



Connected Travel

SENSE OF ADVENTURE REQUIRED

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

WHERE COMFORT MEETS CURIOSITY, AND TRAVEL IS DESIGNED TO FEEL
AS GOOD AS IT LOOKS.

Sense of Adventure Required

The Soft Adventure Edit

This is where I share destinations I know deeply, journeys I'd confidently send my own clients on, and the thoughtful details that turn a trip into something that stays with you. Expect considered advice, personal perspective, and travel ideas for those who want a sense of adventure, without rushing, roughing it, or ticking boxes.

WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S SENSE OF ADVENTURE REQUIRED

What if adventure didn't have to mean roughing it, rushing from place to place or stepping too far outside your comfort zone?

This month, I'm looking at travel with a slightly different lens, from discovering the unexpected appeal of China to rethinking what river cruising really looks like today.

Because sometimes the best adventures are the ones that give you a little comfort, a little curiosity and plenty of room to explore.



SOFT ADVENTURE TRAVEL HACK

BUILD IN A “NOTHING PLANNED” DAY.

Leave one day of your itinerary intentionally free. No tours, no early starts and no strict schedule, just a few ideas to choose from. It gives you the freedom to follow your curiosity, discover somewhere unexpected and enjoy the destination at a slower pace.

A free day can often become one of the most memorable parts of a trip. Instead of rushing from one attraction to the next, you might stumble across a neighbourhood café, discover a local market, take a scenic walk or simply sit and watch everyday life unfold around you.

The trick is to have a loose plan, not a rigid itinerary. I like to have a few ideas saved, a walking route, a restaurant, a market or a nearby village, but leave the decision until the day itself. That little bit of flexibility creates space for the unexpected, which is where the real **sense of adventure** often begins.

CHINA TIPPED TO BE AUSTRALIA’S NEXT BIG TRAVEL TREND.....

Australian interest in travel to China is surging, with new Skyscanner data showing searches from Australia to the destination up 44 per cent year-on-year, prompting the flight search platform to ask whether China is shaping up as “the new Japan” for Aussie travellers.

The 44 per cent increase in China searches was recorded over the six months to 26 June 2026, based on travel dates between 1 June and 31 July 2026. By comparison, Australia-to-Japan searches rose 41 per cent over the same period, suggesting China is now growing at a faster clip than its long-favoured neighbour.

According to Skyscanner, the trend is being driven largely by Gen Z travellers seeking out culture and attractions in China that have already been well-trodden in Japan, with social media, particularly TikTok, playing a significant role as travellers share tips and recommendations.



Wendy Wu Tours has released a new China & Central Asia brochure as it looks to capitalise on a sharp rise in Australian demand for the destination.

The operator's 2026 China bookings are up more than 100 per cent year-on-year, far outstripping the broader market. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show overall visits to China rose 16.5 per cent over the same period. Wendy Wu Tours Australia managing director Simon Bell said the growth was being driven by a shift in perception rather than any single trend.

"China is increasingly in the spotlight, with demand driven less by a single trend and more by shifting perceptions as the country modernises," Bell said. "This growing visibility is fuelling curiosity among Australian travellers and a desire to experience it first-hand."

Bell said the operator was also seeing stronger demand for its Tailormade itineraries, as more travellers sought out specialist operators to manage the complexity of a China trip.

The new brochure merges China and Central Asia into a single collection, leaning into the historic Silk Road routes connecting the two regions. The operator said Central Asia was drawing growing interest off the back of its Silk Road cities and landscapes, as travellers looked for destinations with a sense of discovery and shared heritage with China.

Beyond gateway cities Beijing and Shanghai, the operator reported rising demand for regional destinations and seasonal departures, including over the Christmas period, as well as longer multi-country itineraries.

Wendy Wu Tours describes itself as Australia's largest dedicated China touring operator, and continues to expand its Tailormade and Private touring options alongside its group programs.

