

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Ecuador Discovery (EC 2017)



TRIPDURATION
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: EC

Trip Highlights - Ecuador Discovery

- ✓ Quito - Discover Ecuador's colonial Andean capital, surrounded by snow-capped mountains
- ✓ Volcanoes - Picturesque drives through the 'Avenue of the Volcanoes'
- ✓ Otavalo - Visit the fascinating Indian market
- ✓ Banos - Dramatic gateway to the jungles of the Orient
- ✓ Cuenca - Explore this pretty city and visit a panama hat factory

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 4 nights Standard Hotel
5 nights Standard Guesthouse
3 nights Standard Lodge
1 night Standard Hacienda

Included Meals: 13 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Quito

End Point: Trip ends: Guayaquil

Transport: Bus, Train

Countries: Ecuador

Ecuador Discovery

This ambitious journey through the Ecuadorian Andes takes you on a discovery of the fascinating colonial cities of Quito and Cuenca, an exploration of the Amazonian wildlife along the Napo River, through thermal springs and along precarious railway tracks. The stunning scenery along the 'Avenue of the Volcanoes', the excitement of travelling on the Devil's Nose Railway and the wilderness of the Cajas National Park are just a few of the highlights of this trip.

No visit to Ecuador is complete without visiting the Galapagos. The 18 volcanic islands and 40 islets host an abundance of wildlife and natural wonders not found anywhere in the world. If you would like to extend your mainland Ecuador trip, we have a selection of cruises exploring the Galapagos from three to seven nights, with three different standards of boats available to suit your budget. Type 'Galapagos' into the search bar on your left to see what is available.

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 in Quito

Arrive Quito and check into hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Tour of Quito's highlights including the Church of San Francisco

We begin with a walking tour of Quito, Ecuador's mountain capital and the second highest capital city in Latin America. One of South America's most beautiful cities, Quito lies in a narrow valley at the foot of Pichincha Volcano, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and extinct volcanoes. The fascinating UNESCO Heritage Site of the Old Town, with its rich blend of colonial architecture, imposing churches and bustling local markets, makes for a stunning introduction to Ecuador. We will visit some of the main sites, including the Plaza de la Independencia, the cultural heart of the colonial city, and La Compania church with its magnificent gilded altars, walls and ceilings. At the church of San Francisco we are introduced to Quito's largest and oldest colonial church, built in 1553. A climb to the top of nearby Cerro Panecillo affords us one of the best views across the city and the surrounding mountains, presenting us with an unparalleled vista of the encircling Andes from the viewing platform offered by the statue of the Virgen de Quito.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Visit the Quitsato Equator Monument en route to Otavalo; visit Peguche village

This morning we drive to Otavalo via the Equator line, stopping off at the Quitsato Equator monument, a huge sundial spanning 54 metres across, which celebrates the crossing of the equator line at zero degrees. From this huge clock face, a compass of stones allows you to not only read the time, but also the month, while other features indicate the solstices and equinoxes. The word 'Quitsato' comes from the language of the indigenous Tsachilas people from the Ecuadorian coast. 'Quitsa' means 'Middle', and 'To' means 'world'; Quitsato therefore means Middle of the World, and it is from this word that Ecuador's capital city also derives its name. Following the Panamericana Highway, we then head north, towards San Pablo Lake, via the scenic route Cayambe - Zuleta, where we take a gentle walk. We will have lunch before continuing to the indigenous village of Peguche. This village is famed for its local families who make colourful weavings plus others who play traditional Andean music by using several types of panpipes made by themselves. We will stop and enjoy visiting one of the musician families before heading to Otavalo where we will overnight.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4 Explore Otavalo Market and Laguna Cuicocha

This morning we explore the small market town of Otavalo. The town is one of South America's most important areas for ethno-tourism and its regular markets attract traders and artisans from as far away as Peru and Bolivia. The Otavaleños are an incredibly dignified and assured people, proudly displaying their cultural traditions and ancient heritage for all to see. The market is a rich confusion of goods and styles from right across the region, with jewellery, rugs, woven linen bags, woodcarvings and leather goods on display. Add to that the visual majesty of the setting and the colourful costumes of the protagonists and you have a truly remarkable cultural experience. This afternoon we take a drive out to the tranquil setting of Cuicocha, a turquoise crater-lake located at 3100m and approached through a wonderful landscape of alpine vegetation. Located in the Western Cordillera, at the foot of Cotacachi, this now dormant volcanic caldera is a prime spot to find the 'King of the Andes', wide-winged condors that soar high above the valleys in graceful flight. There may be the option to go for a walk along a segment of the trail that goes around the lake (1.5 hours) before returning to Otavalo for the evening.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Drive via Cotopaxi National Park to Quito

