EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Ancient Nubia Explorer (BSU 2017)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TRIPDURATI
12
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: BSU

Trip Highlights - Ancient Nubia Explorer

- ✓ Temples & Pyramids - Discover the amazing Pharaonic architecture of northern Sudan - there are more pyramids here than in Egypt.
- ✓ Nubian hospitality - Enjoy a traditional welcome as guests in the village of Soleb.
- ✓ Desert landscapes - Get off the beaten track in this little visited tourist destination.
- ✓ Nile - Take an exhilarating cruise along the world's longest river to discover its hidden treasures.

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	3 nights Standard Hotel 2 nights Standard Tented Camp 3 nights Standard Guesthouse 2 nights Simple Village House
Included Meals:	11 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 8 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Khartoum
End Point:	Trip ends: Khartoum
Transport:	4WD, Boat
Countries:	Sudan

Ancient Nubia Explorer

Travelling through the scenic Nile Valley and into the desert we discover Sudan, a country with more pyramids than Egypt and some of the friendliest people on the planet. We visit well-preserved sandstone temples, tombs engraved with images of the pharaohs and the many pyramids of the Royal Necropolis of Meroe. We will experience the warm hospitality of the Nubian people and stay in a traditional village house.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

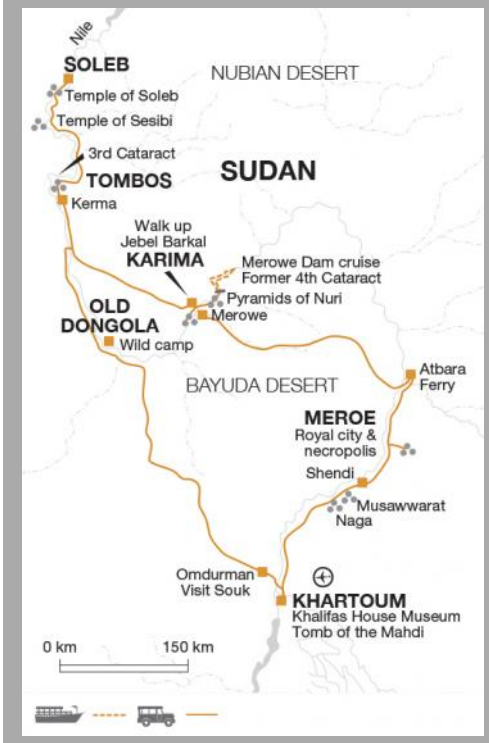
Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour in Khartoum

Our tour begins in Khartoum, Sudan's vibrant capital city which comprises of both a permanent and nomadic population. Khartoum is located at the confluence of the White and Blue Nile and the point where the two rivers converge is called Al-Mogran. It is said that the 2 different colours of the river branches can be seen before they meet to feed the iconic Nile river.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Omdurman Souk and lunch on the Nile

After an early morning arrival there is the opportunity for those travelling on the group flight to freshen up. We then begin our exploration of the city with a visit to the tomb and small museum of the Mahdi, the Islamic leader of the Sudan who fought in 1885 against General Gordon and English colonisation. After lunch, in a typical local restaurant that overlooks the Nile, we make the short drive to Omdurman. Once the old capital city of Sudan, Omdurman is famed for its huge colourful souk.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3 Visit of Coptic Christian Temples at Old Dongola

Leaving behind the city of Khartoum we get our first glimpse of the Nubian desert as we drive up to Old Dongola, a deserted old town on the east bank of the Nile. Here we visit two Coptic Christian temples decorated with marble columns. Old Dongola was an important city in medieval Nubia, so is a great place to start our Nubian experience. Tonight we will wild camp in the desert, an immersive experience that will never be forgotten.

