereotypes. I was pleasantly surprised to find a rather beautiful old capital with enormous character.

In those days, the streets were very quiet. There was almost no traffic. There were no private cars. A few motor scooters were starting to arrive from the south, but most people went about on foot or by bicycle.

After decades of war, the city looked badly neglected, but it had a wistful beauty. The heart of the city was far less crowded than today but there was plenty to see: markets, workshops, street stalls, temples and so forth.

I was very interested in traditional culture – temples, religious festivals, pilgrimages etc. In China, during the 'Cultural Revolution', they had tried to ban all these things. In Vietnam, while religion was not encouraged it was clearly tolerated. Some of the temples were magnificent: though often in poor repair they were deeply atmospheric places.

## What surprised you most about Vietnam at that time?

There must have been very deep scars left by the war – so many dead and wounded, so much destruction. But there seemed to be very little bitterness, for example towards westerners. People seemed very philosophical about what had happened. Perhaps we have something to learn from Vietnam in this respect.



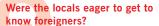
Taking baskets to market



Four on a bike. A bike was a prize possession



Heart of Hanoi. Everyone went by foot



Yes. I had the impression that people were friendly and would have welcomed more contact with foreigners, especially westerners.

But at that time, any meaningful contact with foreigners was discouraged unless approved by the authorities. This was normal in communist countries during the cold war and perhaps inevitable in Vietnam, so soon after the war and with the country still on a semi-war footing.

But I did have some contact. I could, for instance, buy things in the market and exchange a few words with the stall holders in the process. And everything was more relaxed during the Tet festival.

## Was there any one experience that really stood out for you during your time spent in Vietnam?

Meeting Bui Xuan Phai, the famous painter. The streets of the old quarter were sometimes called 'Phai Streets' because Phai's paintings caught the spirit of the city so well. I was able to visit Phai many times in his studio – a single room that was also home to his family of four (in those days each family was allowed one room. Everyone in the building shared a tap in the courtyard for washing etc).

Phai was an elderly and highly respected figure by that stage – perhaps that is why I was able to visit him, despite the restrictions on contact with foreigners. I used to bring him supplies of paint, cigarettes etc. from abroad. It was fascinating to see his pictures taking shape.

## How did your book come about?

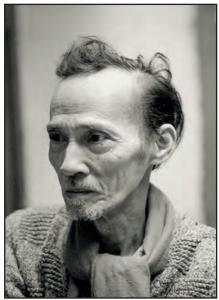
My photos lay in a cupboard for 30 years, until I retired. In 2013 I had an exhibition in London and then a bigger one in Hanoi. These were organised by 'Vietpro', a wonderful group of Vietnamese professionals and students in London.

Images of the period are very rare. My photos were a chance for them to visualise what their parents and grandparents had lived through. Their reaction was amazing and the exhibition they put on in Hanoi had a big impact.

Duong Trung Quoc, a well-known writer and historian produced a small catalogue. My book has grown out of the exhibition. As well as my photos, there are essays by Quoc and other Vietnamese writers who lived through the period.

I returned for the first time in 2013: the change was staggering. Back in 1980, people dreamed of owning a decent bike. On the first day of my visit in 2013 I counted three Rolls Royces! But the biggest change was being able to meet and share a beer with my new Vietnamese friends. The old magic was still there, now woven into a thriving, colourful, enjoyable modern city.





The artist, Bui Xuan Phai



A disused temple

'Hanoi After the War' is a collection of John's photographs with the memories of Vietnamese writers who lived through the period. Published by SKIRA, it is available from August on Amazon. Learn more at hanoiafterthewar.com.



# An isolated sliver of land between the towering Andes and the Pacific Ocean, Chile boasts an incredible amount of sights pack into its unfathomable length. Come with us on a journey through this extraordinary lead of the packets.

Pacific Ocean, Chile boasts an incredible amount of sights packed into its unfathomable length. Come with us on a journey through this extraordinary land, from the fire of the Atacama Desert in the north to the ice of Patagonia in the south - let us tell you, it is quite the adventure!



incredible beauty.