Selected 2027 and 2028 departures are being offered with savings of up to \$1,800 per person.



In Pursuit of Pandas

10 days | ★★★★★ (82 Reviews)

EARLY BIRD SALE

INCLUDES INTERNATIONAL AIRFARES

- Fully Inclusive Tour
- All Meals
- 8 Nights Accommodation

Now From **\$5,130**pp
was \$5,930pp



Ancient China

18 days | ★★★★★ (42 Reviews)

EARLY BIRD SALE

INCLUDES INTERNATIONAL AIRFARES

- Fully Inclusive Tour
- All Meals
- 16 Nights Accommodation

Now From **\$6,880**pp
was \$7,580pp



Magnificent China

22 days | ★★★★★ (203 Reviews)

EARLY BIRD SALE

INCLUDES INTERNATIONAL AIRFARES

- Fully Inclusive Tour
- All Meals
- 20 Nights Accommodation

Now From **\$8,280**pp
was \$9,980pp

INTRODUCING SKI-JI

THE NEW TRAVEL TREND COMBINING PARADISE AND THE SLOPES

Beach days or ski fields? Fiji Airways is making a case for both with the launch of Ski-Ji. Coined by the archipelago's flagship airline, Ski-Ji involves pairing a ski holiday in Canada or Japan with a tropical island escape in Fiji.

Whether travellers choose to soak up some sun before hitting the slopes, or unwind in the tropics before heading home, the concept makes the journey itself a part of the adventure.

More than a stopover

Traditionally, stopovers are treated as little more than a practical pause between destinations. Ski-Ji rewrites that narrative, encouraging travellers to bookend their high-energy winter adventures with time to reset and recharge on Fiji's palm-fringed shores.

Instead of rushing through airports, travellers can spend a few days embracing island life, savouring everything from sunset cruises and snorkelling to traditional lovo feasts and spa days spent at beachfront resorts, before jetting off to hit the slopes in some of the world's most celebrated ski destinations.

Contrast is a huge part of the appeal. One day guests will find themselves carving up fresh powder in Niseko or Whistler, the next they'll spend floating in crystal-clear lagoons, obligatory cocktail in hand.

From Nadi, travellers can fly direct to Vancouver or Tokyo to hit the slopes. Vancouver serves as the gateway to ever-popular Whistler ski resort and the dramatic landscapes of the Canadian Rockies, while Tokyo Narita connects powder hounds to the coveted runs and onsen culture of Niseko and Hokkaido.

A new way to travel

No matter the destination, Ski-Ji reflects a growing appetite for experience-led itineraries that make every element of a client's journey worthwhile.

Rather than selling a cookie-cutter ski holiday with a connecting flight, the concept is an experience that seamlessly blends a range of unique climates, cultures and unforgettable travel moments.

FIJI AIRWAYS

SKi-Ji

AUSTRALIA ➔ JAPAN
RETURN
WAS \$1,375.
NOW FROM
\$899*

*FARES IN AUD. FLY VIA FJI. CONDITIONS APPLY.

FIJI AIRWAYS

SKi-Ji

AUSTRALIA ➔ CANADA
RETURN
WAS \$2,045.
NOW FROM
\$1,599*

*FARES IN AUD. FLY VIA FJI. CONDITIONS APPLY.

VIETNAM ON THE RISE!

WHY THIS IS A HOT DESTINATION RIGHT NOW

The number of Australians visiting Vietnam has more than doubled since before Covid, according to recent monthly figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The ABS figures show that Vietnam is now ranked 5th, with 68,000 short-term residents returning to Australia from the South-East Asian destination in April this year, compared to 32,480 in April 2019, when it was ranked 7th. The country welcomed more than half a million visitors last year compared to 2024 – a rise of almost 12 per cent. Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Nha Trang, and Phu Quoc remain Vietnam's top five destinations, but that growth is extending well into its secondary cities and nature-focused regions.

Why go?

