



# Mekong Discovery Private tour

## Mekong Discovery Private Tour 15 Days Inclusive from the UK

Explore authentic Indochina and get off the beaten track on this fascinating trip up the Mekong River

### Inclusive price includes:

- International flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation
- Accommodation
- Meals as stated
- Touring with Guides and entrance fees
- Visa fees for UK passport holders



## Your Tour Dossier

This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the other pre-departure information provided by Wendy Wu Tours including the tour itinerary as described in our brochure and/or website. It aims to provide a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in sightseeing or travelling during the tour.

If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the length of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation; they will be explained here.

All passengers must read this document to ensure the itinerary is suitable for their interests and physical capabilities. This is not your final itinerary and therefore does not mention all the sites visited.

## Welcome to Wendy Wu Tours

Indochina continues to amaze, fascinate and thrill our passengers, many of whom have travelled to one country in Asia with us, then another, year after year. We urge you to keep in mind all the rewards, as well as challenges of travelling in a country with a history, culture and attitude so unlike your own.

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

Almost everything will be different to what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark with a sense of humour and adventure, who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding. It is essential that all passengers recognise the demands of factors such as basic facilities and cultural differences they may encounter in some areas.

### Mekong Discovery Private Tour – Comfortable Paced Tour

Our private tours are accessible to everyone. This tour will involve sightseeing on foot, some climbing of stairs and getting on and off boats throughout the tour. Please note that the cruise ship and all shore excursions arranged by the Pandaw Cruise are on a shared basis.

This tour is not strenuous, and can be taken at the pace, and according to the abilities of passengers travelling in your party. If any member of your party has mobility difficulties, please advise Wendy Wu Tours, so that our operators can be made aware, and may rearrange the itinerary to suit your needs. If at any point during the tour you feel you are being rushed, or not moving fast enough, please let your Local Guide know, so that they may adjust the touring accordingly and provide you with the best experience possible. Similarly, as you are travelling on a private basis, if you would like to change the touring, dates, timings, please speak to your reservations consultant, prior to travelling, or speak to your Local Guide whilst on tour.

NB: Please note that times and distances listed in the tour dossier are approximate.

#### Days 1-2: UK/Saigon

Fly overnight from the UK. On day 2, you will be met at Saigon Airport in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours. Transfer to your hotel and check-in.

#### Day 3: Explore Saigon

Sightseeing in downtown Saigon involves approx. 4 hours on foot over the whole day. There are graphic pictures in the War Remnants Museum that some people might find upsetting. Easy sightseeing and shopping time at Ben Thanh Market; watch your valuables in this area.

*Breakfast*

#### Day 4: My Tho

**The below cruise schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the cruise company. See *itinerary changes* section below**

Transfer to the Purple Jade Bar in the Intercontinental Asiana Saigon, the pick-up point for your Mekong river cruise. Later, be transferred (approx. 2 hours) to your ship and start cruising into the Mekong Delta.

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### Day 5: Cai Be & Sa Dec

Sightseeing around Cai Be will be done by Sampan boat and last approx. 2.5 hours. There will be a chance to visit a colourful floating market and visit a candy and rice paper factory. In the afternoon, take an exciting Sampan boat excursion to Sa Dec via Vinh Long, along canals and backwaters and see the local market, a brick factory and the ancient house of Mr Huyn Thuy Le, the 'lover' of Marguerite Duras, a famous French novelist. Your afternoon Sampan boat ride will last approx. 3 hours.

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### Day 6: Chau Doc

Travel by speedboat for approx. 3 hours today. Visit a Cham tribal village, a cat fish farm, and enjoy a trishaw ride round Chau Doc. There will be 1 hour of walking. Return to the ship by boat for lunch and cast off for the Cambodian border for the usual formalities.

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### Day 7: Phnom Penh

Passengers will visit Phnom Penh and will be provided with their own private cyclo. The Cyclo Centre Phnom Penh which provides the cyclos is a charity that provides basic welfare

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and medical services to cyclo drivers ([www.cyclo.org.uk](http://www.cyclo.org.uk)). Your cyclo ride will last 3 hours.

In the afternoon, choose to take an optional excursion (by coach) to the Killing Fields and the Tuol Sleng Museum to learn about life under the Khmer Rouge or explore the city independently. Touring this afternoon will be approx. 4 hours.

***The afternoon tour is included in the cost of the cruise but must be requested at the time of booking.***

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### **Day 8: Kampong Chhnang**

Today learn about traditional manual skills of pottery, enjoy the country side and some more village life. In the afternoon take motorboat excursions out into the wet lands for approx. 2 hours.

