

February 2023

 Wendy Wu Tours

Celebrating

25
YEARS

WHISPERS

TRAVEL INSPIRATION FROM THE AWARD-WINNING TOUR SPECIALIST

FALL FOR JAPAN

Discover the colourful delights of Japan in Autumn

Going solo?

HALF PRICE Single Supplements in our Solo Traveller Sale

Enchanting Europe

Introducing impressive Scotland, Greece and Portugal



LET'S
CELEBRATE

25 years of Extraordinary Touring

SAVE \$600 PER COUPLE ON ALL TOURS OR
HALF PRICE SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS ON SELECTED DATES

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A Message from Wendy

Welcome to our Summer edition of Whispers, and the very first for this year, filled with inspiring travel articles, tour ideas and the latest news from Wendy Wu Tours.

Many of our customers are telling us on the return from their holidays that the travel experience in the newly opened destinations is truly extraordinary, quieter than they have been for decades. Why not experience it for yourself with one of the late getaways on page 6?

We are thrilled to release brand new tours including magical Greece, Portugal and Scotland. Read more about these new tours inside this issue.

2023 marks our 25 year anniversary at Wendy Wu Tours and what a roller coaster ride it's been. Read all about how it began on page 4. We can't wait to share more of our celebrations with you throughout the year.

Of course, we started out in China but in those 25 years we have sought out unforgettable experiences in almost every corner of the world. I hope you enjoy reading about many of those inspiring destinations in this special issue and we look forward to taking care of your travels very soon.

Wendy Wu

SAVE \$600
PER COUPLE ON ALL 2023/2024 GROUP TOURS

OR SAVE 50%
OFF THE SINGLE SUPPLEMENT ON SELECTED DATES

On sale to 28 Feb

Terms and conditions for tours featured in this issue: All tours featured are based on twin share and subject to availability. Information and pricing available correct at time of publication and subject to change. Current offers: Save \$600 per couple on all 2023/24 tours or 50% off the single supplement on selected dates valid to 28 Feb 2023, unless sold out prior. Introductory save \$500pp on selected Turkey and Europe departures valid to 13 Mar 2023, unless sold out prior. New bookings. Savings included in advertised prices. Offers are not combinable or valid in conjunction with any other offer. Savings included in advertised prices. View full terms and conditions at wendywutours.com.au



What's New in the Wu Kingdom

Keep up to date with our latest news, hear fascinating stories from our travelling customers, find inspiration with captivating travel articles and have fun with our well-travelled and passionate staff.



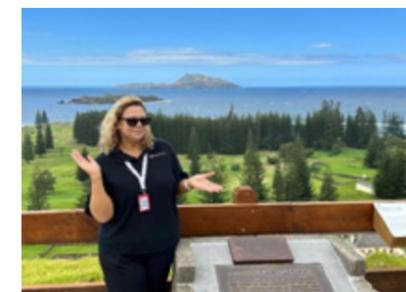
Brochures out now

We're thrilled to release not one, but three of our popular brochures in print format. Our exciting collection of Japan, Southeast Asia and India tours are now available in printed format. Contact us to order your copy, or request a copy online. You can also download or view our entire brochure range online. Stay tuned for more releases soon!



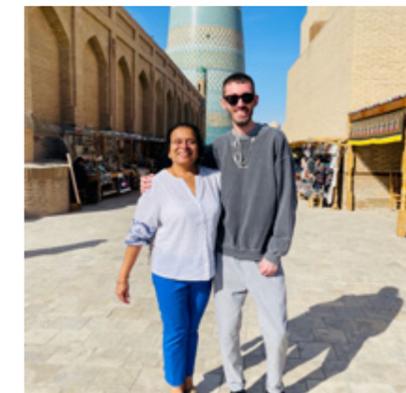
First into Japan

After nearly three years without any international tourists, Japan finally opened its borders last summer. Wendy Wu Tours were the first group into Japan and what a treat it was. Lucky WWT customers got to experience a rejuvenated Japan where the sites were looking pristine and were quieter than they have been for over 20 years. The time to travel really is now.



Delightful Norfolk

Our Business Development Manager, Angelina explored wonderful Norfolk Island. Angelina, along with our amazing group members loved exploring the island and sampling the delicious produce. This particular departure celebrated Thanksgiving complete with an incredible feast!



Hello Uzbekistan!

Our Assistant Operations Manager in the UK, Matt Cobley returned from the inaugural departure of our new Ultimate Uzbekistan tour. Matt was of course wowed by Uzbekistan's ancient cities, beautiful mosques and mausoleums along the Silk Road but he was equally impressed by the incredible scenery: rushing rivers, tranquil lakes and towering mountains.



Sensational South Korea

The first ever departure of our Scenic South Korea tour was an incredible success. South Korea is a land of ancient ruins, romantic legends, natural wonders, extraordinary landscapes and packed modern cities and our group got to experience them all. Why not join us to discover this unexplored slice of East Asia in 2023?



Can we tempt you to Turkey?

Brand new for 2023 – our Treasures of Turkey tour has only been on sale a few weeks and is close to selling out on some departures already. See page 8 for more details of how to experience this treasure trove of fascinating history and archaeological wonders.

Join us in the Wu Kingdom

The Wu Kingdom is our online portal where you can keep up to date with our latest news, hear fascinating stories from our travelling customers, find inspiration with captivating travel articles and have fun with our well-travelled and passionate staff.

To find us just search – Wendy Wu Kingdom

25 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



Pioneering Beginnings

In 1994, a passionate travel agent named Wendy Wu designed and led her very first tour to China.

At that time China seemed out of reach to most travellers. Only a lucky few had wandered around the beautiful Forbidden City in Beijing or stared open-mouthed in wonder when confronted with the Terracotta Warriors in Xian.

One of the pioneers of group travel to China, Wendy was so passionate about her home country, she wanted everyone to experience it for themselves and give them an insight into her own fascinating culture. Many of those customers that embarked on that first tour still travel with Wendy Wu Tours today, some having travelled with us eight times or more.



Passionate about Travel

Wendy personally led her first group of intrepid travellers to China and this local expertise and personal touch continues to this day. It is those unique insights and attention to detail that can turn a good holiday into a great one.

Following the phenomenal success of that departure, Wendy Wu Tours the company was founded in 1998 and today operates award-winning fully inclusive tours to over 40 countries, delivering extraordinary experiences from the snow-capped mountains of Chile to the sweeping dunes of the Silk Road.



1994 Wendy Wu, a travel agent, designs and leads her first tour to China.

1996 Wendy Wu expands her range of touring into Vietnam, and establishes a local office in China.

1998 Wendy Wu Tours Pty Ltd is established.

2000 Hosts first escorted tour from the western world of Tibet – Tibetan Dreams. The first tour to follow this route.

2001 Pioneers tours into Sichuan's remote Nine Villages Valley and the glorious Zhangjiajie National Park.

2004 Launches tours to India.

2009 Launches famous 'Solar Eclipse' tour of China.

2012 Launches tours to Japan.

2015 Introduces 'Exclusive Collection' deluxe touring range and immersive adventure tours range. Launches tours to South America.

2017 Wins National Industry Travel Awards for Best Speciality Wholesaler

2018 Introduces dedicated Solos only departures.

2019 Launches tours to Central Asia and brand-new deluxe river cruise vessel, Victoria Mekong.

2020 Launches tours to the Middle East.

2021 Launches tours to New Zealand and Norfolk Island

2022 Japan and Vietnam touring recommences with our first customers welcomed back.

WERE YOU ON ONE OF OUR FIRST EVER TOURS?
 We'd love to hear from you!
 Email us at info@wendywutours.com.au



CELEBRATE WITH US

Throughout 2023 we'll be celebrating our Silver Anniversary with a series of extraordinary events around the country. Sign up to our newsletter to be the first to hear.

LATE GETAWAYS

Save up to **\$1,000pp** on selected departures

If you just can't wait to get exploring again – take a look at these fabulous adventures departing in the next few months and save yourself up to **\$1,000 per person!** For your convenience, these tours are based on land only so you can utilise your frequent flyer points and choose your preferred airline. You'll also enjoy the added benefit of visa's included for Australian passports.



Saving \$600pp

Vietnam Panorama

Date: 13 Mar 2023
17 days land only, from \$3,890pp

This tour not only showcases Vietnam's highlights but fully absorbs you in the rich history and culture too. Spend more time interacting with locals and visiting lesser-known places alongside the favourites.



Saving \$1,000pp

Experience Japan

Date: 21 Mar 2023, 4 Apr 2023
10 days land only from \$6,590pp

This tour not only visits the famous sights of Japan including Osaka, Nara, Kyoto, Mount Fuji and Tokyo, but is brimful of experiences allowing you to immerse yourself in the local culture from traditional tea ceremonies to origami.



Saving \$1,000pp

Japan Uncovered

Dates: Daily between 19-22 Mar 2023, 25 Mar 2023, 27-29 Mar 2023, 1 Apr 2023, 2 Apr 2023
16 days land only from \$10,590pp

Witness Japan awash with the colours of Spring as you explore harmonious gardens, tranquil temples and magnificent Mount Fuji during the stunning cherry blossom season on our most popular tour of Japan.



Saving \$1,000pp

Japan by Rail

Date: 24 Mar 2023, 28 Mar 2023
20 days land only from \$12,490pp

Travelling mainly by bullet train, take in the highlights of all three main islands: Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido. Experience ancient traditions and modern Japan's unique charm on this all-encompassing journey.



Saving \$600pp

Angkor to the Bay

Date: 2 Apr 2023, 23 Apr 2023
16 days land only from \$5,390pp

One of our most popular tours – take a voyage of discovery from the breathtaking majesty of the temples of Angkor, through to the spectacular grandeur of Halong Bay, experiencing all manners of delight en route.



Saving \$1,000pp

Jewels of Japan

Date: 13 April 2023
10 days land only from \$7,890pp

See the classic sights of Japan, visiting modern Tokyo, iconic Mount Fuji and historic Kyoto. A visit to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park and Museum and the holy island of Miyajima complete this fascinating tour.

25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CLASSIC MEKONG

Enjoy a VIP edition of one of our most popular tours of Cambodia & Vietnam.



Departs **10 October 2023** – Limited Spaces Available



Save \$600 per couple

18 days from \$8,280pp twin share

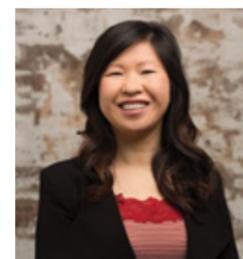
Including: International flights, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides, sightseeing, entrance fees & unique VIP experiences

Angkor Temples – Phnom Penh – Mekong Cruise – Saigon – Hoi An – Hanoi – Halong Bay

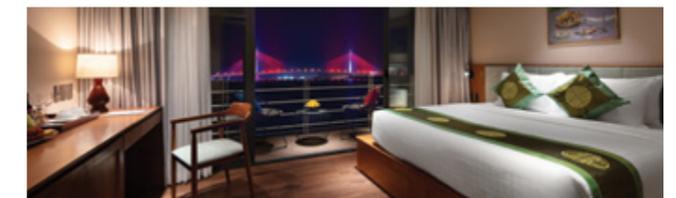
Sail into Vietnam to discover its many treasures, including vibrant Saigon, charming Hoi An and historic Hanoi. End your trip with an overnight cruise through Halong Bay.



For this special VIP departure, we have added a number of VIP inclusions that are completely exclusive to these tours. Along with the three-night cruise together with our founder Wendy, you'll also enjoy a special mindfulness session on the Mekong, a cocktail at Bitexco Tower's 49th-floor sky bar, dinner with a Vietnamese family in Saigon, a special 'Farmer & Fisherman' experience in Cam Thanh and a 25-minute scenic seaplane flight over Halong Bay.



Start amongst the magnificence of the temples of Angkor before joining **Wendy Wu** (our owner and founder) on a three-night river cruise down the Mekong, complete with shore excursions designed to give you an authentic glimpse of local life.



Valid on selected land only departures for bookings made up to 21 days before departure. New bookings only. Not combinable with any other offer other than loyalty discount. Savings included in advertised prices. View full terms and conditions online



Fall for Japan

Japan's location between mainland Asia and the Pacific brings with it distinctive seasonal changes. The most famous being springtime with its iconic cherry blossoms and their renowned soft pink hues.