Our journey to Quito takes us south through some of the most impressive mountain scenery in the entire country, into the landscapes so aptly described by the German explorer Alexander von Humboldt as the 'Avenue of the Volcanoes'. We actually drive just past Quito this morning, into the spectacular Cotopaxi National Park, where we shall see one of the world's highest active volcanoes. Ecuador's second highest mountain, Cotopaxi is a classic volcanic cone, snow covered and rising an imposing 5897m from the valley floor below. We will take some time whilst we are here to walk around the Limpiopungo Plateau (1.5 hours), where a shallow glacial lake presents us with a perfect spot to explore something of the rich flora and fauna of the paramo (high altitude Andean grasslands). Set between the imposing masses of Cotopaxi and Ruminahui, the plateau is a haven for birdlife, as well as wild horses, the south american fox and the white tailed deer. After exploring this majestic place, we head back north to our overnight stop in Quito.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

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DAY 6 Drive to the Amazon, our base for the next three nights

This morning we will drive north-east to Termas de Papallacta, this route was taken by the Spanish conquistador Francisco de Orellana in 1542 as he crossed the Andes mountain range upon discovering the Amazon and Amazon River. Termas de Papallacta Spa & Resort is located just 67 km (40 miles) from Ecuador's capital. With an altitude of 3300 meters (10,824 feet) above sea level and a cold wet climate we will enjoy a couple of hours at the thermoludic area, which consists of five hot thermal pools and one cold pool. We'll continue driving into the Amazon Region and will take a short walk around the lodge before dinner.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7 Explore the Amazon by canoe searching for wildlife

After breakfast we will depart the lodge for a canoe trip on the Misahualli and Napo River to the protected forest of Misicocha where we will walk in the forest. We will admire the extraordinary flora and the exotic sounds of the primary rainforest. If we are lucky, we might see toucans, oropendolas, parrots and small monkeys. The local guide will explain the flora and fauna of the Amazon Region with special emphasis on medicinal plants. We will have lunch in a typical hut with a wonderful view over the Napo River. We will return to our canoe and ride upstream to visit the Indian village of Muyuna and find out how to prepare 'chicha', a fermented yuca drink.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Walk along the Misahualli River learning about local plants and visiting an Indian Community

Today we go for a walk with a native guide who will explain the typical plants of this area and their daily use. During the hike we will pass through a labyrinth of high rocks with caves and amazing vegetation. After lunch, we will walk along the Misahualli River to the small village of Pununo where we cross a suspended bridge and enter the territory of the Indian Community of 'Alto Pununo' where we will see how the local Indians live and work.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Travel the Waterfall Route to Banos

Crossing from the Amazon Jungle to the Highlands we will drive through the 'Avenue of Waterfalls'. We'll stop to visit the Pailon del Diablo waterfall, and will continue to the town of Banos, sitting below the active Tungurahua volcano. If the level of activity of the volcano changes, the accommodation for tonight is subject to change, but we will keep you updated if that happens.

Overnight: **Standard Hacienda**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Visit Chimborazo Forest Reserve, overnight in Riobamba

Today we plan to see the highest peak in Ecuador in the Chimborazo Forest Reserve. Mt. Chimborazo, at 6310 mts is the most distant point from the centre of the earth. The reserve is an important protected area that guards a wide variety of vegetation and animals, including alpacas and vicunas. Once in the reserve, we will drive up to the "Hermanos Carrel Refuge" located at 4800m, a great place to take a rest and enjoy a fantastic view of the beautiful Ecuadorian Andes. From here we will descend to El Arenal at 4200m, here we will take a leisurely 1 hour walk observing the vegetation, fauna and landscapes of the reserve. Leaving this magnificent scenery behind, we will continue driving to Riobamba, where we will stay overnight.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Travel on the 'Devil's Nose' Train to Alausi before continuing to Cuenca

