

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Active Sri Lanka! (ASL 2017 HORTON PLAINS)



TRIPDURATION
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: ASL

Trip Highlights - Active Sri Lanka!

- ✓ Hiking and Biking - Cycle through rural villages and hike across the striking landscapes of the Knuckles Mountains
- ✓ Sigiriya - Climb up to the stunning cave temples at Dambulla and the mountain top fortress of King Kassapa
- ✓ Rafting - Tackle the Kelani River as we raft to our jungle chalet
- ✓ Willpaththu National Park - Game drive in search of leopard
- ✓ Kandy - Visit vibrant markets and the unique Temple of the Tooth
- ✓ Hikkaduwa - Relax beside the golden beaches and turquoise waters on the south coast

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 10 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Standard Camping
1 night Standard Lodge

Included Meals: 12 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Negombo

End Point: Trip ends: Colombo Airport

Transport: 4WD, Bus, Boat, Bicycle

Countries: Sri Lanka

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Active Sri Lanka!

Join us on an action-packed adventure across this spiritual island. We cycle backroads to discover ancient Buddhist cities, trek through verdant mountains and raft the white waters of the Central Highlands. We search for leopard in Willpaththu National Park and relax on the white sandy beaches of this tropical paradise known as 'Buddha's Island'.

Kandy Perahera

Every year there is a spectacular 10 day Festival in Kandy called the Esala Perahera. A replica of the famous Buddha's tooth relic is paraded around the town followed by a huge number of performers and elaborately adorned elephants. The scene is noisy, colourful and tremendous fun. If you travel on the 24th July 2017 departure you will be able to see this spectacle while you are in Kandy.

Why Book this trip

This tour is ideal if you are looking to combine Sri Lanka's cultural highlights with some active adventure. The rafting, cycling and walking are all fairly gentle and suitable for all levels of fitness and are a great way to get off the tourist trail.

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: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

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 Negombo

Our tour begins this afternoon in the small town of Negombo. Our hotel is set on the beach front offering the chance to watch small fishing boats come ashore and the sun setting over the ocean.



Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Morning cycle; jeep safari in Wilpattu National Park

Leaving after breakfast we drive to Giriulla this morning, from where we begin our morning's cycle ride along lush forested back roads to Padeniya. After stopping for lunch we have time to freshen up before swapping the bikes for jeeps and heading in to Wilpattu National Park. Despite the park's location in Sri Lanka's dry zone, it boasts nearly 60 lakes and is renowned for leopard, elephant and sambar deer spottings. We will go on a jeep safari in the hope of spotting the elusive leopard. We choose to visit this park, rather than the more touristy Yala National Park further south because we believe it offers our customers a better experience. The same animals can be seen here as in Yala, however it is less crowded, making our visit more enjoyable and responsible. We camp on the outskirts of the park this evening. Total cycling distance 45kms.

Overnight: **Standard Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3 Explore Dambulla's painted caves en route to Sigiriya

Today we take to our bikes again and cycle to Anaradhapura. We will then drive out to the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Dambulla, where a great series of caves hide an incredible collection of temples that date back to the 1st century BC. Containing a large number of Buddha images, as well as sculptures of Hindu Gods, the caves have become a huge pilgrimage site for countless worshippers, and this afternoon we will visit five separate caves, before returning to Anaradhapura for the evening. Total cycling distance 50km.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Climb Lion Rock before cycling to Polonnaruwa

An early transfer this morning takes us to the start of our ascent up the imposing Lion Rock for the climb to the redoubtable Sky Fortress. The ruins of this 5th century fortress (declared a World Heritage Site in 1982) are one of Sri Lanka's major attractions, a stu-pendous sight to behold and a feat of consummate engineering skill. A switchback series of steps (sometimes very steep and somewhat precarious) ascends to the top and half-way up, tucked beneath a sheltering overhang of rock, are the famous Sigiriya Damsels. These frescoes, their ancient colours still glowing, once covered an area of some 140 metres in length and are the only ancient non-religious paintings to have survived into modern times. On arriving at the summit (200m) we are presented with some magnificent views of the surrounding country, as well as the remains of what is left of the palace of King Kassapa. returning to the base of the fortress, we then cycle to the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, following a series of relatively straight and flat back roads that provide us with a moderately easy journey that passes through patches of forest and rural villages. For those that wish it, there is the option to break up part of the 30 km journey to Polonnaruwa by travelling along sections of it by bus. Total cycling distance 30km.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 5 Search for elephants in Minneriya National Park