However, as summer gives way to autumn, the transition brings with it a new and equally impressive palette of vivid reds, golds and oranges. Beginning in Hokkaido in late September, the cooling weather and shorter days prompt the turning of the leaves across Japan's deciduous trees. By mid-November, the vivid display reaches Kyoto and Tokyo before continuing south into early December.

This vibrant spectacle is also more predictable, and less fleeting, than cherry blossom season. The display lasts around two months and can be seen across the entire country.

Momijigari

In Japan, the arrival of autumn also means that it's time for momijigari, which translates as 'maple leaf hunting'. This tradition usually involves walking with family and friends through the forests and fields, searching for the most striking autumn colours.

Although the word 'momiji' refers to maple leaves, there are many more tree species involved in this cataclysm of colour. Over 70% of Japan's forests are made up of deciduous trees, including Japanese maple trees, wax trees, rowan, burning bush, Japanese sumac and many more. There are also the aki no nanakusa, or the seven known flowers and grasses that herald the season's arrival. All of this cumulates in a spectacular display of warm and vibrant autumn colours spread over mountains, across forests and through tree-lined streets.

How to momijigari like a local

It's one thing to admire the beautiful autumn leaves in passing, and another to really immerse yourself in the spirit of momijigari. It goes without saying that getting out in nature is really the only way to really experience the vivid colours of the season. But what makes all the difference is the pace of your exploration.

During momijigari, you are encouraged to slow down and look closely. Take the time to observe the delicate tracery of lines on a mottled cherry blossom leaf or the contrast of the red maple leaves that have fallen on yellowing moss below.

Autumnal food

As the Japanese say goodbye to lighter summer meals, shokuyoku, or 'the season of hearty appetites' is welcomed in. With the fish having been fattened up over the summer, autumn seafood is now at its best. A sweet, fatty fish known as sanma, which translates as 'autumn knife fish', is now in season and ready to be enjoyed dipped in salt and smoked over a barbecue.

Many traditional fruits and vegetables are also harvested in autumn, including daikon. This is a long white vegetable that comes from the same family as the radish and can be found in salads or pickled as a condiment. Mushrooms, sweet potatoes and vivid orange persimmons are also popular ingredients at this time of year.

Arguably the most traditional autumnal food is kuri (fresh chestnuts). A Japanese favourite since prehistoric times, they're usually enjoyed roasted or pureed as a sweet filling. Kuri rice is a popular savoury dish during autumn.

Autumn festivals and events

The darker evenings and cool weather at this time of year make autumn an ideal time for traditional festivals and events. Regardless of where you're travelling, you're sure to encounter many festivals showcasing centuries of rich history and traditions.

Tsukimi

The Japanese consider the harvest moon the most beautiful lunar appearance of the year. Traditionally the pastime of tsukimi was a way of expressing gratitude for a good harvest and encouraging successful yields in the following years. At this time people will congregate in parks, temples and riverbanks to admire the brightest moon of the year. Small white dumplings of rice flour, called tsukimi dango are served as offerings to the moon and eaten afterwards.

Japanese gardens

Traditional Japanese gardens, found all over Japan, are some of the best places to enjoy the colourful tones of autumn. The unique fusion of fall colours and Japanese garden zen can only be experienced at this time of year. Many gardens will host dedicated illumination events in the evenings.

Winter illuminations

As the days become shorter, dazzling illuminations can be seen popping up in towns and cities across Japan. They do get busier towards the Christmas and New Year season, with many of the less crowded events taking place in November. Bigger cities like Tokyo and Kyoto will have large, dedicated areas where they show extensive illumination displays.



Save \$600 per couple or 50% off the single supplement on selected dates



Japan Uncovered

18 days Fully Inclusive Tour
From \$12,590pp, twin share

Osaka – Nara – Kyoto – Hiroshima – Kanazawa – Snow Monkeys – Tokyo

Our most popular Japan tour includes all the classic sights and key cultural activities. Featuring modern cities, historical tours and beautiful landscapes, Japan Uncovered ensures you get the most out of your trip to this fascinating land.

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



Legends of the Silk Road

Covering over 4,000 miles and traversing more than 40 countries, the legends of the Silk Road have achieved an almost mythical status.



Silk Road history

The first significant link between east and west, the Silk Road isn't actually a single road, but a network of routes used by traders to transport goods, ideas and curious travellers from east to west and vice versa. The route was initially established when China's Han Dynasty officially opened trade with the west in 130 BC in response to demand for Chinese silk.

Travelling the Silk Road in its heyday was not for the faint-hearted. The road cut through some of the wildest places on earth, crossing the Gobi Desert and climbing over the Pamir Mountains. There were no governments to maintain the route, so the roads were often in poor condition, and robbers were common. To protect themselves, traders formed large caravans of camels, relaying goods along the Silk Road. Over time, large inns known as caravanserais cropped up to provide safe shelter for travelling merchants and their animals.

From the tales of Marco Polo's years spent travelling from west to east and Genghis Khan's attempts at conquering this coveted trading route, to the fatal transit of the Black Death along its roads, the Silk Road harbours a compelling collection of intriguing tales.

Some of the greatest minds in history exchanged ideas in the legendary trading posts and caravanserais that later became powerful modern-day cities, and the long-lasting influence that the Silk Road had on global politics can never be underestimated. Yet its decline in the 15th century happened relatively quickly as Europeans sought to trade with the New World and the Ottoman Empire extended its reach.

Explore the rise and fall of this ancient highway, meet some of its most famous travellers and discover the remarkable influence the route would exert over the world.



Marco Polo

Arguably the most famous European to have journeyed the full length of the Silk Road is the legendary explorer, Marco Polo. As a young merchant, Polo set out on his journey to China in 1271 and would stay on the Silk Road for a further 24 years. During this time, Kublai Khan, the would-be founder of China's Yuan dynasty developed an interest in Polo and his adventures. It's said that Kublai Khan eventually appointed Polo to one of the highest posts within his administration.

Upon returning to his hometown of Venice in 1295, Marco Polo was captured as a prisoner of war. During his imprisonment, he told stories of his travels to an inmate who helped Polo write the book for which he became famous, 'The Travels of Marco Polo'.



Buddhism, paper and gunpowder

Although it was named after the Chinese silk that inspired its foundation, the Silk Route was used to trade a huge variety of goods, in both directions. Fruits, vegetables, livestock, grain, leather, spices and precious stones were just a few of the profitable items that made the journey.

Some of the products that travelled along the Silk Road would alter the course of history. Paper was invented in China during the 3rd century BC, arriving in Europe via the Silk Road in 700 AD. This new import heralded the use of the written word as mass communication for the first time. This eventually led to Gutenberg's printing press and the first printed edition of the Bible. Gunpowder was another Chinese export that would change political history upon its arrival in Europe.

And it wasn't just commodities that passed along the Silk Road. Religions, cultures and ideas were passed between political centres via the worldly traders that travelled through. Buddhism travelled from the Kushan kingdom to India, Central Asia and China with the help of merchant caravans. Catholic missions travelled the route in the 13th century and Islam journeyed with Arab warriors in the 7th century. Cultural concepts including architecture, art, music, dance and theatre can all be traced along the Silk Road.



Where does the Silk Road run to and from?

At its peak, it ran from Xi'an in Eastern China to Constantinople (Istanbul) with different branches stretching out on alternative routes to the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia, across the Middle East and over sea routes to North Africa.

The trading posts and caravanserais along the route would eventually become wealthy and important cities. Samarkand and Bukhara in Uzbekistan, Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Italy's Venice and Constantinople in modern-day Turkey all began as popular gathering spots for traders. After travelling across inhospitable environments for weeks on end, these settlements provided a refuge where traders could rest, sell, buy and socialise. This opportunity for cultural exchange later attracted scholars, teachers, theologians and philosophers, giving birth to the development of modern civilisation.



The decline of the Silk Road

When Europeans sailed west in search of new trade routes in the 13th century, demand for Silk Road travel waned. And when the Ottoman Empire boycotted trade with China in 1453 resulting in the closure of large parts of the route, the glory days of the Silk Road were finally over.

Political turmoil in Uzbekistan, the Silk Road's commercial hub, was also a factor in its decline. Uzbekistan's commercial power fell in 1405 when the Timurid Empire ended. This resulted in a fractured, impassable region. The Russians restored peace in the 19th century during their rule over Central Asia, which ended after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, Uzbekistan has been enthusiastic about reclaiming its Silk Road heritage, with many of the ruined buildings from the era having been carefully restored. There has also been a cultural resurgence of Silk Road-era arts – ceramic, tile making and wood carving are once again popular activities.

Whilst Uzbekistan remains a focal point for modern Silk Road explorers, there are many points along the ancient route that are now UNESCO World Heritage sites with lots of opportunities to appreciate this remarkable stretch of history.

Save \$600 per couple or 50% off the single supplement on selected dates



Road to Samarkand

23 days Fully Inclusive Tour
From \$14,580pp, twin share

Bishkek – Cholpon Ata – Karakol – Naryn – Chong Kemin – Tashkent – Samarkand – Bukhara – Khiva – Tashkent

Journey through the heart of Central Asia crossing starkly beautiful deserts and magnificent mountain landscapes. Discover ancient cities full of intricate Islamic architecture, thriving bazaars and a mystical old-world atmosphere, all inextricably linked with the legends of the Silk Road.

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

Turkish Delight

You may be familiar with the beautiful resorts of Turkey's Turquoise Coast but with a rich history, vibrant culture and incredible cuisine, Turkey is so much more than just a beautiful beach.

Combining influences from the Middle East, the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Central Asia, here you'll find a captivating mix of the exotic and the familiar that makes for a perfect touring destination.



Ancient Wonders

Modern-day Turkey rests on the shoulders of some of the ancient world's most powerful empires with the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans all leaving their mark.

The roll call of ancient wonders is quite simply astounding. You can walk in the footsteps of Achilles in the ruins of Troy or those of legionaries at Ephesus, one of the best-preserved Roman cities in the world. Istanbul is a beguiling mix of glorious Byzantine and Ottoman architecture; lonely caravanserais guard the old Silk Road and the WWI memorials of the Gallipoli Peninsula are testament to more modern cataclysms that have rocked this nation.



Fantastical Landscapes

The diversity of Turkey's landscapes is quite extraordinary. From the olive groves that fringe its Mediterranean coast to Cappadocia's otherworldly 'fairy chimney' rock formations, the country's terrain takes on a different persona at every turn. Alpine landscapes offer breathtaking beauty and hold legendary secrets; Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey is said to be the landing place of Noah's Ark after the flood, and the country's 1,600 kilometres of coastline is host to sparkling seas, golden beaches and striking forest-clad cliffsides.



Culinary Delights

The incredible history may be what draws you to Turkey, but it may well be the food that leaves you with the fondest memories. Come for the battlefields and stay for the baklava you might say.

The broad sweep of the Ottoman empire has left its impression on the plates of Turkey, and you'll find culinary influences that stretch from Western Europe through the Balkans to the Middle East and even North Africa. Sample the classic meze and kebab dishes, accompanied by oil-grilled Aegean vegetables and washed down with a tulip-shaped glass of çay. And of course, you'll need to save some space for dessert, no Turkish meal is complete without a bite of sweet baklava.



COMING SOON!

ANZAC 2024 tours. Register your details [here](#) to receive information once released.

NEW FOR
2023

Treasures of Turkey

We are so excited to tell you about a brand new tour for 2023 – Treasures of Turkey

The place where East meets West, Turkey is a treasure trove of fascinating history and archaeological wonders. From Istanbul's iconic landmarks and Gallipoli's bloody battlegrounds to Cappadocia's other-worldly landscapes and much more, this all-encompassing tour uncovers the very best of Turkey.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Istanbul

Explore Istanbul's iconic landmarks including the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and Topkapi Palace

Ancient Ephesus

Uncover the well-preserved ruins of this UNESCO Site – one of the ancient world's most powerful cities.

Cappadocia

Marvel at the unusual rock formations of Pasabag Valley and the 100-metre-deep gorge of Ihlara Valley.

INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCES



Visit the Cape Helles Memorial

Pay your respects to the fallen soldiers at Gallipoli, the site of the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign. Afterwards, raise a glass at sunset overlooking the Dardanelles – the scene of so many conflicts including the great Trojan War

Cook with locals in Cappadocia

Embrace everyday life in Cappadocia as you enjoy a cooking demonstration and a delicious lunch with a local family. Get involved with the region's handmade pottery and enjoy tea in a traditional village home.