#### ATACAMA DESERT

The driest place on earth, the Atacama is exactly what you'd imagine Mars to look like. Its stark beauty is in the simplicity of its shapes and colours - valleys and ridges formed of jagged triangles of rock and perfectly symmetrical volcanos all come in the same hues of red that shift to purples and blacks as the sun sets. These are the views you'll get from simply staying put in vibrant desert hub San Pedro de Atacama but venture deeper and you'll find a more varied palette. Vast rocky plains are broken by azure lakes populated with salmon-pink flamingos, the white geometric-patterns of a salt lake or the yellowish billows of steam produced by the geothermic pools and geysers. Being so dry, the Atacama is also the ideal place to stargaze; the night sky here is beyond compare, with galaxies, planets and constellations easy for the naked eye to feast on, night after night. Trust us when we say that the Atacama Desert is unlike anywhere you've experienced before!

#### **SANTIAGO DE CHILE**

Nestled in a bowl created by the Andes mountains, whose peaks are easily visible from all over the city, Santiago is a lively and cosmopolitan place. Each of its vibrant neighbourhoods leaves a unique impression - stately Centro, for example, is full of colonial architecture, Bellavista gives a relaxed and bohemian vibe while Barrios Brasil is a bit more boisterous. On the coast, 100 kilometres from the capital, the port city of Valparaiso has a ramshackle, roguish charm. Perched on the cliffs above the industrial seafront are its UNESCO-listed cerros neighbourhoods. Here, the narrow streets lined with colourful painted clapboard houses, chic cafes and boutiques, and artfully dilapidated mansions with astonishing views of the Pacific. Reached by rickety old funicular lifts, as you wander the maze you'll find some incredible street art and a trendy, laidback vibe.



#### LAKE DISTRICT

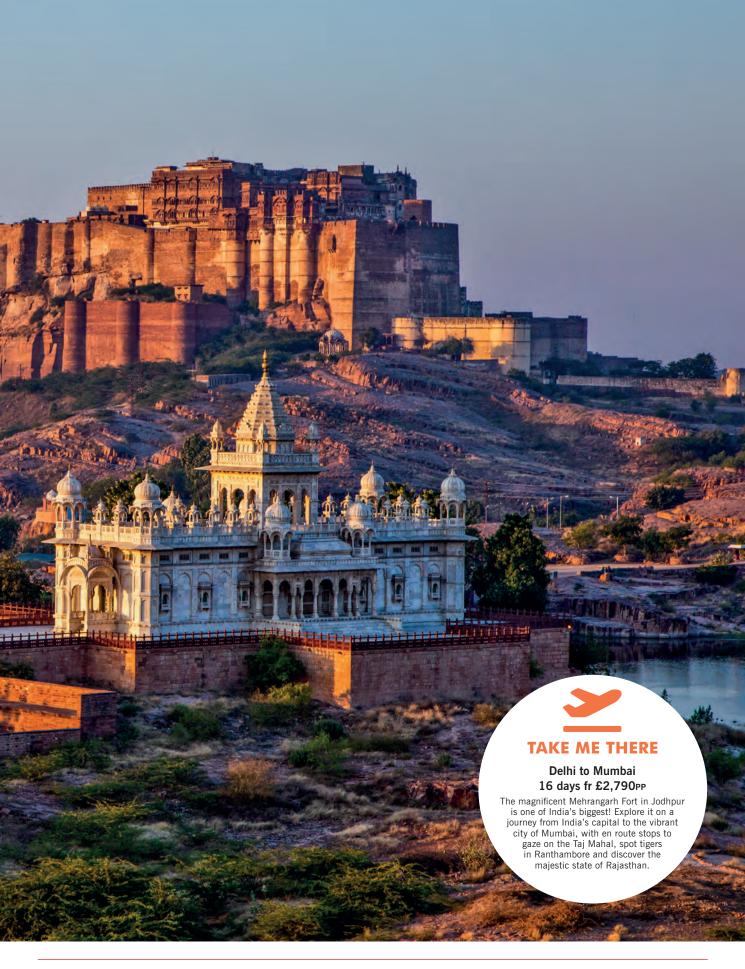
Thanks to a long resistance to the advances of both the Inca and the Spanish, Chile's Lake District was long a region of simple farming settlements and the indigenous Mapuche people. Much of its thick forest remains intact today, dotted with deep lakes and watched over by snow-capped volcanoes. Towns such as Puerto Varas, on the banks of Lake Llanguihue, blend in with surroundings with an Alpine-esque style and offer a gateway in the gorgeous nature that it nestles in. The close by cone of Volcan Osorno offers hikes on its forested slopes in the summer, and skiing in the winter, whilst around it's foot are waterfalls and lush greenery to explore. You can also venture to the Chiloe Island, part of an archipelago just off the coast, home to pastoral landscapes steeped in folklore and, often, an enigmatic fog. Chiloe is best known for its 150 charming wooden churches and the much photographed 'palafitos', colourful houses perched above the water on stilts.

