EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Outdoor Alaska (AKH 2015)

INSPIRING LANDSCAPES

TOURDURAT
15
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard
tour Code: AKH

Tour Highlights - Outdoor Alaska

- ✓ Denali National Park - One of the planet's truly inspiring wilderness areas containing Mount McKinley - the highest mountain in North America, spectacular hiking trails and abundant wildlife
- ✓ Wrangell St. Elias National Park - Home to nine of North America's 16 highest peaks, stunning hikes, breathtaking scenery and a range of optional activities
- ✓ Seward - Gateway to the spectacular landscapes of Kenai Fjords National Park
- ✓ Valdez - Fabulous ferry ride across Prince William Sound
- ✓ Hatcher's Pass - Stunning mountain landscapes and old gold mines

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	9 nights Standard Hotel 4 nights Simple Hotel 1 night Standard Lodge
Included Meals:	0 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Anchorage
End Point:	Tour ends: Anchorage
Transport:	Ferry, Maxiwagon
Countries:	USA

Outdoor Alaska

Travel with us to the untouched parts of Alaska. We tour its beautiful landscapes and discover unspoilt views of snow-capped mountains, sparkling rivers and emerald-green glacial lakes. We look for grizzly bears and spot moose and caribou as they amble slowly by. Join us on this adventure into the great outdoors.

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.

Tour Comfort: 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 tour 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.

DAY 1 Join tour in Anchorage

Join tour Anchorage and check-in at the hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Drive to Portage Valley for guided hike, continue to Seward

Leaving Anchorage this morning we turn south taking the Seward Highway and following the coastline of Turnagain Arm, through the Chugach and Kenai Mountains. This stunning setting affords us an opportunity to take a short, guided hike that takes in the dramatic scenery of the Byron Glacier Creek and ends in a permanent snowfield under a hanging glacier. From here we continue south to the town of Seward, a picturesque port ringed by a stunning landscape of mountains and glaciers, lying alongside the rich waters of Resurrection Bay. Founded at the turn of the 20th century by engineers building the railroad to the interior, it benefited from its status as an ice-free port, prospering during the early years of the Nome gold rush and going on to become the gateway port for cruises into the spectacular Kenai Fjords National Park. On arrival we will make our way to our hotel, where we will spend the next three nights amidst this majestic landscape.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 3 Discover Kenai Fjords National Park

Driving to Exit Glacier after breakfast we enter the breath taking expanse of the Kenai Fjords National Park, a 580,000-acre wonderland of towering peaks, glaciers and coastline that is home to a rich diversity of marine wildlife, including sea otters, orcas, humpbacks and minks. The park is also the site of the immense Harding Icefield, a gigantic expanse of nearly 500sq km that feeds some 40 glaciers throughout these northern states, making it the largest icefield within the territories of the United States. The fjords have been created by the retreat of these mighty glaciers, leaving behind an awe-inspiring vista of dramatic fjords and cliffs covered in nesting seabirds, whilst the tidewaters glaciers on the coast regularly calve huge icebergs into the icy waters. Depending upon the interests of the group there may be a possibility to enjoy a walk at the glacier, or perhaps even make a day of it by exploring something of the Icefield. Those not wishing to partake in the walks today may like to check out Seward's impressive SeaLife Centre, a remarkable project partially funded by the Exxon Valdez disaster that combines a unique mix of research and education and affords an opportunity to watch stellar sea lions, harbour seals and puffins in their natural underwater environments.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 4 Drive and ferry to Valdez via Portage Glacier and Whittier

Departing Seward this morning we follow the railway through the Chugach forest and over to Moose Pass, so named because in 1903 a mail carrier driving a team of dogs had considerable trouble gaining right of way from a giant moose! Heading for Portage Glacier Visitors Centre, we then continue through the old mountain tunnel to Whittier, at the western end of Prince William Sound. From here we board a ferry to take us to Valdez, the northernmost ice-free port in the western hemisphere, ringed by the snow-capped peaks at the end of the Valdez Narrows. During the crossing you may be able to catch a glimpse of the Columbia Glacier. Valdez is the terminus of the 800 mile Trans-Alaska Pipeline which begins in Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean. This astounding feat of engineering traverses the Brooks Range, crossing rivers and valleys, above and below ground, before finally feeding its oil into the waiting tankers. The economy of the town depends very much on the oil industry and salmon fisheries, and is our base for tonight. Please Note: The final itinerary is subject to confirmation of the ferry schedules between Seward and Valdez. Occasionally the new timetable may not fit with our planned itinerary and/or ferries are occasionally cancelled. Due to ferry schedule changes, on the 30th May and 15th August departures, we will overnight in Seward tonight and travel to Valdez on day 5. The optional activities offered on day 5 in Valdez will be offered in Seward instead.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 5 Free day; optional sea kayaking or cruise to Columbia Glacier