There are myriad reasons why Aussies are now choosing Vietnam, looking east of Thailand and north and Indonesia (and Bali), for alternative winter getaways.

Agoda survey data found that while 62 per cent of respondents say relaxation is their primary motivation for travel, 31 per cent cite culinary experiences and 25 per cent cultural exploration. Vietnam's mix of street food culture, historic cities, and nature-based attractions fits well to both groups.

But raw figures don't tell the whole story. Given its proximity (8-9 hours flight time), the variety of destinations on offer (from mountains, rivers and reefs to tailor-made clothing and hectic street markets) to accommodation (from backpacker to luxe villas), fantastic food, abundant flights from several carriers, and buying power of the AUD to the Dong, then it ticks a lot of boxes.

"Vietnam continues to be one of the most sought-after destinations for Australian travellers," Intrepid's ANZ managing director Brett Mitchell told Travel Weekly. "It's a place people return to time and again because it offers an incredible mix of culture, food, history and natural landscapes, and there's always something new to discover."

[Click Here](#) to read more about my journey through Vietnam called "Where Ancient Traditions are Preserved and Dynamic, Modern Cities Thrive. "



Fairways & Getaways

Vietnam Group Departure
13–20 March 2027

8 DAYS
7 Nights

4 ★ BEACHFRONT RESORT

from **AUD \$2,364** *With Golf
from **AUD \$1,380** Non-Golfers
based on 2 pax sharing

INCLUDES

- 7 nights accommodation
- 3 rounds of 18-hole golf including cart & caddies*
- Daily breakfast
- Private airport & touring transfers
- English-speaking local guides & entrance fees
- Local support throughout

This relaxed golf and lifestyle escape blends championship golf with cultural experiences, coastal scenery and free time in beautiful Hoi An. Designed for both golfers and non-golfers, the itinerary combines premium golf, immersive local touring, Vietnamese cuisine and downtime by the beach, all while staying at a stylish beachfront resort.

3 ROUNDS OF GOLF

WORLD-CLASS GOLF EXPERIENCE

Play three of Central Vietnam's premier golf courses including the riverside BRG Nicklaus Course, the scenic mountain setting of Ba Na Hills Golf Club and the coastal fairways of Vinpearl Golf Nam Hoi An — each offering a unique and memorable golfing experience.



DA NANG BRG NICKLAUS



BA NA HILLS GOLF CLUB



VINPEARL GOLF NAM HOI AN

BEACHFRONT RESORT RETREAT

WYNDHAM HOI AN ROYAL BEACHFRONT RESORT ★★★★★

Unwind at the Wyndham Hoi An Royal Beachfront Resort, a stylish coastal retreat set just steps from the beach. Combining spacious ocean-view rooms with resort facilities, pools and easy access to Hoi An's ancient town, it provides the perfect base for both relaxation and exploration.



BEYOND THE FAIRWAYS

HOI AN COUNTRYSIDE JEEP TOUR

Explore rural Hoi An by Jeep visiting local farms, traditional craft villages and countryside communities before enjoying a home-cooked Vietnamese lunch with a local family.

BA NA HILLS & GOLDEN BRIDGE

Ride one of Southeast Asia's most impressive cable car systems to Ba Na Hills, famous for its mountain scenery, before visiting the iconic Golden Bridge and enjoying panoramic views over Da Nang and the coastline.

RED BRIDGE COOKING CLASS

Visit Hoi An's vibrant market before cruising by boat to Red Bridge Cooking School for a hands-on Vietnamese cooking experience.



13–20 March 2027
SPACES LIMITED | ENQUIRE NOW



Jen Camilleri | Travel Advisor
M: 0411 332 172
E: jen.camilleri@connectedtravel.com.au

Sarah Beggs | Travel Advisor
M: 0403 324 733
E: sarah.beggs@connectedtravel.com.au

FAIRWAYS & GETAWAYS – HOI AN, VIETNAM

MARCH 2027 – LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE

I'm delighted to invite you to join me on Fairways & Getaways, a hosted small-group journey to the enchanting town of Hoi An, Vietnam, in March 2027.