Whirling Dervish Ceremony

Discover the traditional town of Konya, learn about the Mevlana Dervish tradition and witness the dance of the 'whirling dervishes' at the historical Saruhan Caravanserai.

Save \$500pp on selected departures - Book by 13 March



Treasures of Turkey

18 days Fully Inclusive Touring from \$9,100pp

Istanbul – Gallipoli – Canakkale – Pergamon – Ephesus – Selcuk – Pamukkale – Antalya – Aspendos – Konya – Cappadocia – Ankara

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

Amidst the aftermath of the earthquake, our hearts are with the people of Turkey, and we remain committed to promoting tourism as a vital lifeline for the country's economic and social recovery.

We invite you to join us in showing support to the people of Turkey by making a donation at www.redcross.org.au/earthquakes

PANDORA RETURNS

With the long-awaited sequel to Avatar hitting our screens, we just couldn't resist showing you the inspiration behind those spectacular Hallelujah Mountains featured in the original blockbuster.

A scenic area of over 3,000 sandstone pillars, rising from misty folds of subtropical forest and cloaked in vibrant green vegetation, Zhangjiajie's striking beauty is unforgettable. Ravines and gorges, streams and waterfalls and a plethora of endangered plants and animal species complete this idyllic scene.

Our incredible 'Dreams of Nature' tour includes two full days in this spectacular region where you will take a cruise on Lake Baofeng surrounded by cascading waterfalls, explore the vast Huanglong Cave, home to rivers, pools and lakes, and walk amongst the stupendous peaks of Ten-Mile Natural Gallery.

Save \$600 per couple



Dreams Of Nature

23 days Fully Inclusive Tour
from \$8,380pp, twin share

Guilin – Yangshuo – Zhangjiajie
– Yangtze River Cruise – Wulong –
Chongqing – Chengdu – Emeishan

This scenic tour is ideal for those looking to explore lesser known parts of China and get closer to nature. Indulge your senses with China's most spectacular, mysterious and dramatic natural highlights

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

THE MAGICAL MIDDLE EAST

Our top 10 highlights

The Middle East conjures images of orange-hued deserts lit by a hazy sunrise and ancient cities stowing long-lost treasures; that's exactly what it delivers. If you're into history, then the Middle East will feel a lot like Aladdin's cave, no other region in the world has as much to offer when it comes to archaeological discoveries, historical gems and religious locales. With so many to choose from, we've shortlisted our top 10 highlights to get you excited to explore this sensational region, all of which you can experience on our 27-day Egypt, Jordan & Israel Explored tour.

1. Petra, Jordan

Long hidden among the wind-hewn cliffs and gorges of the desert, Petra is one of the world's most treasured UNESCO World Heritage sites. A wealthy Nabataean city in the 3rd century CE, it was lost to the world for 500 years and it's those years of abandonment that have lent it the air of mystery which makes it so alluring. Tucked away in a sandstone escarpment, the facades of this great ancient city still bear the echoes of their once ornate carvings and seeing it lit by candlelight as you explore by night is unforgettable.

2. Karnak Temple, Egypt

Constructed over a 2,000 year span and built to mark the birthplace of Amun-Ra, the greatest of all Egyptian gods, Karnak Temple is the second-largest ancient religious site in the world after Cambodia's Angkor complex. The complex was expanded by each ruling Pharaoh all aiming to outdo the last, and here you can see centuries of evolving architectural styles - it is often referred to as 'the great historical document in stone'. What was once a place of pilgrimage, exploring this monumental temple certainly makes you feel like you are in the presence of gods, and no more so than the Great Hypostyle Hall with its 134 richly decorated, towering columns.

3. Holy City of Jerusalem

Considered by many to be the world's most holy city, Jerusalem has been an object of desire for Christian, Muslim and Jewish people for centuries. Its sacred old town in the east is alive with atmosphere and here pilgrims flood into the walled city to pray at the ancient Western Wall. In the centre of the Temple Mount area, the magnificent gold-topped Dome of the Rock sits proudly with its gorgeous Islamic tile work for all to see.

4. Wadi Rum, Jordan

Around 80% of Jordan is desert and Wadi Rum offers a particularly picturesque and accessible section to explore. Also known as the 'Valley of the Moon', the region has hosted humanity from the very beginning - there is ancient rock art and graffiti to discover among the geological formations - and is still home to nomadic Bedouins today. The plentiful siqs, arches and towering dunes change moods throughout the day, so it's good to spend enough time here to see them shift through hues of reds and purples; a luxury desert camp is the best way and an overnight stay means you will also get to revel in some stargazing.



5. Abu Simbel, Egypt

Nestled deep in southern Egypt in the Nubian Valley, sits the historic site of Abu Simbel which consists of two magnificent temples built by Rameses II - one for his favourite wife, Nefertari, and one for himself. Both temples are guarded by imposing statues of the king and queen, with seated colossi of Rameses reaching over 20 metres high, and although the temples were deconstructed and rebuilt in a new location in the 1960s to salvage them from rising waters caused by the Aswan Dam, their setting overlooking the expanse of Lake Nasser couldn't be more perfect.

6. Valley of the Kings, Egypt

One of the world's most famous archaeological sites, this ancient burial ground contains 63 tombs built for the New Kingdom pharaohs who reigned between 1550-1069 BC. Chosen in an attempt to conceal the deceased and their riches from looters, this unassuming valley hides a vast network of tunnels and chambers below ground, each decorated with exquisite carvings and paintings of the kings and queens on their journey to the afterlife. The most famous of the tombs is that of King Tutankhamen, and you'll get to venture inside and see the mummy of the Boy King himself on our Egypt tours.

7. The Dead Sea, Jordan & Israel

A spa destination for millennia, the Dead Sea (which is actually a lake) has long been famous for the therapeutic properties of its water. Nestled in the Great Rift Valley, it is fed by the River Jordan whose waters then evaporate at a rate of millions of litres per day leaving behind concentrated levels of salt and minerals. Wallowing in its waters and slathering yourself in its rich muds will exfoliate and heal and, apparently, leave you restored and beautified. Whether that's true or not, floating in the super saline water is extremely relaxing.

8. Sakkara, Egypt

Just one hour outside of Cairo lies the ancient necropolis of Sakkara, known for its painted catacombs and home to the famous Step Pyramid of Djoser - Egypt's first ever pyramid. Built in the 27th century BC for Pharaoh Djoser, you can venture inside to view the wonderful carvings on the alabaster stone walls and peer deep into the 90-foot shaft leading to Djoser's burial chamber below. In fact, the entire site is a treasure trove of archaeological wonders, even the complex's outer walls (which look surprisingly modern) are over 4,500 years old, and you'll find thousands of coin-like fossils scattered all over the grounds.

9. Masada Fortress, Israel

In southern Israel's Judean Desert lies the impregnable mountain, Masada. Sitting 434 metres above sea level, on the isolated rock plateau that is Masada's summit, you will find the archaeological remains of an ancient fortification - one of Israel's most important UNESCO Sites. Built by King Herod the Great c. 37 BC, Masada Fortress was a key site in the fateful and controversial last stand of the Jews against Rome. On our tours you'll ascend the summit by cable car, explore the historic ruins and hear the story of the siege of Masada, all accompanied by fabulous views of the Dead Sea.

10. Jerash, Jordan

Jerash was a Roman city, and another of Jordan's jewels to be lost to the sands of time - quite literally in this case, as the ruins were hidden for centuries by the shifting dunes of the desert. Here, you can walk in the footsteps of Hadrian and Trajan wandering the colonnaded avenues of what is considered perhaps the best-preserved Roman city in the Middle East. Explore the enormous Forum and Hippodrome, which still hosts chariot races, and admire ceremonial gates, temples, elaborate mosaics and carvings.

Save \$600 per couple



Egypt, Jordan & Israel Explored

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Cairo - Alexandria - Luxor - Nile Cruise - Aswan - Cairo - Amman - Jerash - Petra - Wadi Rum Desert Camp - The Dead Sea - Tel Aviv - Nazareth - Bethlehem - Jerusalem

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

My Sri Lanka Highlights



Wendy Wu Tours VIP Wendy Harris was one of the first international travellers to enter Sri Lanka following the COVID-19 travel restrictions. She set off on an epic adventure where she delved into the history, soaked up the culture and ticked off one of her bucket list experiences – seeing elephants in the wild.

On the 4th of March, we set off on our long-awaited adventure to the beautiful island of Sri Lanka.

We spent the first night close to the resort city of Negombo, in a beautiful seaside setting - a wonderful welcome to a magical tropical island after so long stuck at home unable to travel.

Cultural triangle

The next morning, we headed inland to our next stop, Dambulla. At the heart of Sri Lanka's 'Cultural Triangle', this is an area full of historic and cultural sights, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage-listed.

We ventured to Sigiriya, also called Lion Rock, which rises 180 metres out of the plain. At the very top of the rock are the remains of a 5th-century palace, but to reach it, you must climb...oh my! I am delighted to say that with our guide Latif's help, I was able to conquer my fears and make it to the top – a sweaty, shaking mess...but I did it. I was rewarded with glorious views and a feeling of real achievement, so it was really worth the effort.

We then returned to the hotel for a well-deserved swim and a drink (or two). Located in the jungle it was in such a glorious setting, the staff were so kind and helpful, the food was excellent, and the rooms were lovely. Being so close to the jungle, we even had some local wildlife popping in to see us!

After a fascinating visit to the temples and gardens of the old city of Polonnaruwa, particularly interesting to me as a Buddhist, the afternoon excursion was a real thrill and the absolute highlight of my tour – a jeep safari to see elephants in the wild. We saw so many of these gorgeous creatures, some even came right up to the jeeps, which was so exciting, and a dream come true for me. Something to tick off my bucket list!

Kandy

Departing our hotel, we stopped at

Dambulla Rock Temple to visit the ancient caves. As well as being a wonderful sight, it was nice to get away from the sun and enjoy the cool of the caves. With that we began our drive to Kandy, with a stop at a spice garden for a welcome neck and shoulder massage, which was a real treat, followed by a wonderful cooking demonstration. They even gave me a really effective herbal ointment for my ant bites!

On our first day in Kandy, Sri Lanka's cultural capital, we enjoyed a leisurely stroll around the Botanical Gardens followed by a thirst-quenching, locally brewed ginger beer before lunch. Our evening visit to the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's most sacred temple, was crowded with devotees and the atmosphere was electric. Although it was very busy, our trusty guide escorted us through the scrum safely.

Our hotel in Kandy was once again superb. We were able to eat outside both nights and even had an impromptu Beatles sing-along with some strolling minstrels – much to the bemusement of the other diners. We also enjoyed a cultural dance show on the second evening here which was loud, colourful and a brilliant showcase for Sri Lankan heritage...the fire walking at the end was a tad scary though!

While in Kandy I was able to make a trip to a textile shop to purchase a sari, and the lovely ladies in the hotel reception helped me put it on for our evening meal. I had tried doing it myself using a YouTube video as a guide but had gotten into a real mess. They very kindly unwound me and sorted me out. It's a shame I couldn't bring those ladies home with me for when I want to wear it again!

Train to Nuwara Eliya

On the train to Nuwara Eliya we shared a train carriage with a lovely local family who had brought an amazing lunch onboard. They kindly shared the bananas they had brought from their estate and some



coconut ice (a Sri Lankan delicacy) with us. It was the perfect complement to the spectacular views over the tea plantations as we climbed into the highlands.



Yala National Park

Our journey back down to the coast to Yala was a long one but a stop at the Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home, a conservation and rehabilitation centre for orphaned juvenile elephants, more than made up for it. We then embarked on some amazing and exciting jeep safaris in Yala National Park. Although we didn't spot any leopards, we did get to see a sloth bear, which is quite rare. The hotel was top class, and we had the extra excitement of having to be escorted to and from our rooms, as wildlife has been known to wander into the hotel grounds.

Galle

Galle is a lovely seaside city with an old 17th-century Dutch Fort at its heart. The fort, the lighthouse and a church are all UNESCO World Heritage sites, and the streets of the fort are full of lovely small shops and cafes – it was charming to explore.

Colombo

The final leg of our trip was from Galle to Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital. On arrival we had a lovely lunch with a Wendy Wu Tour representative, who gifted us each with some Sri Lankan tea. What a treat, and a lovely surprise.