Today has been left free for you to enjoy as you see fit. We would recommend either a cruise to the Columbia or Mears Glacier. Sea kayaking is also possible.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 6 Journey to McCarthy via Keystone Canyon

Our route today takes us through some of the most spectacular scenery in Alaska, as we drive through forested hills and past cascading rivers, fed by small glaciers on the Chugach Mountains. The numerous rivers in this area are full of fish. Five species of salmon are found in Alaska and the spawning season, in midsummer, is a major event for all the animals, with bears and birds waiting to catch the weakened fish, exhausted from their spawning runs. The views are even more dramatic as we reach Keystone Canyon, where sheer cliff walls covered in lime green moss present cascades of crystal water tumbling over the edge to the river below. 'Bridal Veil' and 'Horsetail' Falls evocatively describe the scene. The canyon is steeped in history from the gold rush period and this was once the scene of a bloody gun battle, whilst the remains of the sled trail used in the early days are still visible. Crossing Thompson Pass we head towards the Worthington Glacier, heading south through Chitina and onto the McCarthy road. Stopping at the Copper River, we then cross the Kuskulana River on a narrow railroad bridge high above the water and continue through a vast expanse of untouched wilderness, following an unpaved road through the remote forests. At the end of the road we reach the small town of McCarthy (pop 42), which grew to serve the Copper mine at Kennicott, located 4.5 miles up the valley.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 7 Walk in Wrangell St Elias National Park

Nestling amongst the wild landscapes of the Wrangell St. Elias National Park, McCarthy presents us with an ideal base from which to explore this stunning setting further. Less accessible than Denali, Wrangell St Elias contains the largest concentration of glaciers on the continent and some 13.2 million acres of the park system have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage area. Shaped by volcanoes and ice, the park has nine of the 16 highest peaks in the United States, including Mount St Elias, the second highest in the US. Mount Wrangell (4318m) erupted as recently as 1930 and its thermal mud springs are evidence of continued volcanic activity. Mountain goats and Dall sheep with long curly horns can be found on the upper slopes while wolves, black bears, coyotes, bison and caribou range through the interior of the park. There will be an opportunity today to walk the Bonanza Mine trail, a 16km, straightforward, but fairly strenuous walk that follows the ridges and tram lines to the old mine, taking in the magnificent panoramas of the Chugach Mountains, Mount Blackburn and the Kennicott Glacier along the way. The road is steep, climbing to an elevation of some 1200m as the path negotiates the trail from the mill town to the old mine, affording a unique glimpse of part of this country's fascinating history, as well as its breathtaking landscapes. From the ridge above the mine there are some spectacular views across to the University Range in the St Elias Mountains. Return to Kennicott via the same path and head back to the hotel.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 8 Free day; optional hike along the Kennicott Glacier or rafting

Today has once again been left free for you to enjoy at your leisure. You may like to try some of the other spectacular walks through the park, perhaps taking an optional hike along the Kennicott Glacier, or undertaking some optional ice-climbing (accompanied by professional guides). Flight-seeing trips over the park are also available – without doubt one of the most spectacular outings to be had in Alaska, whilst the powerful rivers present some exhilarating rafting opportunities. Those looking for some more sedate activities might like to explore the old mining town of Kennicott. Designated as a National Historic landmark and considered the finest remaining example of an early 20th century copper mine anywhere, the town remains a fascinating monument to a long forgotten era of America's pioneering past.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 9 Travel along the Denali Highway to Tangle Lakes