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### **Day 9: Kampong Cham**

Today's excursions include Chong Koh silk weaving village and Peam Chi Kang village. Touring today will include 2.5 hours on foot in total.

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### **Day 10: Wat Hanchey**

Visit the hilltop temple of Wat Hanchey (2 hours) and travel by bus for approx. 3 hours to the Twin Holy Mountains of Phnom Pros and Phnom Srey.

*Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

#### **Day 11: Siem Reap**

Morning disembarkation from the the cruise vessel and transfer to Siem Reap.

**During the low water season (approx. Dec-Apr) you will transfer from Kampong Cham to Siem Reap (approx. five hours).**

*Breakfast*

#### **Day 12: Angkor Wat**

Travel to the fortified city of Angkor Thom. Start at the Southern Gate and continue to The Bayon, which is beautifully carved with numerous striking faces followed by a visit to the Elephant Terrace, and the Terrace of the Leper King. Then you will commence your touring of the magnificent Angkor Wat Temple.

It can get very hot and humid here so you must carry sun protection and drinking water with you. If you choose to climb at any site, you must be able to climb and descend independently – most of the ancient stairs are steep and without handrails. The most walking is involved at Ta Keo.

*N.B: The Central Tower of the Angkor Wat complex has a limited number of visitors allowed at any given time, under new regulations from UNESCO. If you wish to visit this tower you will be required to wait in the queue alongside all other visitors.*

*Breakfast, lunch*

#### **Day 13: Angkor**

Continue your explorations of the magnificent Angkor with visits to Preah Kahn, Neak Pean and Ta Prohm temples and the Sreah Srang Royal Pool.

*Breakfast, lunch*

#### **Days 14-15: Siem Reap/UK**

Transfer from your hotel to Siem Reap International Airport for your flight to the UK. Depending on your chosen airline, some flights will arrive the same day, whereas others will arrive the following day.

*Breakfast included on day 14 only*

#### **Land Only**

If you are travelling on a land only basis, then you will need to make your own way to the starting hotel in Saigon on Day 2. On Day 14, you will checkout from your Siem Reap hotel, and continue as per your own arrangements.

Please refer to the Wendy Wu Tours brochure and/or website for details on departure dates, prices, itineraries, inclusions and tour extensions available as well as full booking conditions.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Before You Leave

**Itinerary Changes** - The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any Pandaw expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Roads in Cambodia have generally been improved over recent years, but some road construction and/or weather conditions may still lengthen the driving times.

**Visas** - A visa is required for entry into Cambodia. We will complete the visa application process through the Cambodian Embassy.

A visa is not currently required for Vietnam if you are travelling before 20<sup>th</sup> June and hold a British, French, Spanish, Italian or German passport.

A standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. We will require your passport, completed visa application form, and 1 passport photo, taken within the last 6 months, to process your visa. We will require all this information 8 weeks prior to departure. As per our standard visa processing service, we will have your passport for at least 4 weeks. In rare cases you may be required to provide further information or documentation and/or be required to attend an interview at the embassy in London. If this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

**Vaccinations and Your Health** - We recommend that you contact either your local GP or a travel doctor for advice on vaccinations and travel health. [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) is a comprehensive website that you may also find useful.

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

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

**Suggested Packing List** - A complete list will be provided with deposit documentation.

**Luggage** - All clients are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### What to Expect on Tour

**Development** - Although Indochina is developing, it still lacks international standards of civil infrastructure and therefore tourist facilities. For example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade; concepts of personal responsibility are different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK. However, all of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow advice from your Local Guide.

**Traffic in Indochina** - Roads in Vietnam and Cambodia have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

**Seatbelts** - Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Indochina and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath

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protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort or Local Guide.

**Tipping** - As with most countries, tipping is a way of life in Indochina. Crew gratuities are included. Tips to tour guides and drivers are at your own discretion. For private tours we recommend an amount of US \$5-10 per person per day for tipping to be distributed amongst drivers, restaurants, guides etc.

**Exchanging Cash** - US dollars are the preferred currency to be used in Indochina. It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling outside major cities in Indochina. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Indochina, provided notes are new and undamaged. US Dollars should be from the new series from the year 2003 onwards. We suggest for your convenience that you ensure your US Dollars are from the new series and are in good condition to avoid any difficulties exchanging money during your trip. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

**Personal Expenses**- You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of £150 per week should be sufficient; however for those that can't resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

### **After Your Booking**

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form and help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approx. 2 weeks prior to departure, and will include a travel wallet, badge, lanyard, suggested packing list and a phrase book, along with your final itinerary and international etickets.

Last updated: 22 October 2015