#### **PATAGONIA**

Encompassing the tip of the South American continent, Patagonia is a region of wild grey seas, ice and rock. Its landscapes are pristine and, thanks to its huge scale, incredibly diverse. From the colourful town of Puerto Natales, you can cruise the desolate waters of the Ultima Esperanza fjord to spot sea lions, snow-capped mountains and glaciers, before heading to Chilean Patagonia's headline attraction, the Torres del Paine National Park. Centred around a massif of towering granite columns, the eponymous torres, this national park showcases the very best of Patagonia's dramatic landscapes. Alpine valleys, grass meadows, dramatic peaks, sparkling blue lakes abound, all watched over by the mighty Grey glacier, this is nature at its most magnificent, and totally unmissable.







### YOUR PHOTOS

### The Wendy Wu Tours website has an exciting new addition; our Inspiration Wall!

It's here that you, and your fellow travellers, can upload your favourite photos of your experiences on tour. It's also where we will share the latest photos of our adventures in Asia and South America. All the wonderful pictures we've gathered so far, and will gather in the future, will also make it the perfect place to find inspiration for your next adventure!

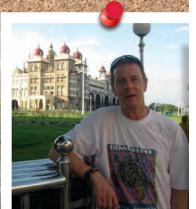
#### How to upload your images

It's easy! Go to the 'Get Inspired' tab on our website and scroll to the bottom of the page. There you'll find a box titled 'Upload Your Content'. You can drag and drop your image into the box to upload or hit 'browse' to choose your photo from where it's saved. Once the image is uploaded, add a comment (the what and where), click Next, fill in a couple of details and agree to the T&Cs and you're done!

You can also put your photos on the Inspiration Wall by: posting your images on our Facebook page, tweeting it to us @wendywutours, emailing it to magazine@wendywutours.co.uk or #wendywutours on Instagram.

#### Win a £20 Amazon voucher!

Add your images now for the chance to be selected as 'Photo of the Week' and have your picture displayed on our Facebook page. You'll also be entered into our Photo of the Month competition, to win a £20 Amazon voucher!





Susan trying out the Cu Chi Tunnels in Vietnam

Jeremy admiring Mysore Palace in Mysore, India



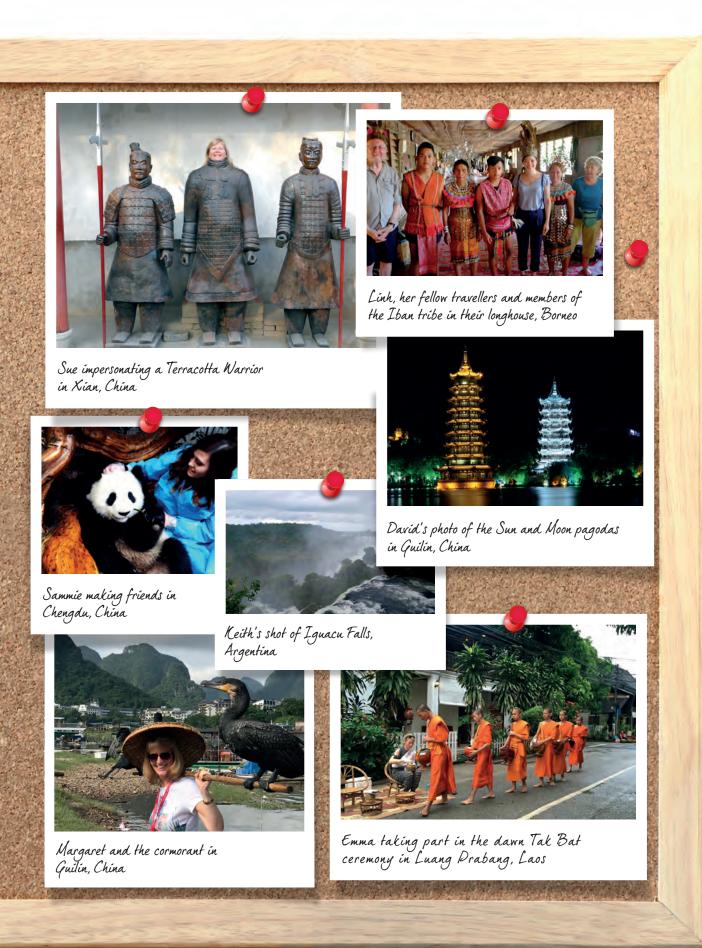
Liz, Artí and Christ the Redeemer in Río de Janeiro, Brazil



