

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Family Land of Ice and Fire (FIC 2017)



TRIPDURATION
7
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: FIC

Trip Highlights - Family Land of Ice and Fire

- ✓ Seljalandsfoss - Walk behind the Seljalandsfoss waterfall
- ✓ Reykjafoss Waterfall - take a zip-wire over a waterfall
- ✓ Reykjavik - Chance to join a whale-watching excursion and enjoy Iceland's bustling capital
- ✓ The Blue Lagoon - Relax in the famed thermal waters
- ✓ Snaefellsnes Peninsula - Walk amidst stunning scenery and see the Snaefellsjokull Glacier

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 2 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Standard Guesthouse
2 nights Simple Guesthouse

Included Meals: 6 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Keflavik Airport

End Point: Trip ends: Keflavik Airport

Transport: Bus, Boat

Countries: Iceland

Minimum Age: From 7 years

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Family Land of Ice & Fire

Iceland's volcanic landscape offers a dramatic mix of ice and fire: from snow-covered glaciers and thundering waterfalls to barren lava fields and steaming geysers. As we explore the island we try our hand at making a traditional Icelandic dish, visit a Viking heritage centre, go caving and even take a zip-wire over a waterfall. We also find time to unwind in the thermal waters of the Blue Lagoon and explore the bustling capital, Reykjavik.

TRIPLE ROOMS

This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Loyalty discounts of 5% are available on a second and subsequent family holiday plus there are group discounts of up to 10%

Why Book this trip

This adventure is designed for families who want to see stunning landscapes and natural wonders with the added benefit of long days of sunlight. We have added a few additional activities this year including zip-wiring over a waterfall! There are also opportunities to understand the Viking culture further with visits to a heritage centre and learning how to cook a traditional Viking dish. Iceland really is an unusual volcanic island and this tour includes the country's natural highlights.



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 and drive to Grindavik

Arrive in Iceland and join the tour at Keflavik airport. On arrival we transfer to our accommodation in Grindavik. We have included the opportunity to swim in a local geothermally heated pool

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Swim in the Blue Lagoon and try out zip-wiring over a waterfall

We drive to the Blue Lagoon this morning to experience one of Iceland's wonders - accidentally formed in the 1970's by a nearby geothermal power plant, its health-giving properties and steaming turquoise waters now attract people from around the world. We continue onto Hveragerdi, where you have a chance to experience a powerful earthquake in an earthquake simulator (6 on the Richter Scale) as part of the exhibition. Now for a real treat! How about zip-wiring over the Reykjafoss Waterfall, one of Iceland's major natural highlights. At 90 meters long, this is a great way to enjoy the adrenaline rush of zipping across the waterfall in Hveragerdi with all equipment and instruction included, this activity is sure to put a smile on everyone's faces (the zip-wire is weather dependant based upon wind conditions so could take place on another day during your holiday). We continue to Vatnsholt where we will spend the night with the opportunity to swim in a local pool that is geothermally heated with accompanying hot tubs.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Walk behind a waterfall and the visit the Eyjafjallajokull Volcano centre

This morning we drive to the stunning Seljalandsfoss waterfall. We have the unique opportunity here to actually walk behind the falls for an altogether different perspective. The Skogafoss waterfall is close by and probably rivals Gullfoss as Iceland's most famous waterfall with a height of 60m, it regularly produces a rainbow-yielding mist that makes it a photographer's dream. It is easily accessible with a pathway running alongside the falls and the ability to get close to the base of the waterfall. We then go to see the Eyjafjallajokull Volcano visitor centre with the volcano itself looming ominously in the background. The centre explains the history and geology of this famous volcano made famous when it erupted in 2010 and caused enormous disruption to air travel across Europe. An interesting video follows the plight of the local community and how they dealt with the ash that covered large areas of the country. We then walk along the coastal area where the black beach at Vik I Myrdal, with its basalt cliffs and windswept vistas all providing some great photo opportunities. There is the option for a glacier walk on the glacier where you are able to wander through a dazzling landscape of ice sculptures, ridges and deep crevasses with an experienced guide. We end the day with a visit to the Secret Lagoon natural hot springs near Fludir. Unlike the Blue Lagoon, this pool has been kept to its natural surroundings. The warm water holds 38-40 Celsius year round and there are several geothermal spots and a little Geysir which erupts every 5 minutes.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Visit the Gullfoss waterfall and Geysir, cooking lesson and a Viking Heritage Centre