Overnight: **Standard Tented Camp**
Your own tent available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Temple of Soleb and overnight stay in Nubian house

Today we continue our exploration of this fabulous region, first of all we will visit a local village and meet the local people before crossing the Nile and driving north to Soleb. At the Temple of Soleb we spend time at what is considered to be one of, if not the most beautiful Egyptian temple of all Sudan. Standing as a testimony of the New Kingdom in Nubia, its many walls are rich in hieroglyphic inscriptions and bas-relief figures. In the nearby village we totally immerse ourselves in village life with a stay in a traditional house. Here the population speaks a different language from the Arabs and the Islamic religion is not as 'strict' as in other regions of northern Sudan. The women don't cover their faces and readily speak to foreigners. The villages are beautiful, sandwiched between sand dunes and palm trees, the houses are painted and decorated with intricate patterns and flowers. Enthusiastic hospitality abounds - the local Nubian people will often invite visitors into their homes to share a meal or a cup of spiced tea. We stay in a large Nubian house where one of the buildings has been allocated for the weary traveller. For those who prefer sleeping under the stars you are welcome to put your tent up in the courtyard.

Overnight: **Standard Tented Camp**
Your own tent available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Visit the Temple of Sesibi, experience Sudanese hospitality

Moving south down the Nile we reach the remains of the temple of Sesibi. We eventually reach the granite boulders of the Third Cataract which used to be the third huge obstacle that the ancients Egyptians had to face when trying to sail on the Nile River. In Sebu, right on the river bank of the Nile it is possible to visit one of the richest sites of rock engraving of all Sudan with hundreds of images from prehistoric to Egyptian times. Not far from here, among the rocks near the village of Tombos, there are the granite quarries and the remains of a huge statue of the King Taharqa, simply left there in the desert 3000 years ago.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 Exploring the mud temple Defuffas of Kerma

This morning we continue to move south to the ancient city of Karima, a city that was first settled in 2400BC. Once in Kerma we will visit the famous Deffufas, the mud brick temples where ceremonies were performed. There are the east and west Deffufas, both temples very different in size and repair but incredibly fascinating. There is also a museum at the site to cement the knowledge learned during this visit. We will then drive east to cross the Nubian Desert and make our way to our rest house for the evening.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Petrified forest and sunset trip to Jebel Barkal

The small town of Karima lies at the foot of the Jebel Barkal. This landmark in the Nubian Desert, Jebel Barkal (Jebel means mountain in Arabic) can be seen from many kilometres away whilst still in the open desert. At the foot of this wonderful isolated red sandstone mountain, considered holy since the ancient times, there is a large temple dedicated to the Pharaohs of the New Reign. Heading southwards to the village of El Kurru where there is the necropolis of the ancient capital, Napata. Here we visit a tomb, which was excavated in the rock under pyramids - partially collapsed - and are totally decorated with images of the Pharaoh, of the gods and multicolour hieroglyphic inscriptions. Before returning to Karima we then continue through the Nubian desert and visit a petrified forest with thousands of fossilised trunks. We will take a sunset walk to Jebel Barkal.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Nile cruise and afternoon visit of the Pyramids of Nuri

After breakfast, we visit the market in Karima, where we get a real insight into the everyday life of the Sudanese people before heading through the Nubian Desert with its level evenness, its sand stretches and its soft undulation. It is an almost sterile area where no vegetation survives. Until 2008 this drive would take you to the beautiful granite rocky formations of the 4th Cataract where the Nile ran turbulently among rocks forming rapids and a beautiful wild landscape, making navigation of the river very difficult. However in April 2008 the new Dam of Merowee was completed and following flooding and artificial lake was created. We take a cruise on the Nile taking the opportunity to walk on the small islands to explore the sandy beaches along the river edges. In the afternoon we cross the Nile to and spend time at the Pyramids of Nuri.

Overnight: **Simple Village House**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Driving through the Bayuda Desert to Meroe

We cross the Nile again this morning and then we experience off road driving through the Bayuda desert. We continue for few hours before hitting the asphalt road for 100kms and then back on to desert trails to reconnect with the Nile. This journey is likely to take around 7 hours, though the scenery and environment keeps us occupied and enthralled. If we are lucky then we may see Bisharin nomads in the desert, rarely seen by westerners. Once we reach the Nile, a pontoon (local ferry) is used to cross before we reach our fixed camp at magical Meroe.

