

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Cycle the Camino de Santiago (CCDS 2017)



TRIPDURATION

8

DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: CCDS

Trip Highlights - Cycle the Camino de Santiago

- ✓ The legendary Camino de Santiago route - Beautiful scenery and cultural highlights as we cherry pick the best bits of the route
- ✓ Santiago De Compostela - Lively historic town and 'holy shrine' of the pilgrims
- ✓ Leon - Imposing Gothic Cathedral with stunning stained glass windows
- ✓ Astorga - Magnificent Bishop's Palace designed by Antoni Gaudi
- ✓ Cruz de Ferro - The famous iron cross at the highest point of the Camino
- ✓ O Cebreiro - Charming mountain village with cobbled streets, round stone thatched houses and picturesque valley views
- ✓ Pilgrims' Passport - collect local stamps as you go and fill up your passport

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point: Join trip: Bilbao
End Point: Trip ends: Santiago De Compostela
Included Bike: 27 gear Stevens Galant SX or similar hybrid bikes.
Transport: Bus, Bicycle
Countries: Spain

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Cycle The Camino De Santiago

Following the route of ancient pilgrims we cycle sections of the legendary trail to Santiago de Compostela - the resting place of Saint James. The trip follows the last 200 kilometres of the scenic route through northern Spain, starting on the high plains of the Castilian meseta. We ascend into the fertile region of the Bierzo and traverse the rolling hills of Galicia to the delightful city of Santiago completing our pilgrims' passport as we go.

Why Book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 283 km over six days (an average of 47 km per day) with a further optional 33 km available. The route is mainly on tarmac. The first day of cycling is relatively flat and the subsequent five days across the rolling hills of Galicia involve frequent uphill and downhill sections. The cycle rides are not accompanied by a cycle guide, except on days 6 and 7 when the Tour Leader will cycle with the group. On the other days the Tour Leader drives the support vehicle, accompanying the ride wherever necessary or possible, and provides clear instructions throughout the ride so you can cycle individually or as a group. We have graded the route as moderate.



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.

Cycling Grade: Moderate

Medium length rides are suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. You'll be cycling mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

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 Tour starts in Bilbao

Arrive Bilbao and check into our hotel. You may like to take an evening stroll to visit and view the impressive Guggenheim Museum from the outside.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Drive to Leon for sightseeing; cycle across the high plateau to Astorga

We start the day with a four hour drive to Leon, set in the heart of the Spanish meseta (high plateau). There will be time to discover the ancient centre of town and have lunch (not included). We cover a lot of ground today so only a short visit in Leon is possible. Leon was once the centre of Christian Spain, during the time that two thirds of the peninsula was under Muslim rule. The two central buildings of the city are its great Gothic cathedral and the equally superb Romanesque Basilica de San Isidoro, both among the finest examples to be found anywhere in Spain. The cathedral is unique for the quality and magnificence of its stained-glass windows, which span seven centuries and cover subjects as diverse as religion, mythology and even medieval life. After lunch we continue by bus to the village of Santovenia where we commence our cycle ride. Over the coming days please note that we won't always be precisely following the path used by pilgrims on foot (too rough in parts). Our cycle route is actually an advantage and it still allows us to see the important monuments and places of interest along the route because we always return to the Camino. The route from here to Astorga gives us a feel for the endless Meseta. We negotiate a series of secondary roads that undulate through the countryside towards the small town of Astorga. Once a strategically important staging post on the Roman route to Andalucia, it was from this small outpost that the Romans controlled the traffic of gold from mines in the nearby hills of Las Medulas. Later it became a major stopping point on the pilgrim trail to Santiago. Astorga houses some fine medieval buildings, including the superb cathedral, but it is the Palacio Episcopal that probably shines out. Designed by Antoni Gaudi, the Modernista architect at the end of the 19th century, the magnificent Bishops Palace was built to replace its predecessor, destroyed by a fire in 1887. Unfortunately its radical design and horrendous costs resulted in it never being used and it now houses a unique collection of artefacts and treasures devoted to Astorga's history and its importance on the Pilgrim route. Astorga is also famous for its chocolate and in medieval times it was one of the first centres in Europe to undertake the production and copy of the original recipes brought from the Spanish colonies in Mexico. The good news is that you will have an opportunity to purchase some of this renowned confectionary before we leave! Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (Total 300 metres ascent and descent)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Cycle the rolling landscapes of the Bierzo mountains to Molinaseca

As we leave Astorga the scenery takes a dramatic change, from the expansive high plateau of La Meseta towards the rolling landscapes of the Bierzo mountains. We cycle through Castrillo de Los Polvazares, one of the finest medieval villages in Castille and through Rabanal del Camino, an outpost built by the Templars to ensure the safe passage of the pilgrims travelling through this wild country. Heading into the hills we then pass the village of Foncebadón en route to the 'Cruz de Ferro' (Iron Cross), which is the highest point in the entire Camino Francés at 1482m. This is one of the most significant points on the route, where for centuries pilgrims have been leaving stone offerings from their homelands, in the hope that they would offer protection for the rest of the pilgrimage. From here we can see the mountains of Galicia for the first time in the distance. After a picnic lunch (not included) in the woods somewhere near Riego de Ambros, our journey takes us along a mainly downhill route for the rest of the day, until we finally arrive after a steep downhill to the small village of Molinaseca where we plan to spend the night. Today is probably the most demanding ride of the trip, so you can relax well tonight. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 48 kilometres (Total 600 metres ascent and 900 descent)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Transfer to O'Cebreiro; cycle the rural heart of Galicia to Samos