This carefully curated experience combines exceptional golf, fascinating cultural encounters, delicious cuisine, and time to relax in one of Southeast Asia's most charming destinations. Best of all, it's designed for both golfers and non-golfers, making it the perfect getaway for couples, friends, and solo travellers alike.

Golfers will enjoy the opportunity to play some of Vietnam's most highly regarded golf courses, known for their spectacular settings and world-class design. Meanwhile, non-golfers can immerse themselves in the rich culture and craftsmanship that Hoi An is famous for.

Highlights for non-golfers include visits with skilled local artisans, including jewellery makers, expert tailors, and bespoke shoemakers renowned for their exceptional workmanship. There will also be the opportunity to participate in a Vietnamese cooking class, explore the colourful streets and markets, and perhaps commission a unique handcrafted piece to take home as a lasting reminder of the journey.

As your host, I will be travelling with the group throughout the trip, ensuring everything runs smoothly while sharing the experiences and creating a welcoming atmosphere for everyone.

Whether you're passionate about golf, interested in authentic cultural experiences, or simply looking for a memorable holiday with like-minded travellers, Fairways & Getaways offers the perfect balance of activity, discovery, and relaxation.

I invite you to view the detailed itinerary and learn more about this exciting hosted journey. Places are limited, so if you'd like to join us, please contact me as soon as possible to register your interest.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE DETAILED ITINERARY](#)



CONNECTED TIDES

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF RIVER CRUISING AND WHY THE DEMOGRAPHIC IS GETTING YOUNGER

For years, river cruising has carried a certain reputation: elegant ships, organised excursions, leisurely afternoons and, perhaps, a passenger demographic firmly in the “retirement age” category. But that picture is changing.

River cruising is attracting a younger generation of travellers who are discovering that it offers something surprisingly appealing, the chance to explore multiple destinations without constantly packing and unpacking, while still enjoying comfort, great food and plenty of opportunities for adventure.

Myth #1: River cruising is only for retirees

This is probably the biggest misconception.

While river cruises have traditionally attracted an older demographic, cruise lines are increasingly seeing younger couples, solo travellers and active professionals choosing river cruising.

Why? Because the experience has evolved.

Today's river cruises can include cycling excursions, hiking, kayaking, food tours, wine experiences, cooking classes and active explorations of local towns and villages. You can spend the morning cycling through vineyards and the afternoon relaxing on deck with a glass of wine.

For the adventure-curious traveller, that's a pretty appealing combination.

Myth #2: You spend all your time on the ship

Quite the opposite.

One of the great advantages of river cruising is that the destinations are right outside your door. Unlike ocean cruising, where you can spend hours at sea before reaching your next port, river ships are constantly moving through the heart of the regions you're visiting. Wake up in a new destination, step off the ship and start exploring. And because river ships are smaller, they can often dock close to city centres, meaning you're not spending your precious holiday time travelling from a large port into town.

Myth #3: River cruising is slow and boring

There is certainly an opportunity to slow down, but that doesn't mean you have to sit still.

River cruising is actually a fantastic example of soft adventure: you can choose how active you want each day to be. Perhaps today is a guided walking tour through a historic city. Tomorrow might be a bike ride along the river. The next day could be a wine tasting followed by an afternoon enjoying the scenery from the ship.

The beauty is in having choice without the logistics.

Myth #4: It's all about the ship

The ship is certainly part of the experience, but the real attraction is the destination.

Imagine sailing through the Rhine Valley with medieval castles appearing around the next bend, wandering through Christmas markets in Germany, tasting wine along the Rhône or exploring the villages of the Douro Valley.

The river becomes your moving base, your hotel travels with you while the scenery changes outside your window.

So, why are younger travellers discovering river cruising?