After exploring the city, we were looking for places to buy our last-minute gifts on our final night. As it was a public holiday in Sri

Lanka, most of the markets and shops were closed, but Latif came to the rescue and found us a couple of places to do some shopping. We then celebrated our trip with a room party at the hotel, it was a bit like being 16 again!

At our final dinner, our superb guide gave us all a gift, which was very kind and thoughtful of him. He was such a lovely man and a real asset to our experience.

If I could change anything, it would be to take a day off in the middle of each week, as Wendy Wu Tours are so packed with sites and experiences, it would have been a wonderful chance to catch our breath. Apart from that, the tour was, as usual, amazing and we loved every minute of it. We can't wait to travel with Wendy Wu Tours again very soon.

Lastly, I feel I must add, the people of Sri Lanka were so welcoming and grateful for us being there. We felt completely safe and welcome wherever we went.

Sri Lanka is such a beautiful island full of kind, lovely people.

Thank you, Wendy, for your wonderful account and fabulous pictures.

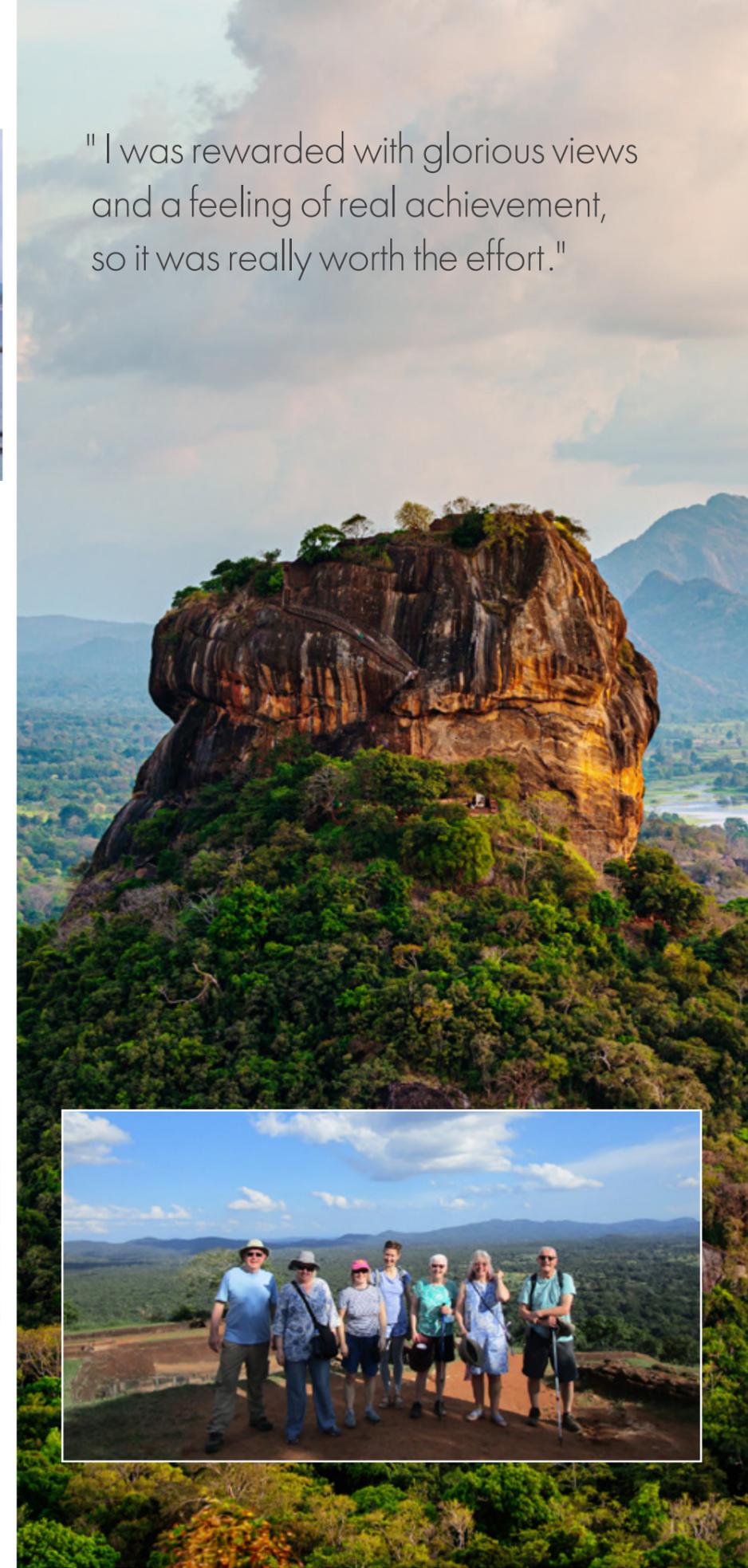
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Highlights of Sri Lanka

14 days Fully Inclusive Tour from \$6,880pp, twin share

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



"I was rewarded with glorious views and a feeling of real achievement, so it was really worth the effort."

MAGICAL NORFOLK ISLAND

During the last several months, we've had more opportunity than ever to really rediscover our own backyard. We're sure you'll agree that we are absolutely spoilt for choice when it comes to incredible landscapes and unique experiences. One place that offers both, plus so much more is Norfolk Island.

Norfolk Island

This hidden piece of paradise is only a two hour flight from the east coast of Australia and with direct flights from both Brisbane and Sydney, Norfolk Island is far enough to give the feeling of an international trip, yet close to home. With a stunning coastline that forms a magnificent backdrop to some of Australia's oldest historical landmarks and a paddock to plate food culture, this is one destination you don't want to miss out on; here are some of our 'must-see' sights:

Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area

The Kingston and Arthurs Vale historic area (KAVHA) is a must visit for history enthusiasts. Located on the southern side of Norfolk Island, this area represents a true snapshot of Australia's convict settlements, having been the locale of convict transportation and settlement to eastern Australia between 1788-1855. It also represents the only Australian location with evidence supporting Polynesian settlement and the place where the Pitcairn Island descendants of the Bounty mutineers were resettled in 1856. Today, it is a living heritage site and significantly contributes to the lives, identities and culture that makes up Norfolk.



Kingston Historic Area, Norfolk Island



Cascade Bay, Norfolk Island

Cascade Bay

Cascade Bay is a beautiful coastal enclave and like most areas of the island, it is filled with historical significance. It was once a popular whaling station resulting from American influences and today, it still serves as the main maritime pier, alongside its southern neighbour, Kingston. It is a hive of activity and filled with dramatic scenes when supply stocks come in via crane or as local fishermen return with their daily catch.

Come and see it for yourself, making sure to bring along a picnic and enjoy the action unfold as you marvel at the high seascapes, take in the salty air and lose yourself in the sparkling turquoise waters ahead.

Get a true taste of Norfolk

With some of the freshest seasonal produce available, the island is a foodie's delight! From self-catering options to gourmet cooking classes there are options to suit everyone's appetite. Collect your favourites to enjoy after a day of touring from the many honesty boxes around the island, relax at a local restaurant or savour the sweet delicacies at a high tea.



An interactive affair

Norfolk Island loves to indulge in a good dress up or re-enactment, with many options to choose from. Some of the more popular are the commandant's dinner where the performers take you on a journey back in time and share the generational stories of times past. Or perhaps try your hand at solving a real-life game of 'Cluedo' aptly titled "who killed the surveyor?" Or dressed in period clothing and with only a lantern to light your way, take off on an Island Ghost tour to learn about some of the Island's more notorious inhabitants.

Hear what our customers have to say

"We recently enjoyed a week on Norfolk Island with a Wendy Wu tour. What a thrilling experience! Each day was filled with excursions and education about the Island's history and culture. We can't single out a favourite excursion as they were all valuable in their own ways. Nothing was too difficult for the excellent tour operators. Our Wendy Wu tour guide handled all our questions with ease, so we always felt well looked after. The whole tour had been well planned to give us ample personal time in addition to the excursions. Overall, our week was a fun-filled, educational holiday. We are looking forward to another opportunity to take part in a Wendy Wu tour".

Ron & Lyn Heitmann, November departure



Emily Bay, Norfolk Island

Bounty Day*

Celebrated every year on the 8 June, Bounty Day is an Island public holiday that commemorates the arrival of the Pitcairn Islanders (bounty mutineer descendants) to the island. The day is full of colour and fun as the descendants, dressed in period costume, enact the landing of their ancestors. Everyone is then invited to follow the procession which ends in a delightful picnic. The highlight of the day is always the food! With table upon table of local fare to choose from.

**Specific departures only.*



Kingston, Norfolk Island

Experience Norfolk Island with Wendy Wu Tours

Our previous tours have sold out in record time and our upcoming June departure is no exception with only two seats available. We are busy working on new dates to be released soon. **Register your details here to be one of the first to receive details.**



VIETNAM NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL

Alongside its famous historical sites and architectural marvels, Vietnam is also home to a kaleidoscope of natural scenic wonders. But which ones are an absolute must-see? We've curated our top ten Vietnam scenic attractions to help you decide...

1 Halong Bay

A vast glistening cove with thousands of sculpted limestone karst towers and islets jutting out from the emerald water, Halong Bay's natural beauty is simply awe-inspiring. Halong Bay translated means 'descending dragon' - legend tells that the valleys and gorges here are the teeth of Mother Dragon and her children, summoned down by the revered Jade Emperor to protect the country from invaders.

The bay is a patchwork of floating villages and locals going about their daily lives. The best way to experience it is to drift through the striking emerald-green islands on a cruise, taking in the rows of junk boats and exploring caves, islands and floating villages as you go.



2 Mekong Delta

An endless lattice of waterways, the Mekong Delta is home to a beautiful patchwork of rice paddies, orchards, palm trees, sugarcane plantations and vegetable fields. Floating through the delta, you'll soon discover that the water is always bustling - with floating markets full of boats plying the water piled high with local produce, locals commuting to

and from their villages or water buffalo wallowing in the shallows.

Away from the buzz of the cities, the delta offers a natural and tranquil retreat and is a delightful place to explore. The best way to see the Mekong is to cruise the river itself. Hop aboard our very own Victoria Mekong, a purpose-built, eco-friendly vessel that uniquely visits some hidden corners of the delta.



3 Sapa

Sprinkled across the hills of the north, Sapa is a serene mountain town far away from Vietnam's everyday hustle and bustle. On the brink of a plunging valley, edged by tumbling rice terraces and watched over by the striking Mount Fansipan, the beauty of Sapa is genuinely awe-inspiring.

After spending time in Vietnam's fast-paced cities, Sapa is refreshing both in terms of its climate and the slower pace of life. Sapa is the place to meet the colourful hill tribe villagers and is also Vietnam's top spot for trekking; you'll see avid hikers resting up in Sapa before heading upwards to explore the cascading rice terraces and hillside villages!



4 Hai Van Pass

Stretching over 20 kilometres, the Hai Van Pass is one of Vietnam's most dramatic highways. Located on the outskirts of Danang and not far from Hoi An, the pass offers some of the best views from the heights of the Annamite Mountain range. The range extends over 1,100 kilometres through Laos, Vietnam and parts of Cambodia.

The road weaves its way through steep hills offering wonderful views of the lush tropical jungle, sparkling ocean and white sandy beaches. Once a physical division between kingdoms, the pass is now a dramatic and scenic carriageway and a 'must-see' on a Vietnam visit.



5 Mount Fansipan

The highest peak in Vietnam, Mount Fansipan, offers some of the most jaw-dropping views in Vietnam. With swirling clouds and forested slopes, it's a sunrise and sunset lover's dream. The mountain is 3,100 metres above Sapa, and you can journey to the top by cable car in under 15 minutes.

On your way up, admire the quaint villages, rice terraces and rocky cliffs below. Along the way, you will notice monasteries and pagodas dotted amongst the landscape, many of which pilgrims would have visited hundreds of years ago.



6 Phu Quoc Island

Lined with white sands and cloaked in gorgeous greenery, Phu Quoc is an idyllic beach escape off the coast of Vietnam. Once a sleepy backwater, the island is now a tourist hotspot, with resorts and busy harbours around every corner. The waters are teeming with biodiverse reefs and an abundance of sea life - all waiting to be explored by snorkelling or kayaking.

As you take in the soft ocean breeze and the brilliant turquoise waters, you'll soon understand why Phu Quoc has been nicknamed the 'Pearl Island'. Make sure you also savour some of the island's famous delicacies whilst here, including fish sauce and pepper.