Today we drive to Gullfoss, the Golden Waterfall, regarded by many as one of the most beautiful falls in the world. It cascades into a deep gorge with tremendous force, its spray forming colourful rainbows in the afternoon sun. En route we will also visit the Geysir Geothermal Area. This is the location of the first spouting hot spring to become known to Europeans and thereby originating the name given to all 'geysers'. There are some very small springs in the area which only reaches about a foot in height, but the main attraction is Strokkur, meaning 'The Butter Churn', which spouts around every 10 minutes up to a height of some 30 metres. We then drive to Thingvellir, meaning Parliament Plains. This was the site of Iceland's first National Assembly in the year 930 AD. It lies in a rift

valley which is about 5 kilometres wide with Lake Thingvallavatn bordering it on the south side and a mountain range to the north. Originating in a nearby volcano, it flows into the rift valley over the edge of a 9,000 year old lava field. The largest of the ravines bordering the rift valley is called Almannagja Ravine near where the Parliament was held. Having spent some time walking through the area we continue to visit a local family who will teach us how to cook a traditional Icelandic desert of pancakes, which we enjoy with some hot chocolate. We then drive to the Viking Heritage settlement at Borgarnes. A unique innovative multimedia experience, the centre brings to life the world of the Vikings and allows you to experience first-hand the thrill and excitement of a voyage back in time. We then swim in a local pool that is geothermally heated with accompanying hot tubs before finishing our day at our guesthouse accommodation in Stadarsveit.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Walk along Snaefellsnes Peninsula and cave exploration

Today is spent driving on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, locally known as the peninsula of the snowy mountain. At 1,000 kilometres in length, the peninsula is dominated by the imposing Snaefellsnes Glacier, made famous by Jules Verne in his book: Journey to the Centre of the Earth. It may be possible to snow-mobile (optional) according to snow conditions. We walk along the south coast of the peninsula, visiting Buthir and its light coloured beach - a rarity in this part of the world given that much of Iceland is made up of black basalt lava. Continuing to Arnastapi, a tiny coastal village with an equally tiny harbour, we can view numerous birds that nest and feed along this coast including kittiwakes and arctic terns. Further along the coast at Djuparlonssandur, we see the bizarre rock formations of the rocks which have been sculpted over time by the sea. The afternoon is spent underground with a cave tour 35 meters below the surface - see amazing colours and lava formations in the 8,000 years old cave. Hiking boots and gloves are recommended although the helmets and flashlights are provided. With the glacier dominating on the landward side we drive back to our accommodation later that day.

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Morning boat trip on Breidafjordur; drive to Reykjavik

We enjoy a boat trip around the islands of Breithafjordur (the wide fjord) this morning, once home to Eric the Red, a Viking of such dubious moral character who was actually expelled from both Norway and Iceland for dispatching his enemies on a less than fair manner and then went on to discover Greenland! We end our trip with a little fishing as the crew cast their nets overboard to bring in fresh scallops and sea urchins straight from the sea and drive to Reykjavik, Iceland's thriving capital city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Free morning in the capital with optional whale watching

You might like to take a self-guided walk around the colourful streets of Reykjavik (a map and general information will be provided locally). The world's most northerly capital was established by the Norse chieftain Ingolfur Amarnson around the year 874AD. The oldest part of the town is near the harbour around the lake known as Tjornin. Ducks, geese, swans and Arctic terns can be observed at close quarters and the harbour is always busy with trawlers and other vessels. The city has numerous options for children to enjoy, including the Volcano Show and Saga Museum. Alternatively you may prefer to try whale watching (optional). There can be few experiences on earth to top the sight of one of these mighty leviathans in their natural habitat and what better way to finish our tour. We transfer back to the airport that afternoon where the tour ends.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Ability to swim required