Life is busy. And increasingly, travellers want to make their holiday time count.

River cruising removes much of the logistical hassle of a multi-destination trip. Your accommodation, meals, transport and often your sightseeing are wrapped into one experience. That means you can spend less time worrying about how to get from A to B and more time enjoying where you are.

There is also a growing desire for more meaningful travel. Travellers are looking for local food, culture, history, scenery and authentic experiences, rather than simply visiting a destination and taking a photo before moving on. **River cruising delivers plenty of that.**

Perhaps it's time to rethink river cruising

If you've always thought river cruising wasn't for you, it might be worth taking another look.

You don't have to be retired. You don't have to be inactive. And you certainly don't have to spend your holiday sitting on a deck watching the world go by. River cruising can be an incredibly comfortable way to explore, with just enough adventure to keep things interesting.

And perhaps that's exactly why it fits so beautifully into the world of soft adventure travel: you can push yourself a little, discover somewhere new, and then return to the comfort of your floating hotel at the end of the day.

The best adventures don't always require roughing it. Sometimes, they come with a balcony, a beautiful view and your bags already unpacked.



Flights
on us



**Economy airfares included
up to \$2,800 per person***

For a limited time, clients will enjoy included economy airfares up to AU\$2,800pp when they book a river, ocean or expedition voyage. These offers are available for select 2027-2029 voyages from now until 30 November 2026.



LIMITED TIME RIVER FARES FOR 2027

Don't miss Viking's new limited time fares on six popular river voyages, sailing March to August 2027. Save your clients thousands on select voyages, plus enjoy Flights on Us with economy airfares included up to \$2,800pp*. This is a rare chance to lock in your clients' stateroom at these fares. Hurry, they're only available until sold out.



RHINE GETAWAY

Basel to Amsterdam or vice versa

8 DAYS | 4 COUNTRIES | 6 GUIDED TOURS

From \$4,995pp with economy flights included up to \$2,800 per person*

Save \$1,800pp. Original fare was \$6,795pp.

Based on 18 March 2027 departure
Available across nine sailing dates at this fare.



LYON & PROVENCE

Avignon to Lyon or vice versa

8 DAYS | 1 COUNTRY | 7 GUIDED TOURS

From \$5,395pp with economy flights included up to \$2,800 per person*

Save \$2,000pp. Original fare was \$7,395pp.

Based on 19 March 2027 departure
Available across six sailing dates at this fare.



PASSAGE TO EASTERN EUROPE

Bucharest to Budapest or vice versa

11 DAYS | 5 COUNTRIES | 8 GUIDED TOURS

From \$6,795pp with economy flights included up to \$2,800 per person*

Save \$2,200pp. Original fare was \$8,995pp.

Based on 26 March 2027 departure
Available across one sailing date at this fare.



PARIS TO THE SWISS ALPS

Paris to Zürich or vice versa

12 DAYS | 4 COUNTRIES | 10 GUIDED TOURS

From \$6,395pp with economy flights included up to \$2,800 per person*

Save \$2,000pp. Original fare was \$8,395pp.

Based on 20 March 2027 departure
Available across one sailing date at this fare.



GRAND EUROPEAN TOUR

Amsterdam to Budapest or vice versa

15 DAYS | 4 COUNTRIES | 12 GUIDED TOURS

From \$8,795pp with economy flights included up to \$2,800 per person*

Save \$2,600pp. Original fare was \$11,395pp.

Based on 20 June 2027 departure
Available across six sailing dates at this fare.



CAPITALS OF EASTERN EUROPE

Vienna to Bucharest or vice versa

17 DAYS | 7 COUNTRIES | 12 GUIDED TOURS

From \$10,095pp with economy flights included up to \$2,800 per person*

Save \$2,700pp. Original fare was \$12,795pp.

Based on 4 June 2027 departure
Available across one sailing date at this fare.