7 Perfume River, Hue

The beautifully serene Perfume River divides the city of Hue in central Vietnam. Its distinctive name comes from the floral scent it exudes during the peak of autumn when the tropical orchids on the trees

upstream fall into the water. The river was once a hive of activity when boats were the only way to cross into the city's other half. With bridges now providing adequate transport across the river, spending time on the river today is a relaxing experience. Sunset is the best time to enjoy a traditional dragon boat ride - not only does the city come to life in neon technicolour, but this is prime time for wildlife on the water's edge, with water buffalo making a frequent appearance.



8 Da Lat

This former French hill station still has traces of its heritage with its French architecture and iconic patisseries. Coupled with the pine forests, this lends the town a unique Franco-Swiss charm unlike anywhere else in Vietnam. Da Lat's flower industry is booming thanks to the town's unusual climate. Popular exports include hydrangeas, golden everlasting flowers and three types of marigolds that blossom in winter.



9 Ancient floating markets

Floating markets are a natural evolution of river life. With most business conducted on the water, a gathering of trading boats fits well with life here. Cai Rang is one of the most fascinating floating markets in the world. Situated in the Mekong Delta, it was established in the early 1900s during the Nguyen dynasty. Unable to call out their wares due to the distance between the furthest boats, the sellers have found an alternative. Each vessel is fashioned with a bamboo mast from which a sample of the produce is hung. This allows buyers to see which boats they need to visit from a distance.

If you are keen to experience this ancient trading network first-hand, be prepared for an early start. The markets open well before sunrise, with some starting as early as 3am and finishing by mid-morning.



10 Ninh Binh

From Ninh Binh, you can travel down the Ngo Dong River and into the stunning landscape of Tam Coc.

The Tam Coc scenery combines rice fields, rivers and limestone cliffs, culminating in a jaw-dropping landscape. Tam Coc consists of three river caves (Hang Ca, Hang Hai, and Hang Ba) that boats float through on the way down the Ngo Dong River. The rhythmic paddling of the local women propelling their boats compliments the region's serenity as they glide between the lush paddy fields, overshadowed by striking karsts.

Save \$600 per couple



Vietnam Panorama

18 days Fully Inclusive Tour
from \$5,290pp twin share

Saigon - Mekong Delta - Dalat - Nha Trang - Qui Nhon - Hoi An - Hue - Hanoi - Halong Bay

This all-encompassing tour showcases Vietnam's 'must see' highlights, rich history and vibrant culture. On this tour, you'll interact with locals and visit off-the-beaten-path destinations alongside the main attractions.

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

Travelling Solo? Let's Go!

Whether you're a first-time solo traveller looking for an unforgettable adventure and you're not quite sure where to start, or even a seasoned solo explorer on the look out for exciting new experiences, you've come to the right place.

Incredible
Single Supplement
Savings on our most
popular tours for
2023 & 2024



Years of experience

At Wendy Wu Tours not only have we mastered the art of fully inclusive escorted touring, we've also been guiding solo travellers around the world for 25 years, especially to those far-flung destinations which may seem daunting to visit on your own.

Stress-free travel

Our group tours offer a totally stress-free way to travel so you can just sit back and enjoy each amazing sight, sound and experience as our guides showcase the wonders of their homeland. Plus, all your flights, accommodation, meals, daily tours, experiences and even visas are taken care of by us so it's easier than ever for solos to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure without the stress of organising it alone.

World-class guides

Whether you're a solo traveller or not, and no matter which Wendy Wu tour you decide to take, every journey is guided by one of our award-winning National Escorts. We will only ever choose the most enthusiastic, passionate, friendly and welcoming guides to lead our tours, so we know you are in the very best hands. Your National Escort will take care of you every step of the way, they simply couldn't do more for you, and it's their dedication and abilities to get a group to bond which will ensure you have the most unforgettable experience with us.

Supremely sociable

Aside from offering the most relaxed and carefree way to travel, our group tours are incredibly sociable, and you're more than likely to make friends for life. On every tour we include a whole host of immersive hands-on experiences, informal local dining and cultural encounters which you will all enjoy together as part of a group – they are the perfect icebreakers and fantastic ways to make memories with new friends.

DEDICATED SOLO DEPARTURES

Of course, solo travellers are more than welcome on all Wendy Wu group tours, however if you prefer to travel only with other solos we have selected departures on some of our most popular tours which are dedicated to solo travellers, so you can travel in a group of like-minded individuals just like you.

Enjoy the following fabulous benefits

- Smaller group size (max. 18)
- Room of your own throughout trip
- Free airport lounge access (selected Australian airports)
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Enjoy dedicated solo departures to: Japan, India, China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka

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Be inspired by the classic sights of India's Golden Triangle, discovering delightful Udaipur and searching for majestic Bengal tigers at Ranthambore. Add some of Rajasthan's hidden gems and you have the perfect first-time holiday to India.

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from \$6,355pp with half price single supplement

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Save \$640pp

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Savour 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.

14 days fully inclusive touring

from \$6,520pp with half price single supplement

Shanghai – Yangtze River Cruise – Chongqing – Chengdu – Xian – Beijing – Great Wall



Save \$440pp

Angkor to the Bay

One of our most popular tours – take a voyage of discovery from the breathtaking majesty of the temples of Angkor, through to the spectacular natural grandeur of Halong Bay, experiencing all manner of delights en route.

18 days fully inclusive touring

from \$7,420pp with half price single supplement

Angkor – Phnom Penh – Saigon – Hoi An – Hue – Hanoi – Halong Bay



Save \$440pp

Journey through Jordan

Explore Jordan on this mesmerizing north-to-south tour. Start in vibrant Amman before visiting As-Salt, and the famous fortress of Qal'at ar-Rabad. Discover the 'lost city', Petra and camp in the deserts of Wadi Rum before rounding off an unforgettable week with a night at the Dead Sea.

10 days fully inclusive touring

from \$8,840pp with half price single supplement

Amman – Jerash – Petra – Wadi Rum Desert Camp – The Dead Sea



Save \$310pp

Vietnam at a Glance

This tour is perfect if you have limited time, yet wish to experience Vietnam's top sights. Tick off the highlights with visits to vibrant Saigon, charming Hoi An, historical Hue, and spectacular Halong Bay.

12 days fully inclusive touring

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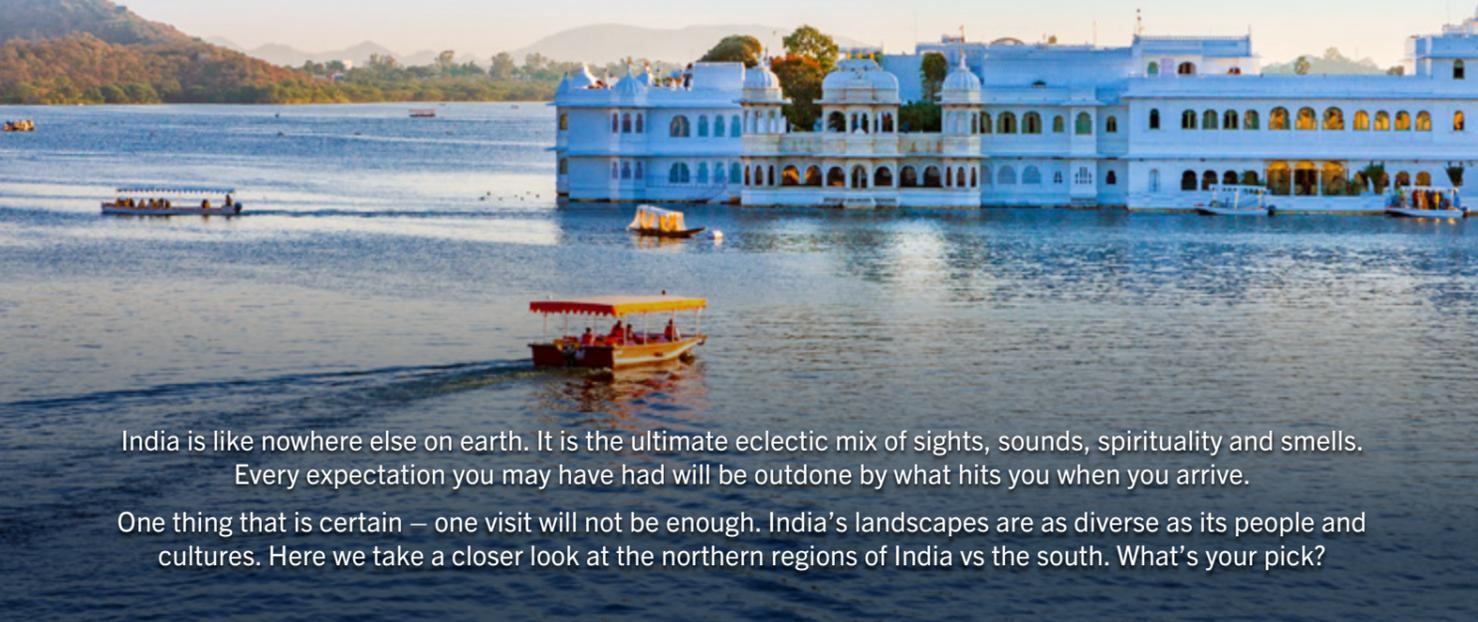
Saigon – Mekong Delta – Hoi An – Hue – Hanoi – Halong Bay

All tours include international flights, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides, entrance fees and visa.

Northern India

vs

Southern India



India is like nowhere else on earth. It is the ultimate eclectic mix of sights, sounds, spirituality and smells. Every expectation you may have had will be outdone by what hits you when you arrive.

One thing that is certain – one visit will not be enough. India’s landscapes are as diverse as its people and cultures. Here we take a closer look at the northern regions of India vs the south. What’s your pick?

Udaipur

Northern India



Aarti Worship Ceremony, Varanasi

Landscape & Culture

The architectural wonders and elaborate history of Northern India will surely capture your imagination, especially in India’s largest and landlocked state - Rajasthan. From the contrasts of bustling bazaars to ancient ruins, and from the ghats of the Ganges to dizzying stepwells, this incredible desert region will bring to life everything you could possibly hope for!

People

We find the people of Northern India to be more traditional, intensely spiritual and curious. Don’t be afraid if a rather shy Indian asks for a selfie or to practice their English with you – it’s normal! Dress code for women here is the salwar kamiz, a longer top and flowing pants.

Food

Mainly vegetarian in nature, the food in Northern India is made with a variety of thick gravy sauces and contains a heavy curry-based spice. Instead of rice, people from this region mainly rely on wheat-based flatbreads to both complement and bulk-up their meals.

Highlights of India – 18 days fully inclusive from \$7,680pp

Delhi – Agra – Jhansi – Khajuraho – Varanasi – Jaipur – Jodhpur – Udaipur – Bundi – Ranthambore

Landscape & Culture

The states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala cover most of India’s southern peninsula. Surrounded by the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, this lush and tropical paradise is the home to many wild animal sanctuaries, hill stations and tea plantations - making it a fascinating part of the country to explore!

People

The open and friendly people of Southern India are laid back and easy going. One might even say they have a greater degree of tolerance towards other religions, cultures and castes. It’s here that you’ll see every woman dressed in a colourful sari.

Food

Being coastal and with plentiful backwaters, Southern India relies heavily on both seafood and fish. It is a staple in most people’s diet, like rice and lentils. Coconut and tamarind, as well as other rich flavourful spices, are used in dishes creating more variety to choose from. Don’t miss out on a robust and creamy Southern Indian coffee each morning either. The ceremony is half the fun!

Kerala & the Southern Highlights – 18 days fully inclusive from \$6,980pp

Chennai – Bangalore – Mysore – Coonoor – Ooty – Coimbatore – Munnar – Thekaddy – Kochi – Houseboat – Kovalam – Trivandrum



Backwaters, Kerala



Taj Mahal, Agra

CONCLUSION

No doubt that from the deserts of Rajasthan in the north, to the backwaters of Kerala in the south, India is a land of extraordinary opposites. It is an eclectic mix of sights, sounds and smells with each state and region fiercely trying to preserve its own regional languages, cuisine, attire, customs and artistic expression through music and dance. It is a dynamic country of striking differences – one that only you can choose where to visit first!

