EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Burma Highlights (BUH 2014)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOUR DURATION **14** DAYS

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

Tour Highlights - Burma Highlights

- ✓ Rangoon (Yangon) - British colonial heritage and the golden Shwedagon Pagoda
- ✓ Inle Lake - Floating markets, stilted villages and leg-rowing fishermen
- ✓ Shan State Highlands - Trek around the former British hill station of Kalaw
- ✓ Mandalay - Cruise on Irrawaddy River and visit nearby U-Bein Bridge
- ✓ Bagan - Breathtaking vast plain studded with over 3,000 ancient temples

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	13 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	13 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Rangoon (Yangon)
End Point:	Tour ends: Rangoon (Yangon)
Transport:	Bus, Train, Boat, Flight, Ferry
Countries:	Burma

Burma Highlights

Half-hidden from the world for decades and only recently re-opened to visitors, Burma (Myanmar) is an exciting and adventurous destination. On this trip we admire gold-encrusted pagodas in Rangoon, floating gardens and stilt villages at Inle Lake and the giant pagoda and bell at Mingun. We explore the many temples of the spectacular Bagan Plains and the ancient cities of Amarapura and Inwa. We also explore the Shan Highlands, discovering the old British hill station of Kalaw.

Should I go?
Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader, gave her blessing to the return of tourism to Burma in November 2010. National League for Democracy (NLD) leader U Win Tin said: "We want people to come to Burma, not to help the junta, but to help the people by understanding the situation: political, economic, moral - everything." This marked the end of the tourism boycott started in 1995 and the return of small groups and individuals to Burma has been endorsed by Burma Campaign UK and the Free Burma campaign. Explore are delighted to return to Burma after pulling out in 1995 in response to the call for boycott. We use a privately-owned Burmese agent for all of our services, and whilst each itinerary has been carefully planned to try and avoid using any service owned by or affiliated with the government or former military junta, we accept that some money will make its way into their hands. We strongly believe that by operating tours in Burma we contribute to the local economy in a positive way, whilst providing our customers with an insight into the culture, through direct interaction with Burmese people.

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

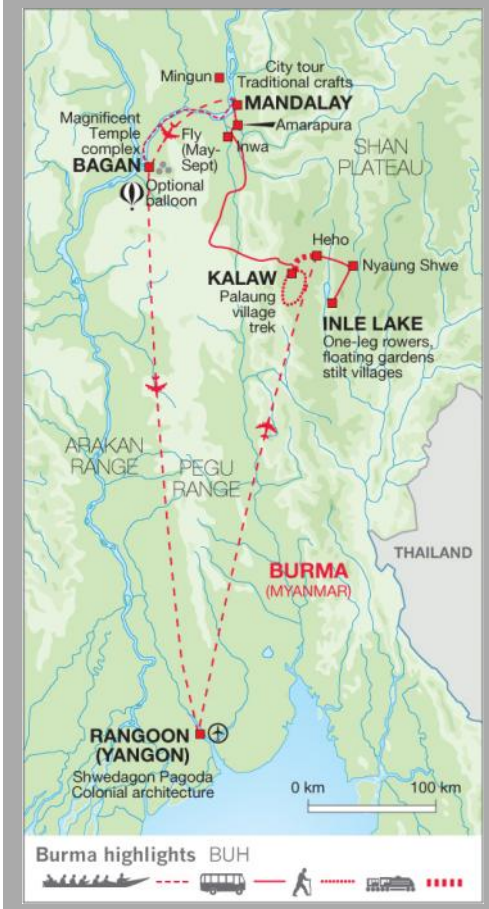
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

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.

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 Rangoon (Yangon)

Arrive in Rangoon and check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is free. You may wish to venture out and make in your first impressions of the city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 2 Discover the sights of Rangoon, then fly to Inle Lake

This morning's sightseeing takes us by foot and bus to Rangoon's major sights, starting with the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda - the most revered Buddhist temple in Burma. The temple is an interesting place to observe the many locals making offerings and prayer. Its central stupa is covered in gold leaf and stands at 90 m tall, dominating the city skyline. We continue to the downtown area to take a walk along Pansodan Street where many of the British colonial period buildings can be found alongside sidewalk markets. Next stop is the Chaukhtatgyi Paya, home to a giant 70 m long reclining Buddha whose serene features are topped by a crown encrusted in diamonds and other precious stones. We take a short flight in the afternoon to Heho from where we drive to the idyllic setting of Inle Lake and continue to our hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 3 Full day to explore Inle Lake by longtail boat