Polonnaruwa reached the height of its glory in the 12th century and the city is still blessed with a number of its ancient buildings and monuments. This morning we visit the ancient city by bicycle and on foot, taking in the spectacular ruins of its Royal Palace, with its Audience Hall, Bathing Pool and Quadrangle-a wonderfully compact collection of ruins. Close by is the Circular Relic House, a curious round structure with a beautifully pre-served 'moonstone' carved at the foot of a flight of steps. Another famous feature of the deserted city is the group of carved images of the Buddha known as Galvihara, a collection of four colossal figures, all hewn out of solid granite. This afternoon we visit nearby Minneriya National Park by jeep, home to sambar deer, leopard and significant herds of elephant, as well as huge populations of migratory birds.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Trek on the Knuckles range. Drive to Kandy

This morning we drive to Giritale, travelling via Elahera and Pellegama, to a point where the crossover point between east and west Sri Lanka lies. Known as Riverstone Point, this region is home to the Knuckles Mountain Range and offers us a chance to break the

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journey with a short hike along a trail that runs through the ranges. Resembling a clenched fist (hence their unusual moniker), the mountains present a remarkable micro-cosm of the country, the striking landscapes and isolated cloud forests providing a haven for a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Our walk will take us around 3 hours, a soft to moderate trek that takes us through a landscape of incredible historic and natural importance. To the south and east lies the Mahaveli Valley, whilst the Matale Valley to the west encircles a collection of peaks that has no equal anywhere else in the country. Returning to our bus, we then complete the journey to Kandy, descending into the Matale Valley to arrive at our hotel late this afternoon. A packed lunch will be provided today, to enjoy en route.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7 Free time to explore Kandy

Today is left free to explore Kandy. This relaxed town is set around a large lake with the revered Temple of the Tooth set in one corner. The lake makes an interesting spot to see birdlife and water monitors as well as chat to the many people who walk the perimeter. Slightly outside the centre of the town are Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, this peaceful space is home to thousands of flying foxes which make for great photo opportunities hanging from the tall trees, or if you are lucky in flight as they dart between the branches.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Drive to Ginigathhena. Rafting on the Kelani River

Our drive this morning takes us to Ginigathhena, set amongst the fertile and lush western highlands. Set amidst a dramatic landscape of towering cliffs and wild water, the Kelani Ganga provides some of the best whitewater rafting in the country. The jungle around here were used as the back-drop for the 1957 film Bridge on the River Kwai and the grade 2-3 rapids provide us with the perfect combination of scenery and excitement, as we spend raft down to our accommodation in Kitulgala. We cover a 7km section of the river through 8 rapids. It will usually take approximately 1.5hr hours to cover the section but this depends on water levels, in high water it can take just under a hour to cover the distance. Taking lunch en route, we should arrive at our overnight lodge late this afternoon and, after a chance to freshen up, if time allows this evening there will be a chance to join an optional trek across the river and through the jungle to a hidden waterfall.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 9 Morning trek; drive to Nuwara Eliya

This morning we follow a trail through forest to a nearby village before taking the short drive to Nuwara Eliya. Along the way we stop to visit one of the tea plantations which cover the landscape in this region. The afternoon is free to explore Nuwara Eliya.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Visit Bambarakand Waterfalls en route to Belihuloya

After a short transfer we trek across the plateau of Horton Plains and through tea plantations until we reach Bambarakanda Waterfalls, the highest in Sri Lanka. We take a picnic lunch while at the waterfalls before walking further down the trail to meet our bus. We then drive to our campsite in Belihuloya. Approximately 5 hours walking in total.