Save \$600 per couple or 50% off the single supplement on these two tours

All tours include international flights, all accommodation, all meals, all touring and entrance fees, a guide throughout and visa fees for Australian passport holders

Welcome to West Kowloon

Hong Kong



With the wonderful news that Hong Kong has reopened, we are thrilled to return to this vibrant and culturally rich destination. Hong Kong's international arts hub is thriving with the latest in the art world and artistic entertainment. It is the city's newest emerging neighbourhood and one of the largest cultural projects in the world with state-of-the-art museums, authentic dining experiences and of course, shopping!

However, you'll find that beyond these amazing spaces lies one of Hong Kong's oldest neighborhoods, making West Kowloon a fascinating treasure trove. Explore ancient craftsmanship, historic buildings, and family run eateries.

Welcome to West Kowloon - let us show you around.

Architecture & history



Yau Ma Tei Fruit Market

Yau Ma Tei Theatre

Built around 1930, this is the only surviving pre-World War II theatre in Kowloon featuring a mix of classicism and Art Deco style characteristics. After a refurbishment in 2012, the theatre hosts Chinese opera, in particular Cantonese opera. *Currently closed for renovations.*

Yau Ma Tei Fruit Market

Locally known as Gwo Laan, this fruit market has been supplying fresh produce to the neighborhood since 1913. The brick stone buildings are reminiscent of the construction style in the 1950's and 1960's, rarely seen anywhere else.



Xiqu Centre

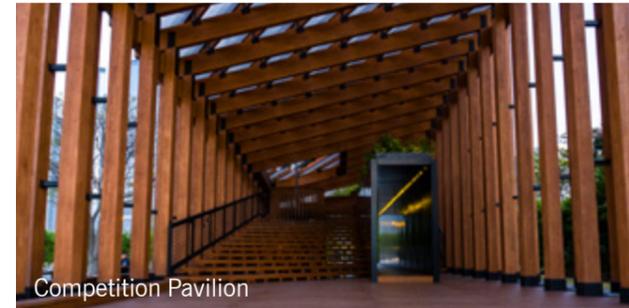
Hong Kong Museum of History

Learn about Hong Kong's cultural heritage through a fascinating collection of artefacts and photos that show the city's transformation from a humble fishing village to the vibrant city of today.

Explore more

- Tin Hau Temple
- 176-178 Shanghai Street – traditional Pawn Shop
- Xiqu Centre

The Art Hub



Competition Pavilion

M+

Spanning over 17,000 sq metres of exhibition space, three cinema houses, learning facilities, shops, museum, dining spots and so much more. This incredible space is Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture encompassing 20th and 21st century visual art, design and architecture. Did we mention the views? Located on the waterfront means you'll also enjoy some of the city's most beautiful.

Competition Pavilion

This modern structure is made from slender pieces of timber and was built to host small concerts and performances. Known as 'Growing Up', the pavilion's nickname refers to how Hong Kong is nurturing cultural growth. Located right by the water, it also offers incredible harbour views – especially at sunset.

Explore more

- Sky100
- Hong Kong Palace Museum
- Freespace
- Hong Kong Cultural Centre

A walk back in time



Shanghai Baoxing Qipao

Master Yan has been handmaking qipaos and Chinese cotton jackets for over 65 years and hosts classes with fashion and design students to preserve this element of Chinese history.

Explore more

- Man Kee Chopping Boards
- Lee Wo Steelyard

Food, glorious food



FAM (Food, Art and Music)

Experience a fusion of culture and Chinese cuisine

Kam Hing Noodles Food Company

A Hong Kong institution, and established in 1946, Kam Hing supplies over 600 restaurants and hotels in the city. The father and son duo now sell around 50 different varieties of noodles instore.

The Woosung Street Temporary Cooked Food Hawker Bazaar

A must for some of Hong Kong's most interesting eateries and renowned for food stalls with outdoor seating known as 'dai pai dong'. Contrary to its name, there is certainly nothing temporary about this bazaar, having opened back in 1984! Since its renovation in 2021, it is now home to some of the area's most loved eateries.

Mrs Fong Dessert

You cannot go past this store for traditional handmade Cantonese sweets and snacks that are becoming harder to find. It is famous for its white sugar cake, deemed one of the best in the city. The shop was also Michelin recommended in the 2022 guide for street food.

Explore more

- Temple Street Night Market
- Kwong Fat Spices
- Ferry Point
- Ozone

Art at its finest

You'll find art in all different forms as you stroll through West Kowloon, often in the most unassuming of places!

- Surrealist mural piece – Shanghai Street
- 1950's interiors – Mido Café
- Floral art depicting different scenes – Flight of Stairs on Public Square Street
- Calligraphy and brushstrokes of Classic Chinese art – Yau Sang Cheong

Top experiences in Godzone

God's Own Country, often abbreviated to Godzone, is a phrase that has been used for more than 100 years by New Zealanders to describe their homeland – and we couldn't agree more! Although a small country stretching across two main islands, New Zealand has a very big heart. Its unique history and vibrant culture provide an incredible amount to see and do – much of it outdoors where you can enjoy its renowned serenity and natural scenery.

From the biggest, most magnificent sights – including Huka Falls, Fiordland National Park, Mt Cook and Lake Wanaka - New Zealand's natural beauty is as diverse, complex, and rich as anywhere in the world.

With that in mind, here are some of our favourite experiences in Godzone as voted by our customers who recently joined our tours.



Little Blue Penguins

Discover Little Blue Penguins

After a day at sea, the world's smallest penguins (the Kororā) congregate in vocal groups known as 'rafts' not far off the shores of the Otago Peninsula. At dusk, watch these Little Blue Penguins arrive home, scurrying up to their cliff-face burrows at Pilots Beach and making a beeline to their nests where chicks await feeding time.



Climb Mou Waho Island

Climb Mou Waho Island

Mou Waho Island is often referred to as an island, in a lake, in an island, in a lake, in an island in the ocean! Being the most remote of Lake Wanaka's five islands, we can only access Mou Waho by catamaran. Once there, we hike to the island's summit to see its stunning natural glacial formed lake - and along the way we may even encounter the rare flightless Buff Weka, the Mountain Stone Weta and many other native New Zealand birds.



Tour members at Skippers Canyon

Traverse Skippers Canyon

Carved out by the Shotover River, made famous in the 1860's gold rush, the rough and winding track known simply as 'Skippers' takes in spectacular mountain scenery to reach views that are rarely seen by most travellers. In our specially designed 4x4 adventure vehicles, we can transport ourselves back in time experiencing what life would have been like for the South Island's brave and pioneering settlers.



Art Deco Touring, Napier

Art Deco Vintage Car Touring

Turn back time as we relive the glamour, style and significant history of the art deco era with a luxurious vintage car tour through Napier and its surrounds. Rebuilt after the 1931 earthquake, Napier is known for its mesmerising seaside promenade, unique art deco landmarks, glorious fresh foods and over 70 wineries dotted within Hawke's Bays' fertile plains.



Auckland Harbour Sailing

Dine and Sail on Auckland's Harbour

Enjoy a drink and three-course dinner while actively sailing on Auckland's Waitematā Harbour. On this 2.5 hour sailing experience, you'll also hear informative commentary from our experienced crew, view the iconic city skyline from the water and sail under the Harbour Bridge itself feeling what it must have been like to participate in The America's Cup and winning the 'Auld Mug'!



Hector's Dolphins, Akaroa Harbour

Cruise Alongside Hector's Dolphins

In Akaroa Harbour, we'll meet the world's smallest and rarest dolphins – the Hector's Dolphin! These easily distinguishable creatures are spotted by their rounded dorsal fins and are only found in New Zealand waters. From our catamaran, watch while they ride the bow putting on a spectacular show for us. We even have a unique crew member onboard with us – a very special dolphin spotting dog!



Huka Falls, New Zealand

Hidden Gems of the North

Start touring the North Island in NZ's capital city – exploring fascinating Weta Workshop and tranquil Zealandia Ecosanctuary. Then travel north by luxury coach to take in the beautiful vistas of Taranaki and New Plymouth. Head over to Tongariro National Park for a scenic gondola ride on the new Sky Waka. An art deco experience in Napier follows, with a visit to one of the wonderful Hawke's Bay wineries. Explore the uniquely themed Hamilton Gardens, have lunch at Zealong Tea Estate, visit fanciful Hobbiton and the famous glowworm caves of Waitomo. Finish the North Island off with an evening's dinner and sail on Auckland's glorious harbour!

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Weta Workshop & Zealandia Ecosanctuary
- Pukeiti Gardens & Govett-Brewster Art Gallery
- Huka Falls & National Trout Centre
- Mt Ruapehu's new Sky Waka
- Napier Art Deco Vintage Car Tour & Hawke's Bay Winery
- Fanciful Hobbiton, Hamilton Gardens & Zealong Tea Estate
- Waitomo Glowworm Caves
- Sailing Auckland's Harbour

11 days fully inclusive touring, from \$6,190pp

Wellington – New Plymouth – Tongariro National Park – Taupo – Napier – Hamilton/Rotorua – Auckland

Did you know our New Zealand tours can be taken back to back for the ultimate adventure!...

Hidden Gold of the South

Discover the hidden gold of New Zealand's spectacular South Island. Journey from the Otago Peninsula where wildlife abounds, to moody Fiordland National Park for a breathtaking cruise. Explore adrenaline seeking Queenstown, charming Arrowtown with its gold rush history, and picturesque Lake Wanaka. Head to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park for a visit to the Tasman Glacier terminus and finish the tour near Christchurch with Hector's dolphins and eclectic art in French-inspired Akaroa...plus so much more!

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Larnach Castle & the Lan Yuan Chinese Gardens in Dunedin
- Blue Penguins at dusk, Otago Peninsula
- Fiordland National Park cruise
- Arrowtown's Gold Rush history
- Skippers Canyon 4WD safari
- Central Otago wine tasting & lunch
- Wanaka's Mou Waho Island cruise & nature walk
- Mt Cook's Hermitage Hotel
- Tasman Glacial Lake to terminus exploration
- Lake Tekapo & Christchurch sightseeing
- A dolphin & wildlife experience in Akaroa Harbour

11 Days fully inclusive touring, from \$7,950pp

Dunedin – Fiordland National Park – Arrowtown – Wanaka – Mount Cook National Park – Christchurch



Larnach Castle, Dunedin, New Zealand

Save \$600 per couple

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

JAPAN'S HIDDEN GEMS

Japan is a diverse country with unique traditions, cuisines and lifestyles that vary across more than 400 inhabited islands. With so much on offer, why limit yourself to just the major cities when visiting?

Get off the beaten track and discover these gems of Japan.



SPECIAL OFFERS:

Save \$600 per couple on 2023/24 group tours or take 50% off the single supplement on selected dates

1. Koyasan

Picture yourself rising early to join Buddhist monks in their morning chants as you take in the serenity and views of the natural surrounds. The Shingon Buddhist sect began their religious practices on Mt Koya in the 9th century and today you can visit them to experience life in a monastery. Spend a night in local monks temple lodgings, known as a 'Shukubo', and enjoy a traditional Buddhist vegetarian meal. This is an unforgettable experience offering visitors the opportunity to witness age-old cultural practices in a truly unique way.

Experience Koyasan on our [Off-Beat Japan group tour](#)

14 days from \$10,650pp

Tokyo – Mount Fuji – Japanese Alps – Kyoto – Koyasan – Osaka

2. Matsushima Bay

For centuries locals have regarded Matsushima Bay as one of the most beautiful regions of Japan. Visiting the area is a must for nature lovers looking for a unique experience. Witness over 200 small islands covered by pine trees and the mysteriously shaped mudstone formations that are scattered around the bay. For the best experience, take in these natural gems from the comfort of a cruise where you will not only be spoilt by spectacular views, but also learn about the history and culture of these beautiful islands.

Visit the remarkable Matsushima Bay on our [Japan By Rail group tour](#)

22 days fully inclusive from \$14,590pp

Fukuoka – Nagasaki – Hiroshima – Himeji – Osaka – Kyoto – Kanazawa – Takayama – Yudanaka – Matsumoto – Suwa – Mt Fuji – Tokyo – Matsushima – Sendai – Sapporo.

3. Beppu

Rest, Relaxation and Rejuvenation. Welcome to the charming volcanic hot spring city of Beppu. Japanese baths or onsens have long been seen to nurture health, beauty and wellness and this city has over 2,000 of them to cater to all visitors. The bizarre 'Hells of Beppu' hot springs are a natural wonder and are now a nationally designated Place of Scenic Beauty. Join the locals for a traditional Japanese custom and unwind with a soak in a hot spring, sand or mud bath while admiring the tranquil scenery.