Inle Lake enjoys a picturesque setting on the Shan Plateau at about 900m, surrounded by hills and populated predominately by the Intha people with a mix of other Shan, Taungyo, Pa-o and Danu ethnicities. Local communities are devout Buddhists that live in simple houses of wood and woven bamboo raised above the water on stilts, they are largely fishermen, skilled artisans and self-sufficient farmers whose vegetables are grown on floating gardens made of grass and seaweed. The local fishermen are known for practicing a distinctive rowing style, which involves standing at the stern on one leg and wrapping the other leg around the oar. A floating morning market is held once every five days in one of the local villages (except on full moon and new moon days). We plan to visit either the floating morning market or other interesting local markets where possible, local villages, fishermen, floating gardens and meet skilled artisans in cottage industries such as the production of paper, silver, silk and cotton weaving, cheroot making and blacksmiths.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 4 At Inle Lake; boat to visit Shwe Indein pagoda complex

Our boat takes us to the western part of the lake up a small creek to Indein village where we disembark and walk up the hill to visit a complex of about 1000 stupas built between the 17th and 18th centuries. There are great views to be enjoyed overlooking the lake and valley beyond. In the afternoon we return to our hotel and the rest of the day is free to relax. Your tour leader may arrange an optional excursion to visit one of Burma's first wineries, or you may choose to sample a traditional massage (optional) in town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 5 Train and drive to hill station of Kalaw

This morning we travel west by train from the shores of Inle Lake up to the town of Aung Ban. We'll ride in regular seats along with the locals that may be taking their goods to and from market and apart from the views and local scenes the obvious attraction is the chance to people watch and meet the locals. The journey should take about 2 hours but delays are commonplace so sit back, relax and enjoy the ride. We are picked up by our bus upon arrival in Aung Ban from where we drive to Kalaw with a stop at Myinmathi cave to see its many Buddha images and small stupas. Kalaw itself sits high on the western edge of the Shan Plateau and was a popular hill station in British colonial times to escape the summer heat. Increasingly seen in modern times as a base for hilltribe treks it is still a peaceful and quiet place with an atmosphere reminiscent of the colonial era. The rest of the day is free to explore.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 6 Walk in Shan Highlands; free afternoon in Kalaw

After breakfast we will begin with a short drive, passing through town to the start of our trek from the village of Say Wingabar, from where we ascend through pine forest to the village of Lu Pyin. We continue along a trail that provides us with views of the valley - a picturesque patchwork of rice and vegetable fields. We might see tribal villagers working on their farms or taking their produce to the market town of Kalaw. We continue trekking through rural countryside until we reach Myinmathi Cave, where we stop for lunch nearby, before the short drive back to Kalaw. The rest of the day is then free to relax. Total walking time is about 4 - 5 hours.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 7 Visit traditional villages en route to Mandalay

This morning we embark on an interesting land journey leaving the Shan mountain scenery behind as we travel north to Mandalay, making our own version of Kipling's famous journey to the gateway to the north, a distance of about 256 km. The journey can take up to 9 hours including breaks and interesting stops along the way in local villages and for a simple lunch (not included). Mandalay was the last royal capital of the Burmese kingdom and is considered to be Burma's most historical and culturally rich region thanks to the surrounding ancient royal capitals of Ava, Mingun, Amarapura and Sagaing. We spend time discovering this rich and beautiful heritage, including intricate and skilled local arts and crafts.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 8 Explore Mandalay; boat trip to Mingun village

This morning we begin our sightseeing with a tour of Mandalay. We visit the world's largest book at Kuthodaw Pagoda - the entire Buddhist scriptures on 729 marble slabs; the magnificent wooden Shwenandaw or Golden Palace Monastery, dating back to 1879 and built with teak from the former royal palace and Mahamuni Paya, the cities holiest temple. Here we can watch local people paying their respects by applying gold leaf to an ancient Buddha image. We also plan to make stops at craft shops to see the skilled workers making gold leaf, ornate tapestries and excellent wood carvings. Time permitting and also depending on the opening hours we can visit Jade market. After lunch we take a boat from Mandalay jetty for a short and pleasant ride upriver to Mingun, the site of what would have been the world's largest pagoda had King Bodawpaya not died in 1819 thus halting all further work. What remains is the giant core of a brick pagoda, dramatically split by an earthquake in 1838 and towering 50 m above the river. The original plans would have created a pagoda three times this height! A nearby shrine houses the 90-tonne bell that was cast to be hung in the finished pagoda, considered to be the world's largest uncracked bell at 13 feet high by 16 feet across. We return the 11 km downriver again by boat as the sun sets over the surrounding hills.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 9 From Mandalay, visit Inwa and U-Bein bridge in Amarapura