Whether in swimming pools, rivers, lakes, the sea or the ocean, participation requires that you are able to swim unaided for your safe enjoyment

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

While in Reykjavik we use a hotel which is located in the outskirts of the city. Set in beautiful surroundings with the Atlantic Ocean on all sides, the hotel is a great introduction to the island. All rooms have private facilities with two outdoor Jacuzzis. There is also a swimming pool within a 10 min walk. In South Iceland, we stay in a renovated country farm lodge (which used to host life stock) with shared toilet facilities. This is a very charming place and great for kids with a variety of animal's ensuite such as dogs, cats, horses, goats and other farm animals. In Snaefellsnes, we stay at a guesthouse with shared facilities located on the southern side of

the peninsula. A unique swimming pool is within walking distance with warm geothermal waters of up to 35°C.

Due to the recent considerable rise in tourism in Iceland, hotels are experiencing very high demand for rooms and there have been some occurrences of overbookings, which are often notified to us at a late stage. For this reason, we would like to emphasise that hotel accommodation is subject to change, which may result in the need to alter your night stops with little or no notice. Explore are working closely with our team on the ground to minimise changes to accommodation, although in the case of unavoidable hotel changes, we will endeavour to always provide accommodation of the same or a higher standard.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 6 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 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.

Iceland

Lunch £: 10.00 - 12.00

Dinner £: 18.00 - 24.00

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.

Iceland

Bottle of Beer £: 4.00 - 6.00

Water £: 2.00

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

Reykjavik - Whale watching from Reykjavik harbour - Adults 9,900 ISK without a pick-up transfer service or an extra 2,000 ISK to have transfers arranged. Children 7 to 15 year old 4,950 ISK without a pick-up transfer service or an extra 1,000 ISK to have transfers arranged; Horse riding including pick up ISK 14,500.

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping is not compulsory. Service charges are included in bills and tipping is not expected.

Foreign Exchange

Iceland

ATM Availability: Cash can be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in Reykjavik and at the airport.

Credit Card Acceptance: Most shops and restaurants take credit cards.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and post offices.

Local Currency: Icelandic Krona (ISK).

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices.

Where to Exchange: Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

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

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

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

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

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

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

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

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

Important Information

Travel Insurance

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

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



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

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

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

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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

Iceland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. 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**.

Lone Parents

Iceland

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Icelandic embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Vaccinations & Protection

Iceland

Nothing compulsory; tetanus recommended. 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

Iceland

Iceland has a cool and temperate climate and, despite its location just south of the Arctic Circle, its northerly latitude is counteracted by the warm waters of the North Atlantic Drift which encircles the island. Temperatures in winter can fluctuate between about 10°C and -10°C and precipitation in the form of rain, sleet or snow is to be expected at any time. Days will be short, with daylight often only guaranteed between about 11 am and 4 pm in December. The best time for seeing the Aurora Borealis is October to March. Summer is generally cool with average temperatures for June and July around 12 - 15 degree centigrade in Reykjavik, although is known to be warmer in other parts of the country. In June and July you can enjoy continuous daylight and see the Midnight Sun, whilst late spring and early autumn offer long twilights.

Clothing

July-August are the warmest months; but summer tends to be cool, especially inland at higher elevations. Weather conditions can change rapidly – sunshine, drizzle, rain and snow may all occur in the same day. You'll need warmer clothing for outdoors and cool evenings. A wind and waterproof jacket and trousers are essential.

Equipment

Suncream, sunglasses, a water bottle, torch, warm hat, gloves, warm and waterproof clothing, sturdy shoes, swimming costume, a fleece and/or warm layers.

Footwear

Walking boots/shoes and trainers. Soft indoor shoes are recommended as it is normal in Iceland to have special house shoes.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage, a soft grip bag is ideal (not a framed rucksack) and a small daysack.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Iceland

Population: 318,452

Size of Country: 103,001 sq km

Major Language: Icelandic

Religion: National Church of Iceland

Electric Supply & Plugs

Iceland

2 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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