Heading north today we take the Denali Highway towards Tangle Lakes, stopping en route to see the remarkable fish wheels on the Copper River, an ingenious method of catching the abundant salmon that follow the river to spawn. Stopping at the Wrangell St. Elias Visitors Centre for a short visit, we then continue on to Glenallen, our gateway into the beautiful setting of the Tangle lakes, one of the most accessible of Alaska's wild and pristine wilderness areas. This is a region of open tundra, glacial lakes and mountain ridges, blessed with an abundance natural beauty, cultural traditions and spectacular wildlife. On arrival we should have time to enjoy a short walk in the alpine tundra, a haven for caribou, wolves and grizzlies and soon to be the site of controversial platinum strip mining operation. The area is also home to the remnants of ancient nomadic peoples and contains some of the richest concentrations of archaeological remains in the sub-arctic regions of North America.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 10 Continue to Denali National Park

Continuing northwards, the highway takes us over a rugged landscape, where the views are breath taking and, weather permitting, we may get a glimpse of Mount McKinley, the highest mountain in North America (6188m). The Athabascan Indians called it 'Denali' meaning 'the high one' and this towering pyramid of rock, ice and snow is often shrouded in a blanket of mist and cloud. Denali National Park represents one of the world's last intact ecosystems, over 6 million acres of tundra, glaciers and mountains that present a unique opportunity to observe the natural behaviour of wild animals still unaffected by the often destructive influence of man. The park provides a haven for bears, caribou, Dall sheep, wolves, moose, red foxes, wolverine and over 160 species of birds, and is without doubt one of the highlights of our remarkable journey.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 11 In Denali National Park; search for wildlife on walks

This morning we will drive to the visitors centre on the edge of the National Park and transfer to a shuttle bus for our journey into the park itself. Established as a national park in 1917, the area was designated as an international biosphere reserve in 1976 and contains everything from 1200 pound moose to 1.5 gram shrews. In order to preserve the wilderness for the wildlife, vehicle access is restricted, so these shuttle buses are the only way that visitors can enter this incredible natural treasure trove. The buses run to either the Eilson Visitors Centre along the route you will see the incredible views of the sheer mountain walls that rise majestically from the plains. Returning to the visitors centre at the park entrance later today, we rendezvous with our maxiwagon to return to the hotel. (Please note guiding is not allowed in the Park - walks will be unescorted).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 12 Morning visit Denali Visitor Centre, afternoon head to Talkeetna

Returning to the Denali Visitors Centre this morning we enjoy a demonstration of the park's sled dogs, which are used for patrolling in the winter season and have been an integral part of Denali for so long that they have become part of the cultural traditions of the area. Their existence here represents an important landmark in the history of the park, signifying a direct link with its native and pioneering heritage and they remain the only sled dogs in the entire U.S. who help directly in the preservation of the park and its wildlife. After our demonstration we head for the town of Talkeetna, an old mining supply station and riverboat port, that since the early 1950s has seen itself become a focus for mountaineers attempting to scale the heights of Mount McKinley. Many believe that the best views of the mountain can be seen from here and this afternoon there should be time to enjoy some exhilarating optional excursions from the town, including river rafting and flightseeing trips to take in the majestic views of Alaska's most famous summit. One of Talkeetna's more bizarre claims to fame is its annual Moose Dropping Festival (yes really), where lucky recipients can purchase a delightful array of genuine, ready varnished, droppings that make for a must have present for that special someone.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 13 Drive over Hatchers Pass and visit gold mine en route to Knik River Lodge

This morning we depart Talkeetna and head for the mountainous landscapes around Hatcher's Pass, where a visit to the gold mine affords us a fascinating glimpse into the pioneering heritage of this great wilderness. Named after Robert Lee Hatcher, who established the first lode claim in Willow Creek Valley in 1906, the top of the pass is the site of the old Independence Mine, today an Historical State Park, but once the property of the Alaska-Pacific Consolidated Mining Company. At the peak of its production the mine employed over 200 men and produced nearly 35,000 ounces of gold, which at today's rates would equate to over $17 million dollars' worth a year. There may be an opportunity to hike around the area, before we resume our journey towards the Knik River Lodge. (Please note that this is weather dependent and the pass may be blocked due to snowfall. In this case we will take an alternative route).