This morning we continue about 6 km southwest of Mandalay to the ancient capital of Inwa (Ava), which served as royal capital for some 400 years between the 15th and 19th centuries, longer than any other. Our visit is conducted by horse-drawn cart along bumpy dirt roads and includes Manu Ok Kaung yellow stucco monastery, Bagaya Kyaung Monastery, famous for its enormous teakwood foundation pillars, and finally the Leaning Tower of Inwa. After lunch in a local restaurant (not included) we head to Amarapura, which lies 11 km south of Mandalay and was Burma's penultimate royal capital, from 1783 to 1863, and walk through the serene confines of the expansive Mahagandayon Monastery complex, perhaps catching a glimpse of monks going about their evening rituals. We end the day at the 1.3 km long teakwood footbridge of U Bein, a wonderful place to visit at the end of the day as the sun is going down when locals take their evening promenade along the bridge across the lake.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 10 By boat along the Irrawaddy River to ancient Bagan

We depart early morning from Mandalay port on board the local Mandalay-Bagan express boat service with other passengers. A simple boxed lunch is provided on board. Spending the whole day cruising down the fabled and mighty Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwaddy) River can be a relaxing experience observing the sights and sounds of river life. In the early evening we will arrive into Bagan and drive to our hotel. (During March to August when water levels are too low for the boat we will fly to Bagan)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 11 Explore the 1000 year old temples of Bagan

Without doubt one of the world's premier archaeological wonders, the vast plain of Bagan is studded with literally thousands of 1000 year old temples and stupas that rival those in Angkor for their splendour. In the morning we visit Phya Saw village where we walk about to see the traditional ways of life that have changed little over the centuries, such as cotton weaving by hand, grinding peanut oil with oxen and caring for various village animals. We may also have the chance to learn about local life by visiting some houses and chatting with locals. Moving on to the famous temples of Bagan we visit some of the most distinctive temples such as Shwezigon, a prototype of later Burmese stupas; Wetkyi-in-Gubyaukgyi, a 13th century cave temple with some interesting frescoes; and Ananda Pagoda, one of the finest, largest and best preserved in Old Bagan. We visit Ananda ok Kyaung - a former monastery with 18th century wall paintings. In the late afternoon a horse drawn carriage will take us through the temple complex and for a memorable sunset view we will head to the upper terraces of one of the temples.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 12 In Bagan; optional visit to Mount Popa

Bagan has as many red-brick Buddhist temples on a plain the size of Manhattan Island as there are medieval cathedrals in Europe. This morning we will take in a panoramic view of the temple studded plain before continuing with our visit to the principal and most interesting sites. Including Manuha Temple built by King Manuha to represent his displeasure of captivity, Nanpaya which is Bagan's first gu or cave style shrine and Gubaukgyi Temple, in the old Bagan village of Myinkaba, an early period temple with well preserved paintings inside. The afternoon is free. You can choose to take an optional bike ride around the ruins, a sunset cruise or further sightseeing around the temples. Alternatively you can also do an optional trip to Mount Popa which supposedly rose from the ground in a massive earthquake in 442 BC. Mount Popa is famous as the abode of the Nats (Spirit Gods) and for its panoramic view of the local tropical region. There is a volcanic plug with a temple on top that we have the option to climb up to if we like. On your way you can also visit one of many toddy farmers and get to witness how toddy palm juice and sugar is produced.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 13 Fly back to Rangoon; free afternoon

We leave the temples and pagodas of Bagan we return to Rangoon by plane. The remainder of the day is free for further sightseeing. You may like to visit the immense Bogyoke Market, formerly known as Scott's Market, for souvenir or gift hunting (closed on Mondays, full moons and public holidays) or explore the many street markets in the heart of the city. Perhaps another visit to Shwedagon Pagoda would be the ideal way to end your Burmese adventure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 14 Tour ends Rangoon

Tour ends after breakfast.

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 2 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

Cameras and video-cameras are permitted in Burma for which some sites charge a small fee. Restrictions on photography include military facilities and any structure considered strategic (including bridges and train stations though this last may be loosely enforced).

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.

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

Bagan - Sunrise visit to Temples from US$ 8; Mount Popa Excursion approximately US$ 42 (based on 3-4 participants); Traditional Massage US$ 10;
Hot Air Balloon US$300-350 depending on Regular or Premium service and time of the year. Due to high demand, if you are planning on taking the optional hot air balloon excursion you may wish to consider booking this in advance to secure your place on the flight. Please refer to your tour notes or personalised itinerary to check which days you will be waking up in Bagan and therefore able to do the excursion. We do not recommend booking on the day you are due to leave Bagan in case an early departure is planned. The balloon excursion does not form part of your included Explore holiday package. Please book and pay with the balloon operator directly: http://www.easternsafaris.com/balloonsoverbagan_home.html
Rangoon - Scott Market and sunset visit to Shwedagon Pagoda US$ 4 transfer plus US$ 5 entrance fees

Inle Lake - Traditional massage US$ 8
Mandalay - Moustache Brothers Alternative Comedy show US$ 12; Traditional dance performance US$ 12

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.
Accordingly you should allow approximately US$ 40 for this purpose.