This morning we start with a transfer to the unusual village of O Cebreiro, a tiny wind-battered settlement of stone houses high above a patchwork quilt of green valleys. The village is famous for its 'pallozas' - traditional circular, thatch-roofed houses. Back on our bikes the first section is mostly downhill, heading steeply downhill to the small village of Triacastela, nestling amongst some of the most unspoilt countryside on the entire Camino. Deep in the rural heart of Galicia the scenery takes on a mantle of lush vegetation, ancient

forests and small rural hamlets. From Triacastela we cycle to the nearby village of Samos with its delightful Benedictine monastery, one of the most important in Galicia and an interesting diversion. NB - The keener and fitter cyclists could opt to start today's ride in Villafranca del Bierzo, which would involve an additional 34km distance and some demanding uphill sections. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 38 kilometres (Total 300 metres ascent and 900 descent) and there is a further 34 km optional ride.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Cycle to Portomarin via the medieval village of Sarria

From Samos we cycle across Galicia passing Sarria town, traversing a terrain of undulating hills in this most verdant of all Spain's regions before finally reaching Portomarin. Once a splendid medieval village and Templar stronghold, the original settlement was relocated by Franco when the Rio Minho was dammed and the old village flooded. When the water level is low in the reservoir you can still see parts of the medieval town rising up from the waters of the lake. We are now within the last 100km of the journey to Santiago, for so long a magical marker for the weary pilgrims and the minimum distance a true pilgrim has to cover on foot to be recognized by the Association of the Friends of the Camino, who reward the effort with the famous stamped document. Subsequently we will encounter a lot more walkers on the Camino as we get closer to Santiago. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres (Total 500 metres ascent and 700 descent)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Cycle to Arzua; chance to try traditional Galician dish of octopus

Continuing through the pasturelands of Galicia the landscape alternates between dense forest of chestnut and small isolated villages, the few occupants living their lives much as they have for generations. Today is a good day for trying some traditional Galician dishes en route, specifically the famous octopus with potatoes! The village of Melide is renowned all over Spain for this particular meal and we can stop here for lunch in one of its traditional restaurants. And what better way to finish than by washing it down with some of the excellent local white wine from the Riberas Baixas near Pontevedra. After lunch we complete the last few kilometres across rolling hills to the town of Arzua, our destination for the evening. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 62 kilometres (Total 650 metres ascent and descent)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Cycle from Arzua into Santiago; free afternoon

Our final day's cycling traverses more undulating terrain as we travel between Arzua to the outskirts of Santiago itself, arriving eventually at Monte de Gozo, the final hill before the city and the point where the pilgrims could finally see the towers of the Cathedral (on a clear day!) and the end of their journey. After contemplating what an emotive moment this must have been for the exhausted pilgrims, we cycle into the heart of the city itself and the gate of the cathedral - journey's end. After checking into our hotel the afternoon is left free to explore something of Santiago on foot, enjoying the relative peace of the late afternoon to visit the cathedral. The 12th century Cathedral towers over the surrounding city streets and is one of Christendom's holiest of shrines, indeed after Jerusalem and Rome this city was the most important place of pilgrimage anywhere in the Christian world. The tomb of St. James is believed to lie in the crypt beneath the altar, part of the original 9th century foundations of an earlier basilica. The majesty of the Praza do Obradoiro, the immense square that stands before the cathedral was the focal point for the arriving pilgrims, a fitting setting for the end of their (and our) journey. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 48 kilometres (Total 600 metres ascent and 750 descent)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Tour ends Santiago de Compostela

The tour ends in Santiago de Compostela this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

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.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 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.

Spain

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

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.

Spain

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water £: 1.40

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

Sarria - Visit to Samos Monastery 10 Euros

Leon - Cathedral and San Isidoro entrance 8 Euros

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, we recommend approximately GBP 15 per person for tipping. 10% is recommended at meal times.

Foreign Exchange

Spain

ATM Availability: In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques: Not recommended.

Local Currency: Euros

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where to Exchange: We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

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

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

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

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

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

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

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

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

Important Information

Travel Insurance

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

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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

Spain: 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.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spain

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. 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. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2		51km
Day 3		48km
Day 4		38/71km
Day 5		36km
Day 6		62km
Day 7		48km

Optional Rides

Bike Details

Your included bike is a 27 gear Stevens Galant SX hybrid or similar make and model and will be the correct frame size for your height. Female and male frames are allocated accordingly when booking unless you specifically request otherwise. A pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point and is driven by the tour leader. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Climate

Spain

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require. Cycling gloves are strongly recommended as they will protect you from sunburn and may also help protect your hands if you fall.

General: Pack essentially for hot or mild weather depending on the time of the year. A warm sweater or fleece and long trousers are advisable for the evenings especially in early and late season when the weather tends to be cooler. A rain jacket is also recommended.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. It is a legal requirement in Spain to wear a helmet that meets current safety criteria. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are

invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn.

Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling so please check the trip notes. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On Tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spain

Population: 46,030,109

Size of Country: 504,782 sq km

Major Language: Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spain

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.

EXPLORE! Share your experiences with us



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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