Relax in Beppu on our [Japan & the Scenic South group tour](#)

14 days fully inclusive from \$10,490pp

Fukuoka – Kumamoto – Mt Aso – Beppu – Hiroshima – Himeji – Kyoto – Mt Fuji – Tokyo

4. Shirakawa-Go

You would be forgiven if you assumed this town resided somewhere in Europe, however this picturesque town is nestled in a valley in the remote mountain ranges of the Gifu Prefecture of Japan. Shirakawa-Go has the most gorgeous unique thatched roof houses, which were designed to handle the large snowfall in the area. It's beautiful to visit any time of year. You can enjoy long summer days, a vibrant cherry blossom bloom, colourful autumn leaves or magical snowy winters - take your pick!

Visit beautiful Shirakawa-Go on our [Discover Japan group tour](#)

14 days fully inclusive from \$10,690pp

Tokyo – Mt. Fuji – Suwa – Takayama – Kanazawa – Kyoto – Nara – Osaka

5. Naoshima

Once a sleepy fishing island, Naoshima has now become the country's art island. Various exhibitions and installations by Japan's most prominent artists take over the island year-round, making a visit here always worthwhile and unique. Check out the Art House project and browse a collection of abandoned houses, workshops and shrines that have been converted into quirky art spaces. The island is one of the world's most unique destinations for art lovers and a must-visit for those travellers seeking one-of-a-kind experiences.

Explore the fascinating island on our [Naoshima extension](#)

4 days private touring and accommodation. Contact us for pricing.

Okayama – Kurashiki – Naoshima – Osaka



6. Mt Aso

Japan is famed for volcanoes and Mt Aso stands proudly as Japan's largest active one. The volcano is located on Japan's Kyushu island and consists of five breathtaking peaks, often referred to as the "Five Mountains of Aso". The volcano's crater is one of the world's largest, with a circumference of over 100km and offering spectacular views over the surrounding landscape. If you are lucky, you may even witness the smoke from Mt. Naka's active crater wafting across the horizon creating a picture-perfect view.

Discover grand Mt Aso on our [Japan & the Scenic South group tour](#)

14 days fully inclusive from \$10,490pp

Fukuoka – Kumamoto – Mt Aso – Beppu – Hiroshima – Himeji – Kyoto – Mt Fuji – Tokyo

7. Kakunodate

An old samurai stronghold steeped in traditions, Kakunodate is a must visit for any history buff. The area once housed approximately 80 families and is one of the best surviving examples of samurai architecture and culture from the Edo period. Six of the historic samurai houses are open to the public and offers visitors a unique glimpse into the life of samurai families residing here from 1603 to 1868. Wander the wide streets of this ancient town and enjoy the quaint charm, especially beautiful when the weeping cherry trees blanket the town in May.

Wander this samurai town on our [Journey Through Japan group tour](#)

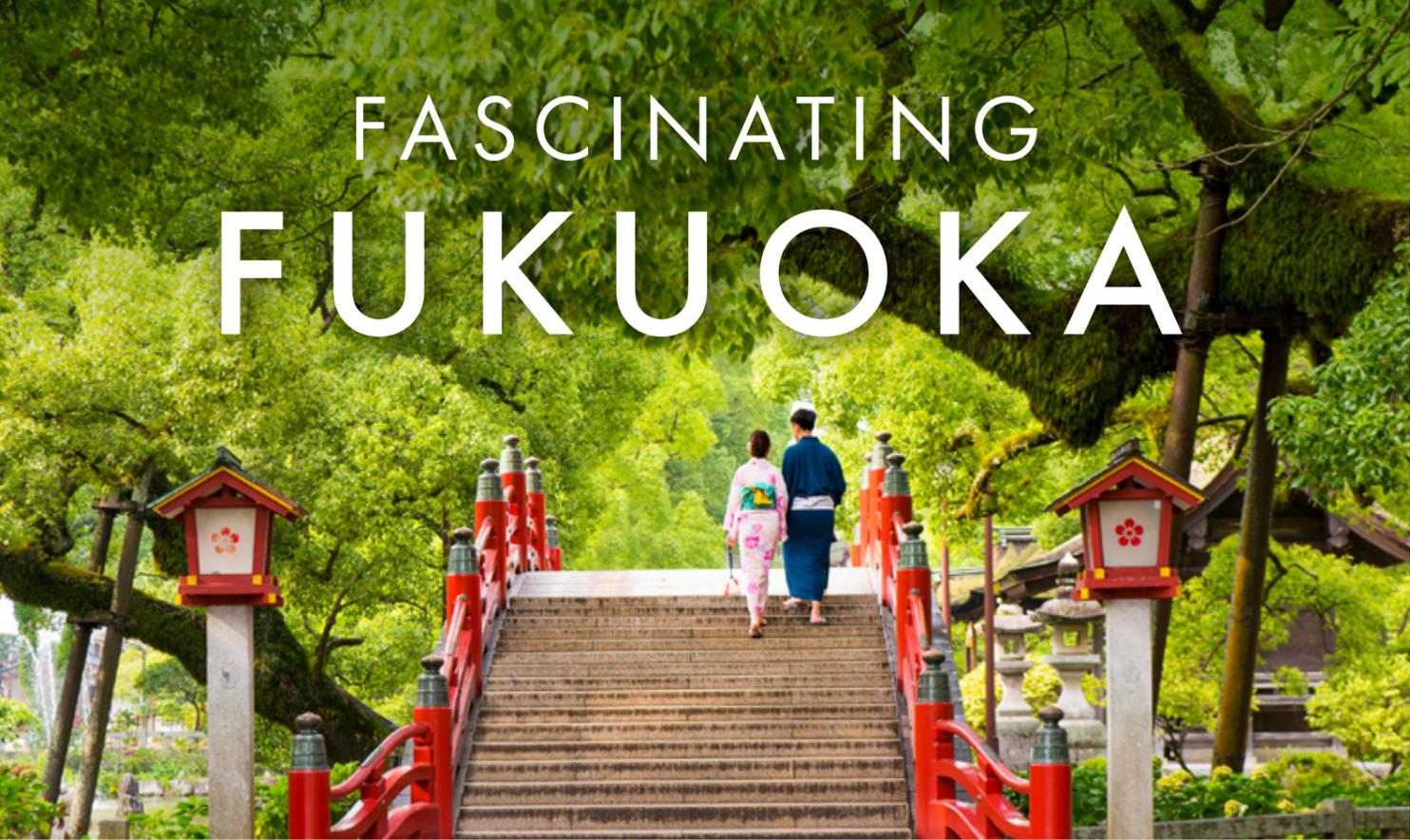
15 days fully inclusive from \$11,590pp

Sapporo – Hakodate – Hiroaki – Kakunodate – Tsunagi – Hiraizumi – Sendai – Tokyo – Mt Fuji – Kyoto – Osaka



See our full range of tours in our Japan brochure

FASCINATING FUKUOKA



Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine

Located on the southern island of Kyushu in Japan, Fukuoka offers a unique and diverse experience. It's a place where old and new blend together in perfect harmony and where towering buildings coexist with tranquil temples and serene gardens. For food lovers, Fukuoka is a foodie's paradise, renowned for its unique cuisine that blends Japanese, Chinese and Korean influences. Not only is the city renowned for its gastronomy, but Fukuoka is also a major hub of innovation and creativity, drawing visitors from all over the world with its thriving arts and culture scene.

Beat the crowds and explore one of Japan's hidden treasures. As listed in **The New York Times' "52 Places to go in 2023"**. Whether you're a food lover, history buff, or just looking for a unique escape, this city is a must-visit. Don't miss the opportunity to uncover this secret gem.

Discover some of these sights on a select range of group tours or why not extend your Japan tour with a visit to Fukuoka?

Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine

One of Japan's most important Shinto shrines, and the head of 12,000 Tenjin shrines nationwide, Dazaifu is one of Fukuoka's top attractions, welcoming more than 10 million visitors a year. It is a symbol of learning, culture, and the arts and has a rich history spanning over a thousand years. Stroll through the stunning gardens while taking in the serenity and cultural significance.



Yanagawa River

Yanagawa River

Yanagawa City is famous for its intricate network of canals that traverse the city. A leisurely boat ride on a traditional 'donkubune' offers a glimpse into the city's rich history and local life. The canals have been designated a National Site of Scenic Beauty. As you glide through the waters, you will be treated to a stunning backdrop of lush greenery and picturesque houses while gaining insight into the city's history and importance to the region.

Rakusuien Garden

Nestled in the bustling city of Fukuoka lies Rakusuien Garden, a tranquil haven filled with natural beauty. This traditional Japanese garden features a serene lake surrounded by lush greenery, vibrant flower beds, and charming bridges. Wander the paths of the garden, taking in the intricate design elements that harmoniously blend with the surrounding environment. A highlight is the tea ceremony room, where guests can join a traditional Japanese tea ceremony while learning about the cultural and historical significance of tea in Japan.



A Food Lover's Paradise

Fukuoka was recently featured in **Lonely Planet's 'Best in Travel List' for 2023**, in the 'eat' category and is the home of the renowned Hakata Ramen, also known as Tonkotsu Ramen. This delicious dish is famous for its rich pork bone broth and perfectly cooked noodles, earning itself a reputation as one of the world's best ramen varieties. Indulge in this popular dish at a local restaurant or at one of the many yatai street food stalls (known as 'shop stand'). With over 100 large-scale yatai dotted around Fukuoka city, particularly in the Tenjin and Nakasu areas, you won't need to go far to enjoy this hearty dish or explore the many other culinary delights on offer.

Raise your glass!

Fukuoka is known for its superior sake production. The region boasts fertile land, prime water sources, and a suitable climate, all key elements in crafting exceptional sake. As one of Japan's major sake rice growing regions, there's a great variety to choose from. Why not indulge in a tasting at a local distillery and discover your favourite?



Fukuoka Tower

Take in sweeping views of Fukuoka City and its surrounding from the observation deck of Fukuoka Tower, Japan's tallest seaside tower. Standing at 234 metres, the highest observation deck perched at 123 metres high offers breathtaking views. The glimmering tower boasts an appearance of a skyscraper with its 8,000 half-mirrors, earning it the nickname 'Mirror Sail'. The most popular time to visit is at sunset.

Save \$600 per couple or 50% off the single supplement on selected dates



Japan & The Scenic South

14 days Fully Inclusive Tour from \$10,490pp twin share

Uncover the beauty of lesser-known island Kyushu, renowned for its active volcanoes, hot springs, and stunning beaches, before exploring the must-see sights of Hiroshima, Kyoto and Tokyo on the largest island of Honshu.

Japan By Rail

22 days Fully Inclusive Tour from \$14,590pp twin share

For those where time is no limit, this is the ultimate top-to-toe tour of Japan covering three islands in one trip – Kyushu, Honshu and Hokkaido whilst travelling on the bullet train! Experience ancient traditions to new-world charm.

Both tours include: International airfares, accommodation, all transportation, all meals, touring with guides and entrance fees.

Fukuoka short-stay options are available on request.

Spotlight on

South Korea

South Korea reopened its borders to international visitors on 1 April after two years. What is it about this country that appeals to so many? Is it the history dating back to centuries, or perhaps the eclectic combination of traditional culture and fast-paced cities? Or perhaps it's the abundance of natural landscapes, stunning coastlines, and endless food options to enjoy. We delve deeper into this exciting and intriguing nation and some of the must-see areas.

Gyeongju

Also known as the 'Museum without walls', Gyeongju city was the former capital of the Silla Kingdom which ruled Korea from the 7th to the 9th centuries. There is an incredible amount of history here with a number of tombs, pagodas, palace ruins and rock carvings than anywhere else in the country. Just beyond the city is the magnificent UNESCO World Heritage Bulguksa Temple which is considered the pinnacle of Silla architecture. Nearby Seokguram Grotto is the perfect spot to view the stunning sunrise. Gyeongju is also home to stunning natural scenery including Namsan Mountain which was regarded as a sacred place during the Silla period. There are hundreds of temples, pagodas and Buddha sculptures as well as scenic hiking trails to enjoy.