Chloe dining on a thali in Kerala, India



Jill enjoyed the Terracotta Warriors in Xian, China



### JAPANESE ETIQUETTE

In preparation for your incredible Japanese adventure, we thought you ought to scrub up on the local etiquette!

With a culture very different from our own, there's plenty to learn before you visit...



IN BUSY TRAIN STATIONS,
BUS STATIONS, AND
AIRPORTS, YOU WILL BE
EXPECTED TO FORM AN
ORDERLY LINE. DON'T PUSH
AHEAD, AND PAY ATTENTION
TO DIRECTIONAL LINES
PAINTED ON THE FLOORS.



DON'T ANSWER YOUR PHONE
ON THE TRAIN
OR EAT ANY FOOD!



DON'T SLAM TAXI DOORS!
WHEN YOU'RE TAKING TAXIS,
YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO
FIND THAT THE DOORS CLOSE
AUTOMATICALLY.



The way of addressing someone respectfully begins with a bow. For tourists, a simple inclination of the head or an attempt at a bow at the waist will usually suffice.



**Public bathhouses are alive and well** in Japan. Sento, or neighbourhood bathhouses, can be found from the largest area in Shinjuku to a small town on the island of Shikoku.

## TABLE MANNERS



Don't leave your chopsticks standing up in your bowl as this reminds locals of a funeral tradition

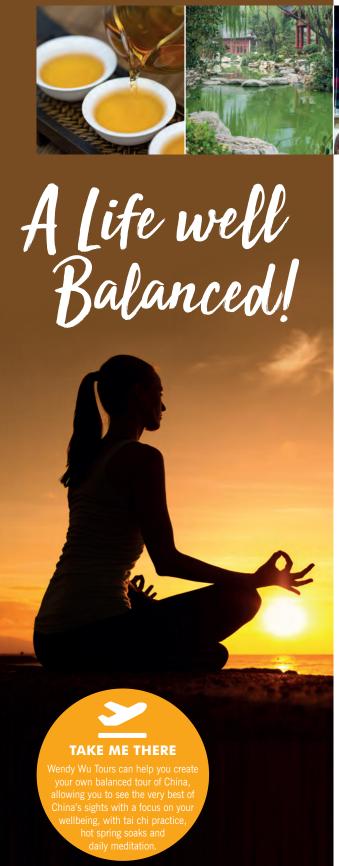
In Japanese culture, slurping your noodles is not only customary, it is good manners - a sign that you're enjoying your food.

Tipping is not customary in Japan. If you leave a cash tip on the table, the waiter may not understand why and chase you to return it.



TAKE ME THERE
Trails of Japan
13 days fr £5,490pp

Trek at the foot of Fuji and meet the Snow Monkeys of Yudanaka, plus you'll see all the classic highlights too.







According to Taoist philosophy born in China over 2,000 years ago, everything in the universe is a balance of yin and yang and the key to your health and wellbeing is 'qi'. Many of the ancient practices prescribed to help find this balance are still alive and well today. So, if you fancy trying a new way to enhance your wellbeing, here are some simple things to help find your equilibrium and keep it steady.

#### **EXERCISE**

Based around ancient Chinese moving meditation, practicing qigong balances tranquillity and movement with breathing exercises and repetitive, slow movements. This is believed to increase the flow of qi by unblocking the bodies meridians (energy pathways), and help you achieve greater strength, a balanced energy, and an inner tranquillity through meditating on your movements and breathing.