Leaving early this morning we take the bus to Alausi and then the train on to Sibambe, which is inaccessible by road. This famous railway is a triumph of engineering. From Alausi the track drops 800m down a ridge and into the gorge of the Río Chanchan. This

almost sheer descent, known as the 'Devil's Nose', was achieved by building a series of switch backs, making it one of the most exciting train rides in the world. The train returns to Alausi where we rejoin our bus. From here, our trip continues south along the scenic Panamerican Highway with a stop in Ingapirca, the main Inca complex in Ecuador where we will visit its principal archeological sites, before continuing to Cuenca.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Cuenca city tour, visit the Panama Hat Factory

Today, we'll visit the principal neighbourhoods and streets of Cuenca, a UNESCO World Heritage city. We will visit the downtown historical area, the central market, Abdon Calderon Park with its new and old cathedral. This city continues a proud intellectual tradition that has produced many notable writers, poets, artists, and philosophers We continue the tour to the Homero Ortega Panama Hat factory to observe the complete process of manufacturing of the Panama hat which is undoubtedly most important to our country. Finally we will visit the tourist balcony of 'Turi' where we can see a panoramic view of the whole city of Cuenca.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Discover Cajas National Park before travelling to Guayaquil

We will drive to Guayaquil on the El Cajas route, stopping at the national park. Here, we'll visit Llaviuco lake for a one and a half hour walk, before travelling to Guayaquil for the night.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Morning city tour of Guayaquil city tour before the tour ends

This morning there is time for a tour of Guayaquil before the tour ends. We'll visit the administration square, where the local government buildings are located. Then we'll go Parque Seminario, also known as 'Parque de las Iguanas' due to the colonies of land iguanas that can be found there. We will walk along the Malecon 2000, including a visit to the Palacio de Cristal, Torre Morisca, La Rotonda and gardens area. To finish, we'll visit Las Penas, the oldest neighborhood of Guayaquil, where we could find some art galleries inside their traditional architecture.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 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.

Ecuador

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 13.00

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.

Ecuador

Bottle of Beer £: 1.70

Water £: 1.3

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

Papallacta hummingbird gardens - US\$5

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will still look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$80.

Foreign Exchange

Ecuador

ATM Availability: Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Local Currency: US Dollar.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in U.S. Dollar Cash (NOT Sterling, which is almost impossible to change). The US dollar is the currency used in Ecuador. It is advisable to bring some US\$400 - \$500 of your total spending money in cash, in small denomination notes (in good condition). 100US\$ bills are very difficult to use.

Where to Exchange: Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

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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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.

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

Ecuador: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. In order for your visa to be granted on arrival, you will be required to show proof of travel insurance valid for the duration of your trip. Please also ensure your passport is stamped with the T3 permit (for 30 or 90 days) on arrival in Ecuador. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit)

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For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>
Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

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

Ecuador

We recommend protection against malaria, Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Yellow fever is only recommended for those travelling east of the Andes (Amazon Extension) 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.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Ecuador

Temperature ranges are similar all year round. In the highlands: the dry season lasts from June to mid-September. November and December are partially dry. The rainy months are October and from January to May, but showers are short and mostly in the afternoons. Temperatures range from 12°C to 24°C. Nights are cold at altitude (4°C - 10°C). The Coastal Region: from December to May it is hot and wet. From June to November it is generally cool and misty with sudden light showers. Temperatures range from 16°C to 32°C. The Amazon Area: it is humid all year round. Temperatures range from 16°C to 32°C. From April to August the rainfall is heavier. The Galapagos: On the Galapagos, the hot season is January to April with largely sunny days and the possibility of heavy showers; the cool season runs from May to December and is generally more cloudy with much cooler seas. Please note that although it is windier from July to November the sea can be rough at any time of the year. On the mainland the dry season lasts from June to October, though September can be wet.

Clothing

Daytime clothing should be lightweight and loose fitting, but warmer clothing is needed at altitude, particularly at night. Long-sleeved lightweight clothes are useful for protection against sunburn. Bring a swimsuit, sunhat, sunglasses and a thick sweater or fleece. Lightweight waterproofs are essential. Remember that altitude can make places much colder, especially at night, so bring something to wrap up in, including a pair of gloves, hat and scarf and a fleece.

Equipment

A torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor sunscreen, ear plugs, binoculars, camera memory card and an umbrella during the hot season may be useful.

Footwear

Comfortable walking boots or shoes and trainers or sandals with a good grip.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of luggage, plus a daypack. Remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage - don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Ecuador

Population: 15,007,343

Size of Country: 272,046

Major Language: Spanish

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: -5

Electric Supply & Plugs

Ecuador

2 Pin Flat

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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