Overnight: **Simple Village House**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Explore the Royal Necropolis and the Royal City of Meroe

The Royal Necropolis of Meroe is located about 3 km from the Nile on hills covered by yellow sand dunes. Several pyramids stand out with their sharp shapes against the clear sky. Nubian pyramids have no mortuary room inside, the real tomb is dug inside the rock below and is connected with the outside with an inclined tunnel with a small temple at its entrance. The walls are fully decorated with bas-reliefs that show the King's life and the gods. There's the opportunity here to take a camel ride (optional). In the afternoon we move along the Nile to visit the ruins of the royal city. The excavations confirm that the town of Meroe used to cover a large area and the royal city was located in a central position, surrounded by suburbs and a boundary wall. Most of the area where the city is located, formed by many small hills covered by red clay fragments, has still to be excavated by the archaeologists.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 Market of Shendi, trip to temples at Naga, return to Khartoum

Leaving Meroe behind we visit the daily market in Shendi, before heading to Musawwarat El Sufra where we'll visit the Elephant and Lion Temples. We then move on to the ancient site of Naga. Here we see the temple of Apedemak (1st century AD), a beautiful sandstone building with walls engraved with the images of the Meroitic kings and gods. Nearby is another temple, in Greek/roman style, called 'Kiosk', and another with the remains of statues of rams which was recently discovered in the sands by a German archaeological mission. This afternoon we return to the capital, Khartoum for our final dinner to reminisce about our Sudanese adventure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 12 Tour ends

Our tour ends today in Khartoum after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 11 breakfasts, 10 lunches,8 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Sudan

Lunch £: 5.00

Dinner £: 16.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Sudan

Water £: 1.00 Please note alcohol is illegal in Sudan and it is not permitted to bring it in the country or to buy locally.

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Meroe - Camel Riding US$ 10

There is a fee of $20USD to use a video camera at all historical sites.

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.
Accordingly you should allow US$ 35 tipping on this tour.

Foreign Exchange

Sudan

ATM Availability: Limited to Khartoum and for Sudanese registered cards only.

Credit Card Acceptance: Limited to Sudanese registered cards only.

Travellers Cheques: Not recommended.

Local Currency: Sudanese Pounds

Recommended Currency for Exchange: It is advisable to take your spending money in USD cash.

Where to Exchange: Khartoum airport and hotel

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Sudan: Visas are required by UK citizens and must be obtained prior to departure.
Visas are required by New Zealand, Australia, USA and Canada citizens and can be obtained prior to departure from your embassy of residence or can be obtained on arrival at Khartoum International airport. Please contact us for details of the process for visas on arrival. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Visas for UK citizens may be obtained through the Sudanese Embassy in London, or, alternatively through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK; Visaswift, at http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx. Your passport must have 6 months validity, 2 consecutive empty pages and must not have an Israeli stamp.

An authorisation is necessary to obtain your visa. Passport details for each client are required by Explore 7 weeks prior to the tour start date. Our local partners then proceed to gain authorisation in Khartoum and provide a letter of invitation. Once authorisation has been obtained, passports should be sent to the Sudanese Embassy in London together with the completed visa form and 3 passport size photographs.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Sudan

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus and Typhoid. During winter months there are generally very few mosquitos in northern Sudan and the risk of Malaria is regarded as low. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Sudan

Northern Sudan has a hot desert climate with a high variance between day and night. Winter months provide the best time to travel, from October to the end of April. The weather during this period is dry and sunny. October/November and March/April is around 30-35C during the day, dropping to 12-18C at night. December to Feburary is around 25-30C during the day and 5-10C at night.

Clothing

Take some warm clothes and a fleece for chilly desert nights in the winter, as temperatures drop sharply. Knee length shorts are acceptable for men in northern Sudan, but not for women. Nevertheless, dress sensitively in accordance with Muslim traditions and avoid wearing revealing clothing, particularly in rural areas. Legs should be covered when entering a mosque and women must also cover their heads.

Equipment

A 2/3 season sleeping bag, inflatable pillow, water bottle, insect repellent, sunhat, sunglasses, sunscreen and a head torch.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes/trainers or desert boots and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage which should be a soft bag or holdall, not a suitcase, plus daypack. As you are expected to carry your own luggage, we recommend that you pack light.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Sudan

Population: 30,894,000

Size of Country: 1,886,068 sq km

Major Language: Arabic, English

Religion: Islam

Time Difference to GMT: +3

Electric Supply & Plugs

Sudan

3 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association

of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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