#### **MEDITATION**

Meditation is as essential a part of the holistic lifestyle as diet and exercise is, all three working in harmony to achieve the ultimate aim, the transformation of the mind, body and spirit. In fact, meditation prepares the mind and body for everything, making it strong and stable. Meditation can be still or moving (qigong) and allows the free flow of gi, relaxing the mind, awakening the senses and de-stressing. Meditation also increases mindfulness and your ability to understand and be aware of self and surroundings.

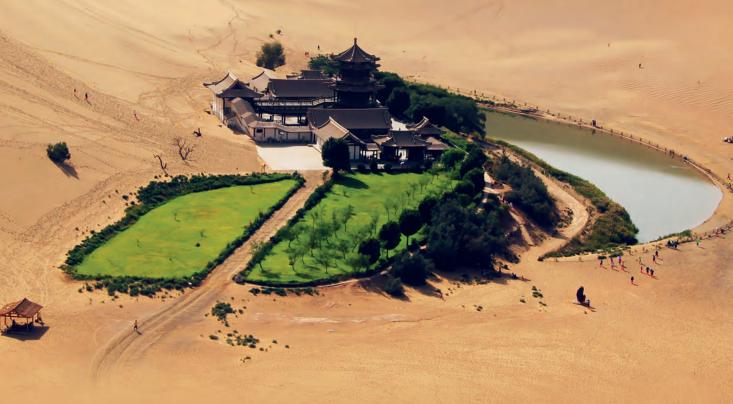
#### **FOOD**

Ancient Chinese beliefs hold that food is medicine, so what you eat is very important for balancing your qi. All foods have their own energy and characteristic properties that will balance, or imbalance the body through being yin (wet and moist) or yang (dry and crisp). Dining in China is a multi-dish affair for that exact purpose, to use different foods to balance out the yin and yang and to allow the gi to flow freely around the body and ensure the organs are working correctly.

#### **HOT SPRINGS**

Mineral rich waters have long been lauded around the world for their therapeutic benefits, and in China it is no exception. The waters have been enjoyed since the Tang Dynasty (618-907) – the imperial bathing pools at Huaqing Palace are thought to be China's oldest and can still be visited today. Whilst it's generally accepted that hot springs can relax the muscles and therefore the mind, in China it is believed that bathing also boosts circulation, reduces stress, promotes sleep, relieves pain and helps skin problems.





If you are looking to see a completely different side to China, then head to the otherworldly Gansu Province in the north-west of the country. You may have already ticked off some of China's iconic sights or are just looking for a new adventure, Gansu will provide you with an experience like no other. The province is packed full of cultural relics, breathtaking natural beauty, distinct cultures and forms part of one of the oldest trading routes.



Ben Briggs, our Head of Marketing, recently spent some time in Gansu and here he shares his thoughts.



#### **Lunar Landscapes**

When you first think of China, you don't necessary think of arid desert and camels. But that is exactly what I got when arriving in the city of Dunhuang,

located on the fringes of the Taklamakan Desert. Just half an hour outside the city, you'll find sand as far as the eye can see and the spectacular Crescent Lake. Just as the name implies, it appears like a crescent moon surrounded on one side by water. If you are feeling fit, you can climb the high sand dunes behind to capture the picture postcard view. It's not for the fainthearted but a lot of fun, especially coming down again.

Another feature of this area is a vast natural geopark featuring extraordinary landscapes formed by wind and water erosion over thousands of years. It felt like another world walking amongst the towers, columns and other interesting shaped rocks.

#### **Gourmet Gansu**

Probably the most famous dish of the region is Beef Noodles, which have been hand stretched. Watching the local chefs at work is mesmerising and put my own pasta making attempts to shame. The noodles are very much part of the culture. They also enjoy a lot of lamb and mutton dishes, look out for the extra spice though.