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 14 Optional glacial boat journey, return to Anchorage

Before we head back to Anchorage this morning you will have the opportunity to take an optional glacier boat tour. This afternoon we will continue to Anchorage, to complete the circle on this amazing journey.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 15 Tour ends Anchorage

The tour ends in Anchorage this morning.

Included Meals: None

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 0 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Local Fees

Beauty always comes at a price and the wonderful isolation of Alaska is reflected in the price of everyday items which normally have to be imported at great costs. The estimates given for Food and Drink are based on the average across USA so when budgeting for your tour you should allow approximately double the amounts stated.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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.

USA

Lunch £: 15.00

Dinner £: 21.00

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.

USA

Bottle of Beer £: Varies for different towns, average £4.00

Water £: 1.10

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

There are a number of exciting optional excursions you can do on tour. These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Valdez - Sea kayaking US$ 69-US$ 249; Full day fishing US$ 195-225; Half day fishing US$ 75-US$ 95; Glacier cruise US$ 75-US$ 95
McCarthy - Glacier walk full day US$ 110, half day US$ 75; Small plane overflight US$ 150;
Ice climbing US$ 125; Rafting US$ 285 including bush flight back to McCarthy; Kennicott Mine US$ 25
Knik Lodge - Glacier boat US$ 99

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 recognised 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. Accordingly, please allow US$ 50 for tipping.

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.

Foreign Exchange

USA

ATM Availability: Widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance: Widely accepted just about everywhere.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be used just about everywhere, although local stores are not keen to change anything over $50.

Local Currency: US Dollars.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Bring your money in US$ cash or Travellers Cheques which can be used almost everywhere

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities. Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Tour

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.

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.

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

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 joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip between 01 January 2015 and 31 August 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit

www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

USA: Visas are not required for UK, Canadian, New Zealand and Australian citizens.

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). This applies if you enter the country by sea or by air on a carrier participating in the visa waiver scheme, holding a return/ onward ticket. The passport requirements are that it must be machine readable, and must contain a digital photograph of the holder and also an integrated circuit chip that stores biographic information.

All passengers travelling to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme must provide their details online no later than 72 hours prior to travel. British travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be detained and sent home.

In addition to passport information, you must also supply the full address of your first night's accommodation in the USA. This information can be obtained from your joining instructions which are sent out approximately 3 weeks before travel. Anyone applying for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ESTA) to travel under the Visa Waiver system will be charged a fee of 14USD (9GBP).

For more information, and to apply online, please visit the following website at https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov. Once obtained, the application will be valid for a period of two years, or for the validity of your passport (whichever is shorter).

For more information about who is eligible for the VWP, or any other questions you may have regarding your eligibility, or machine readable passports, please contact your local consular office, or visit www.usembassy.org.uk

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

Vaccinations & Protection

USA

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. 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 Tour

Trekking Details

The best way to explore the beauty of Alaska is on foot. All walks in this itinerary are optional so you can do as many or as little as you like.

Climate

USA

There are great variations in the altitude and terrain of the areas visited and this is reflected in the temperatures. Desert areas can be extremely hot in the summer months (49°), though temperatures can drop dramatically at night. The mountains are cooler and wetter especially in the north of the Rockies. At the beginning and end of the season there may still be some snow around in the high passes and it can be cold, whereas in mid-summer the day time temperatures can soar.

Clothing

A waterproof jacket and trousers, a pair of gloves and a hat are essential. Include some long-sleeved shirts and warm clothing. Thermal underwear is advised for chilly nights all through the summer. Bring swimwear and a sun hat as well. Be aware that Alaska is notorious for biting insects, so you may wish to bring long trousers and long sleeved tops.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, (head) torch, some plastic bags, to keep things dry, sunblock, insect repellent and binoculars. An umbrella, eye mask for sleeping and mosquito head net may also be useful.

Footwear

Good quality waterproof walking boots, trainers and/or sandals for travelling.

Luggage: On Tour

Luggage is stored either in the van or a trailer on the back. Please make sure the bag is of a reasonable size and preferably soft nature rather than a hard shell.

You will also need a day pack for walking and personal items as your main luggage cannot be accessed during the day.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

USA

Population: 312,609,000

Size of Country: 9,826,675 sq km

Major Language: English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -9

Electric Supply & Plugs

USA

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 & 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, elephant, 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 and traditional, 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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