Did you know? Gyeongju has been mentioned in Lonely Planet's Top 10 Cities in 2022



Jeju Island

Jeju Island is the largest island of Korea and is also one of the most relaxing holiday spots thanks to the stunning beaches, relaxing treatments, local delicacies and the spectacular natural environment of this volcanic island. Volcanic lava tubes occupy almost 10% of the island's area and as such the island has been designated a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. The island has no shortage of sights and unique experiences. 'Must-sees' include Seongsan Ilchulbong Tuff Cone, formed about 5,000 years ago from an eruption of magma on the ocean floor.

Many flock here to see the magnificent sunrise. Explore the lava tubes, more specifically Manjanggul Lava Tube which is more than 8kms long. Jeju is also renowned for the powerful sea-women (haenyo) who dive 10-20 metres without any breathing apparatus.

Did you know? Seoul to Jeju Island is the world's busiest air route.

Jeju Island short stay
4 days land only from \$795pp, twin share



Busan

Busan is one of Asia's most important seaports, yet is one of the more laidback cities of South Korea making it a popular choice for a relaxing getaway. Here you'll find lots of character and traditional features as well as mountains, beaches, temples and delicious seafood. Get a bird's eye view of the city atop Busan Tower, visit the Jagalchi Market, one of South Korea's largest seafood markets or walk over the Oryukdo Skywalk, a glass bridge set on a seaside cliff.

Over on Haeundae Beach, best known for its sailing having one of the largest marinas in the country, enjoy the many shops, restaurants, cafés and hotels along the beach, also South Korea's longest.

Did you know? The village of Gamcheon has terrace houses painted in vibrant colours with murals and sculptures created by the residents.

The village is also known as the 'Machu Picchu of Busan'.

Save \$600 per couple

Scenic South Korea -14 days fully inclusive, from \$9,980pp

Seoul – Damyang – Gwangju – Boseong – Suncheon – Yeosu – Busan – Gyeongju – Mt Seorak – Gagneung



PORTUGAL UNCOVERED

Our top 10 highlights

The readers of *Conde Nast Traveller* voted Portugal the best travel destination of 2022.

“Portugal is a country that just keeps getting better,” *Conde Nast* said, “with a growing appreciation, not only for its beaches, but its food and wine, and with lesser-known corners alongside the obvious hotspots.”

We couldn't agree more, so here are a few of our favourite Portugal highlights to get you excited to explore this magical destination:

1. Historic Porto

Spread along the banks of the River Douro, Porto is Portugal's colourful hub, renowned for its vibrant setting and charming ambiance. A Unesco World Heritage Site, listed for its astonishing array of landmarks, the history of which stretches back over 2,000 years, Porto's buildings are painted every colour of the spectrum, making it one of the most picturesque cities in Europe. While here, exploring on foot, we discover the icons and hidden gems as your guide fills you in on politics, religion, traditions, gastronomy and local customs. Naturally there will be chances to sample the fortified wine for which this city is so famous – port.

2. Douro Valley

One of the most picturesque, and oldest, wine regions in the world, the Douro River flows gently through a remarkable landscape of steep terrace vineyards, rocky bluffs, white-washed wine estates (quintas) and picture-perfect villages. As well as a delight for the eyes, the Douro Valley is also a delight for the tastebuds, thanks to the plentiful wine cellars that also occupy the area. We spend a wonderfully relaxing day making the most of the valley, cruising the river on a historic Rabelo boat, taking a scenic rail trip and visiting a family-run winery for a leisurely tour and tasting which this city is so famous – port.

3. Sintra

Sintra is a fairy-tale come to life, with its ornate palaces and pastel-hued villas nestled among the luxuriant forests, parks and gardens that occupy dramatic hills that roll down to the sparkling blue waters of the Atlantic. Sintra-Vila, the Unesco World Heritage-listed historic centre, is a unique and fascinating glimpse of how architecture can work in harmony with nature. Rising above it all is the striking Pena Palace; built as a summer residence for the royal family, it is an eclectic mix of architectural styles, exuding an undeniable romance. Head up to the very top for unbeatable views over the surrounding landscapes.

4. Alentejo

The Alentejo region might be best known for the beautiful beaches of the Algarve but travel inland away from those purely seeking the sun and you'll discover a rural paradise of rolling hills, cork forests, olive groves and vineyards. There's also the occasional medieval fortress or abandoned chapel dotted among the landscapes, giving a wonderfully timeless appeal. Here, we visit a centuries-old cork farm to learn from the owners about cork farming along with their other crops, followed by a chance to enjoy a taste of the delicious wines and organic produce from the farm.



5. Geres National Park

Peneda-Gerês is Portugal's only national park and is a world away from the hustle and bustle of the cities and popular beach resorts. Hundreds of square miles of oak and pine forests envelop a rugged landscapes of granite cliffs, waterfalls, rushing rivers and tranquil lagoons. Prepare to be captivated by the wild natural beauty of the park as you spend the day in the heart of this spectacular wilderness walking, picnicking and even taking a refreshing swim if you feel so inclined.

6. Fado music

The soundtrack to enchanting streets, fado music can be heard drifting out of the bars, cafes and restaurants of whichever city in Portugal you happen to be wandering. Famous for its expressive and melancholic tone, songs tend to express the struggles, battles and experiences of the musicians or tell the folk stories and history of the local area. We include a fascinating evening walking tour on our Portugal adventure that allows you to discover the roots and the emotion of fado. Led by your fado singer guide, you'll discover some of the traditional fado haunts of Old Lisbon, and visit a Fado House, where you will enjoy an incredible live performance.

7. Culinary delights

From port wines to sweet desserts, Portugal is a foodie heaven. Renowned for sweet pastries such as pastel de nata (egg custard tart), Portuguese cuisine is heavily influenced by the country's seafaring history, when merchants crisscrossed the globe trading everything from spices to seafood. There is nothing more Portuguese than biting into the local pastry 'talasnico', made from honey chestnuts and almonds, alongside an array of cheeses and a glass of port wine, something you'll do, touring with us!

8. Old Lisbon

A maze of winding, narrow streets, charming hidden alleyways and orange roofs as far as the eye can see, Old Lisbon offers a unique experience of Portugal. With castles, museums and cathedrals galore, the beautiful historic centre is brimming with incredible history, vibrant culture and bustling city life. On the final day of the tour, you'll explore this incredible area with a guided walking tour, a ride on a private tram through the most picturesque districts and enjoy a relaxing journey along the Tagus River by sailing boat. It all ends perfectly with dinner at a rooftop restaurant with magical views across the city.

9. Tomar

Rich in art, culture and charm, Tomar is a city that has kept one foot in the past. At its heart is the Unesco World Heritage Convento de Cristo, built in the 12th century as the headquarters of the Knights Templar, a building that plays an integral role in Portugal's history, and it's from here that the delightful streets of convents, chapels and museums meander. The intriguing town is a photographer's dream, with architecture unlike anywhere else in the country but, with its rustic and raw character, it's also as Portuguese as they come.

10. Guimaraes

Sitting in the north of Portugal, the city of Guimaraes is famous for its well-preserved medieval architecture combined with its modern and forwardthinking personality. The historic town centre is a Unesco World Heritage Site due to the fact it showcases the old with the new while retaining plenty of Portuguese character. Another colourful glimpse into historic Portugal, this is a place very close to the heart of the country; often called the 'birthplace of Portugal', it was here that Portugal's first king, Alfonso Henriques, was born and where the Battle of São Mamede, a decisive moment in the foundation of Portugal, was fought.

Save \$500pp on selected departures
- Book by 13 March



Portugal Uncovered

14 days Fully Inclusive Tour
from \$9,980pp twin share

Porto – Viana do Castelo – Geres National Park – Douro Valley – Coimbra – Caldas da Rainha – Évora – Lisbon

Join us on this exhilarating journey from colourful Porto, rising theatrically up the banks of the Douro River, to the ornately cobbled streets of the capital Lisbon.

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

NEW TOUR



A Holiday fit for the Gods

Greece is home to a dazzling array of ancient sites, timeless tales, myths and legends but that's only half the story. Travel with us along ancient highways and discover the vibrant culture of Greece today, where a love of music, dancing, food and wine play such an important role in everyday life.

Explore Athens Ancient & Modern

Discover the astonishing collection of ancient sites at the Acropolis, including the Parthenon, the Propylaea, the Erechtheion and the Temple of Athena. You'll also be able to throw yourself into the unique energy of Athens today, with hilltop sunsets, rooftop restaurants, live Rebetiko music and even a Greek dancing masterclass.

Discover the Temple of Apollo at Delphi

Few places in the world combine ancient history and glorious nature as harmoniously as Delphi. Perched dramatically on the flanks of Mount Parnassos and home to the famous oracle of Pythia, Delphi was for many centuries regarded as the cultural and religious centre of ancient Greece. Today, as you wander amongst the monumental remains, it requires no imagination at all to picture yourself visiting during the site's glory days thousands of years ago.

Marvellous Meteora

Stunning rock formations and jaw-dropping medieval engineering combine at Meteora's precipitously built complexes of Eastern Orthodox monasteries. Set in mountain-top locations amongst the dramatic scenery of central Greece, they are as astonishing today as when they were built in the 13th century.

Food for the Gods

Greeks love their food and we'll show you why. On our Classical Greece tour everyday is an epicurean delight. Enjoy traditional mezedes in an historic Athens bistro, delicious souvlaki in the Gulf of Corinth and flaming fried cheese in Nafplio to name just a few. You'll even get hands on with olive oil, honey and wine tastings, and even a truffle hunt where you'll get to taste your finds!

Save \$500pp on selected departures - Book by 13 March



Classical Greece

12 days Fully Inclusive Tour from \$9,980pp twin share

Athens – Nafplio – Kalamata – Olympia – Delphi – Meteora – Athens

Immerse yourself in the very place western civilisation was born as you discover the classical highlights and hidden gems of the Peloponnese and mainland Greece. Be enthralled by a dazzling array of ancient sites along with the vibrant culture of Greece today.

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

NEW TOUR



Sensational Scotland

From brushes with royalty to spectacular train journeys, Scotland offers terrific experiences that should be on every traveller's bucket list. Here's our pick of the best, all of which can be enjoyed on our Spirit of Scotland tour.

Ride one of the most scenic train journeys in the world

Described as one of the greatest railway journeys in the world, the Jacobite steam train's 135kms round trip takes in an impressive list of magnificent sights. The journey begins a stone's throw from Britain's highest mountain, passes close by its deepest freshwater loch and shortest river before finally arriving at Europe's deepest seawater loch, Loch Nevis! The train also pauses to take in the views from the iconic 21-arch Glenfinnan Viaduct, familiar to anyone who is a Harry Potter fan.

Explore a Floating Palace

The Royal Yacht Britannia has carried Her Majesty, the Queen and the royal family for over 40 years, sailing over one million miles around the world. Now berthed in Edinburgh, you can follow in the footsteps of royalty to discover the heart and soul of this incredible ship. A ship of real contrasts, it's fascinating to compare the homely royal living rooms with the pomp of the 32-seat state dining room where the Queen entertained powerful figures from Winston Churchill to Ronald Reagan.

Experience an Engineering Marvel

Reputed to be inspired by a Celtic double headed spear, a vast turning propeller or the spine of a fish, what can't be denied is that the Falkirk Wheel is a real wonder of modern design. Built to link the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals, a journey that used to take 11 locks and nearly a day to transit now takes amazed visitors just minutes!

Search for the Loch Ness Monster

With so many beautiful lochs to choose from who could pick a favourite? The most famous of them all is Loch Ness. 23 miles long and deeper than the North Sea this vast loch is reputedly

home, of course, to Scotland's shyest monster! Whether Nessie appears or not, a cruise of the loch is the perfect way to enjoy incredible views of the dramatic castle ruins on its banks, and hear stories about the history of its shores.

Meet a Ghillie on the Isle of Skye

Skye, Scotland's second largest island, boasts an eye catching tapestry of rolling moors, jagged mountains, tranquil lochs and towering cliffs. Your most memorable moments though may be your encounter with local legend Mitch, a professional ghillie (or guide), who will regale you with stories of his life on Skye.

Live out your Braveheart Fantasies

Stirling Castle was built in the 15th century and until the Union of the Crowns in 1603, almost every Scottish monarch had either lived, been crowned or died here. The castle is perched on top of an extinct volcano providing fabulous views of the surrounding city and some famous battlefield sites, including that of William Wallace's great victory over English forces at Stirling Bridge in 1297.

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