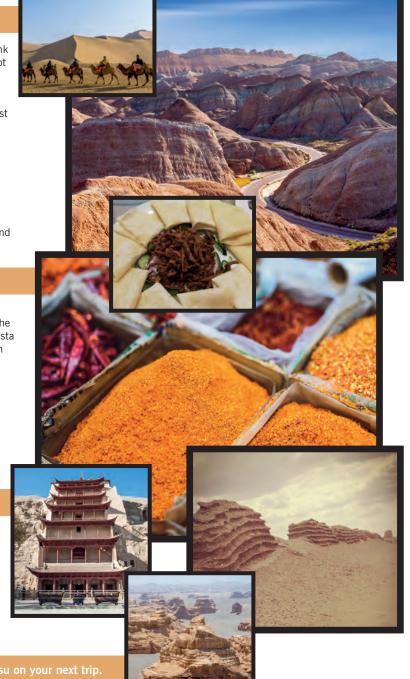
One thing I certainly didn't expect to experience was a visit to the largest wine cellar in Asia. Just outside of Jaiyuguan, we visited Zixuan winery. To give you an idea of the size, the cellar can store 21,000 oak barrels and 5,000 tons of wine! Although it probably needs a few years yet of maturing before it becomes a bestseller.

#### **Culture Vulture**

It was a privilege to stand alongside the first beacon tower at the western end of the Great Wall at Jaiyuguan. To know that these guard towers played such an important role in allowing the guards to pass vital information, during times of war, was fascinating to learn.

What's more, the province also contains the UNESCO listed Mogao Caves, featuring some of the best-preserved Buddhist art in the world.

To experience another side of China, include Gansu on your next trip



#### Top 5 Gansu Experiences



Ride a camel in the Taklamakan Desert



Visit the largest wine cellar in Asia



Explore the western end of the Great Wall at Jaiyu Pass



Walk amongst the moonlike landforms of Dunhuang Yardang Geopark



Marvel at the beautiful Crescent Lake, Dunhuang



Follow in the footsteps of intrepid adventurers by journeying along one of the world's most famous trading routes on this incredible tour

# -W-SURGERY-W-



Question from Arthur Hopper, via email

My wife and I are looking to go to Japan, however we are looking for a tour that offers some incredible experiences. What activities on tour will allow us to get involved with the local culture?

Answered by Jeevan Matharu, Marketing Assistant

Every experience in Japan will be a unique one and this is a great time to consider booking Japan. Some great experiences include a visit to the beautiful Shibazakwa Festival situated at the base of Mount Fuji. The flower festival is the perfect picture spot, where you can gaze in awe at the 800,000 flowers. You can also visit a Miso House and Wasabi Farm, as well as learn Calligraphy. These are just a few of the captivating and unique experiences we offer, not forgetting the Tea Ceremonies and Taiko Drum lessons too!

For more information about our Japan tours, head over to our website where you can view the tours or order a brochure.

Question from Linda Sharp, via our website

We have now been on 4 Wendy Wu tours and are looking to go to somewhere new, what can you recommend for our next tour?

Answered by Linh Farid, Senior Product & Commercial Manager

As one of our brand-new destinations, Indonesia should be at the top of your list. This incredible country is home to many famous sights, including the Komodo National Park, Pink Beach, and the Borobudur Temple, a UNESCO Heritage Site. You'll also get up close to the famous Komodo dragon if you're lucky! It certainly is a unique destination.

Visit our website to download the full Incredible Indonesia tour details.



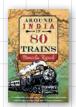
#### The Wendy Wu Book Club

Reading a good book is the perfect way to get you excited about your upcoming holiday, or to inspire you to travel somewhere new. Let us recommend a few of the books we love! Got some recommendations of your own? Let us know on our Facebook page. This issue, it's India:



#### THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS ARUNDHATI ROY

The 1997 Booker Prize winner, The God of Small Things revolves around Rahel and Estha, twins growing up in the midst of political turmoil in Kerala.



#### AROUND INDIA IN 80 TRAINS

MENISHA RAJESH

Menisha Rajesh records the details of her travels on India's railways, travelling 40,000 kilometres on 80 trains, in a Jules Verne-esque adventure.



#### HOLY COW! A INDIAN ADVENTURE

SARAH MACDONALD

Having travelled around India, Sarah MacDonald vowed never to return, until her partner was posted to New Delhi! This book follows her time in India's capital as an expat.



#### THE ARGUMENTATIVE

INDIAN AMARTYA SEN

Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen examines India's history and the way that that history has shaped India's cultural identity in a series of fascinating essays.

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