Foreign Exchange

Burma

ATM Availability: ATMs are becoming more widely available and some hotels may have them, including the Panda Hotel in Yangon. You are more likely to find them in the larger cities, but they are now starting to appear in some of the smaller towns and villages. Please be aware that they are prone to occasional breakdowns so you would be wise to top up your cash before it runs out completely.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are becoming more widely accepted but you should not rely on them. The places where you are most likely to be able to use them are in the cities of Yangon and Mandalay and there may be a charge.

Travellers Cheques: Not accepted.

Local Currency: Kyat.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in U.S. Dollars cash, larger denominations tend to get better exchange rate. NB - PLEASE ONLY BRING NEW U.S. DOLLAR BILLS (BIG HEADS INSTEAD OF SMALL) AND THEY SHOULD BE NEW AND IN A PRISTINE STATE. ANY OLD, TORN OR MARKED NOTES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. U.S. Dollar bills with the series CB will not be accepted for exchange.

Where to Exchange: The official rate is far different from the market rate, we recommend you consult your tour leader for advice regarding the best place to exchange. The exchange booth at airport offers a very poor rate so we recommend you wait until getting into town (taxis accept dollars if agreed beforehand).

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

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on **'Land Only'** arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate **'Joining Instructions'** for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

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.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the

adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

Visa Information

Burma: A visa is required for UK and Irish passport holders, all other nationalities should consult their local consulate. Visas are valid for 90 days from issue and allow a 28-day, single-entry visit.

Visas can be obtained through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK. Please contact: Visaswift, at http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

For those nationalities without a Burmese Embassy in their country of residence, please contact us directly to discuss a visa on arrival.

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

Vaccinations & Protection

Burma

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A and B. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. If travelling from a country in the yellow-fever zone within 6 days prior to entering Burma you will be required to produce a yellow fever vaccine certificate.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Burma

Burma is a tropical country and has three seasons. Temperature and rainfall varies across the country; Rangoon, Bagan and coastal areas tend to have higher temperatures and rainfall. Cool season = October to February with average temperatures from 18-24C; at higher altitudes (Inle Lake, Kalaw) the temperature is slightly cooler and temperatures can drop down to about zero at night. Hot season = March to mid-May 25-38C; particularly hot in Bagan and Rangoon. Rainy (Southwest Monsoon) = mid-May to September 23-33C; practically all of the country's rain falls in this period. Monsoon period means that the beach extension is only possible from October to April.

Clothing

You will need loose fitting, comfortable clothes for hot, humid conditions. Sunhat, sunglasses, long trousers and long sleeved shirt essential for protection from the sun.
Warm weather clothing is suitable for Rangoon, Mandalay and Bagan. The Shan highlands, Inle Lake and Kalaw are cooler and in the winter season temperatures may reach near zero at night. Please dress respectfully when visiting temples and religious sites, covering your torso, shoulders and legs to below the knee and easily removable footwear for convenience as you can only enter sacred sites barefoot. In general, as Burma is a traditional, conservative and largely Buddhist culture we recommend you do not wear revealing clothing.

Equipment

Mobile phones: Your mobile will not work in Burma. It is possible to buy a local SIM card for $20 in order to make/receive international calls, as long as your phone is un-locked. SMS messaging is not possible. WiFi is available in most hotels.
Torch/Batteries/Bulb A small torch is recommended for travel in Burma. Street lighting in both cities and rural areas can be very poor so a torch is useful to help light your way while out at night. Additionally power cuts can occur from time to time, particularly in rural areas. Remember to bring some spare batteries.

Footwear

Lightweight walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, trainers and/or sandals for travelling.

Luggage: On Tour

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

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Food

The prices for meals and 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. 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.

Burma

Lunch £: 5.00

Dinner £: 8.00

Drink

Burma

Bottle of Beer £: 1.80

Water £: 0.70

Country details

Burma

Population: 60,282,000

Size of Country: 676,568 sq km

Major Language: Burmese

Religion: Theravada Buddhism, Hinduism

Time Difference to GMT: +6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Burma

3 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 & 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: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are

helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. www.coolearth.org

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 http://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 http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/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 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.

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 2013 and 31st December 2014.

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: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

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