INTRODUCING **LEGEND OF THE SEAS**



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INTERNATIONAL

Uncover the all-inclusive experience that makes Royal Caribbean cruises truly exceptional. From luxurious accommodations and world-class dining to exciting onboard entertainment and a variety of activities, everything is designed to ensure your journey is seamless and unforgettable. Whether you're relaxing by the pool, enjoying a live show, or exploring vibrant ports, all the essentials are covered so you can focus on making memories.

Choose from a variety of cabin types, each thoughtfully designed to offer comfort and tailored to your preferences. Whether you prefer an interior stateroom, oceanview, balcony, or suite, there are options at different price points to suit your budget. Relax and unwind in a space that matches your style and needs, making your cruise experience truly your own.

Your cruise takes you to some of the most incredible destinations around the world, each offering its own unique experiences, rich culture, and exciting adventures. Every port of call is an opportunity to immerse yourself in new surroundings, whether it's relaxing on sun-soaked beaches, exploring vibrant markets, discovering historic sites, or enjoying local cuisine. Each stop enriches your journey and creates memories that last a lifetime.



7 Nights

Western Mediterranean Cruise

Legend of the Seas

ROUNDTRIP FROM: Barcelona, Spain

CRUISE PORTS: Barcelona, Spain • Palma de Mallorca, Spain • Provence (Marseille), France • Florence/Pisa (La Spezia), Italy • Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy • Naples/Capri, Italy • Barcelona, Spain

[+ View Ports & Map](#)

AVG PER PERSON*

\$2,657

Starting price in AUD, valid for Sep 12, 2027 Taxes & fees included.*



8 Nights

Perfect Day CocoCay & Caribbean

Legend of the Seas

ROUNDTRIP FROM: Fort Lauderdale, Florida

CRUISE PORTS: Fort Lauderdale, Florida • Willemstad, Curacao • Oranjestad, Aruba • Cabo Rojo, Dominican Republic • Perfect Day at CocoCay, Bahamas • Fort Lauderdale, Florida

[+ View Ports & Map](#)

AVG PER PERSON*

\$2,470

Starting price in AUD, valid for Feb 6, 2027 Taxes & fees included.*



The rise of soft adventure travel reflects a shift in how people want to experience the world.

Travellers are seeking more than ticking destinations off a list, they want meaningful experiences, local connection and a little adventure, without sacrificing comfort. Think scenic hikes, cycling through villages, food experiences, cultural encounters and immersive stays, all thoughtfully planned so the journey feels exciting rather than exhausting.

Soft adventure is also about travelling at your own pace, choosing experiences that challenge you just enough, while still leaving time to relax, enjoy a beautiful hotel, savour a local meal or simply take in your surroundings.



Missed Something Recently?

If you've missed any of my recent blogs, you can catch up via the links below. I share longer-form stories, destination insights, and thoughtful travel reflections there.

Asian Perfect Pairings

Why Bhutan Is the Ultimate Destination for the Soft Adventure Traveller

Celebrating Pride Month Through Travel: Exploring the World Authentically

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Soft Adventure Travel Tips - China

1. Go beyond the famous sights

Balance the Great Wall and Terracotta Warriors with local markets, food tours, tea houses, cooking classes or a village stay. These smaller experiences often create the most memorable connections.

2. Allow time to wander

Don't over-schedule. Spend an afternoon exploring an old town, cycling through the countryside or simply getting lost in a historic neighbourhood. Some of China's best moments happen when you slow down and let curiosity lead the way.

3. Make the journey part of the adventure

China's high-speed rail network is an experience in itself. Choose scenic routes and allow time to enjoy the journey rather than rushing between destinations.

If this newsletter stirred something, a memory, a curiosity, or the sense that it might be time to plan a journey of your own, I'm always happy to help shape it. Thoughtfully planned, well connected, and designed around how you want to experience the world.

Email: jen.camilleri@connectedtravel.com.au

Call: 0411 332 172

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