Overnight: **Standard Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 11 Cycle through remote villages then drive to Hikkaduwa

We start this morning with a short bus transfer to Kinchigune where we take to our bikes. We follow quiet back roads and pass through small villages. The route takes us about three hours, depending on how many times we stop to chat to the villagers along the way. We meet up with our bus and then drive to the coastal resort of Hikkaduwa. Along the way we have the chance to stop at a Responsible Tourism Partnership project. The Dickwella Lace Centre is a locally run project that provides income and training for villagers who were badly affected by the 2004 tsunami.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **12** Free to relax on the beach or visit nearby Galle

The next two days are free to enjoy the laid back ambience and turquoise waters of Sri Lanka's southern coast. Rich in colonial history and golden beaches, the region offers us a wealth of options to enjoy the most of our time here. There are snorkelling trips available and for those wanting pure relaxation there are plenty of spots to enjoy an Ayurvedic massage. You could also pay a visit to the city of Galle and its historic colonial fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that remains one of the best preserved examples of colonial fortification in the world.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **13** Relax on the calm beaches of Hikkaduwa

Day free to continue exploring this area.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **14** Tour ends at Colombo Airport

After an early breakfast we transfer to Colombo Airport where the tour ends.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Accommodation in Sri Lanka can be varied and on our trips we stay in a mix of hotels, heritage properties, camp sites and homestays. Standards do not equate to standards in the UK and it's best to approach each type of accommodation with an open mind. Service can be slow in places especially when travelling with a group. Hot water is not always available 24 hours a day in some of the smaller properties, and with a group staying you might find if you are showering last you may miss out on the hottest water.

Traditional Sri Lankan cuisine is excellent, and although it can be very spicy there are many dishes that feature cooling coconut milk or have a spicy sambar on the side to allow you to adjust the meal to your taste. There isn't a culture of eating out in Sri Lanka, most locals will eat at home, and as such there are very few restaurants around, and those that exist tend to be in hotels. As tourism develops a few independent restaurants are beginning to appear, mainly in Colombo but also in Kandy, Galle and in the coastal resorts. During the tour we will endeavour to eat out at local restaurants wherever possible but for many nights, at this point in time, the hotel restaurants are the only option available.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 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.

Sri Lanka

Lunch £: 4.00

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Dinner £: 8.00

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.

Sri Lanka

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 0.50

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

Kandy - Botanical Gardens £4.50 Temple of the Tooth £6.00. Cultural Show - £5.00

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

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 £40 for tipping. Your tour leader will account to you for any organised tipping.

Foreign Exchange

Sri Lanka

ATM Availability: Yes, usually in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards can usually be used in most large shops and restaurants. Please note that Foreign Office advice warns about the problem of credit card fraud in Sri Lanka so please consider this when deciding if to pay by card while on tour.

Travellers Cheques: Are not easy to change and where they can be changed the exchange rates can be poor.

Local Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US\$ and UK£ are equally good

Where to Exchange: In most major towns.

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.

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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.

Travel Aware

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

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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

Sri Lanka: All foreign nationals who intend to visit Sri Lanka for a short stay of up to six months, including transit passengers, must apply for travel authorization online prior to travel to the country. To obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) you must visit <http://www.eta.gov.lk> to apply for it prior to travel. It is strongly recommended that you print and bring a copy of the ETA approval notice with you. The Sri Lankan authorities require that your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after departure from Sri Lanka.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Sri Lanka

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. We strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellents containing DEET as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. 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

Sri Lanka

Year round high temperatures in coastal regions: Colombo averages 27°C. It is much cooler in the hills with Kandy averaging 20°C and Nuwara Eliya down to 16°C. Springlike temperatures in the hill country, but chilly evenings. Two monsoon periods: Apr-Sep when rain is confined to the southwest; and Oct-Mar when it falls in the northeast.

Clothing

Select your clothes carefully, bearing in mind that the climate is tropical and that upland areas are cooler and more temperate. Lightweight rainwear is also essential, and warmer clothing for the highland walks and chilly night temperatures in the mountains. You may also find cycling gloves, shorts or trousers useful. When visiting religious sites you will need to dress respectfully by covering you knees and shoulder plus taking off your shoes and hats. You will need to bring long trousers, or buy a sarong locally. Don't forget your swimming costume.

Equipment

Binoculars, head torch, insect repellent, sunglasses, sun cream, cycling helmet and a cycling water bottle. You may also wish to bring with you a gel saddle. Whilst in tea country there are leeches and you may wish to take leech socks.

Footwear

Comfortable trekking boots, shoes and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Sri Lanka

Population: 20,238,000

Size of Country: 65,610 sq km

Major Language: Sinhala, Tamil

Religion: Buddhism

Time Difference to GMT: +6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Sri Lanka

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 & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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.

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

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) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

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 Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. 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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