EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Prophets And Petra (MH 2014)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOUR DURATION **11** DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Busy
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard
Tour Code: MH

Tour Highlights - Prophets And Petra

- ✓ Jerusalem - We tour the Old City, visit the Mount of Olives and walk the Via Dolorosa
- ✓ Biblical settings - Visit the significant sites of Jericho and Qumran
- ✓ Dead Sea - Float in the buoyant waters of the lowest place on the planet
- ✓ Masada - Visit the fortress city of the Zealots of the First Revolt
- ✓ Wadi Rum - Experience the desert with stunning rock formations and associations with Lawrence of Arabia
- ✓ Petra - Visit to Petra including a half-day guided tour of the famous 'Rose Red City'

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	8 nights Standard Hotel 1 night Basic Tented Camp 1 night Simple Kibbutz
Included Meals:	10 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 2 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Amman
End Point:	Tour ends: Jerusalem
Transport:	4WD, Bus
Countries:	Jordan, Israel, Palestine

Prophets And Petra

On this trip we visit the fascinating historical and cultural sites of Jordan and Israel. We explore the Negev Desert, Wadi Rum and visit ancient Jerash and Bethlehem. We walk through the historic streets of Jerusalem and among the impressive rock-cut tombs at Petra. We also spend the night at a kibbutz and camp out under the stars in Wadi Rum.

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: Busy

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 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 Leaders 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. On this tour you will have one leader in Jordan and then change to another when you cross into Israel.

DAY 1 Join tour Amman

Join tour today in Amman, the capital of Jordan. It is a fascinating city of contrasts - a unique blend of old and new. The Temple of Hercules is in the commercial heart of the city along with ultra-modern buildings, hotels, smart restaurants, art galleries and boutiques that rub shoulders comfortably with traditional coffee shops and tiny artisans' workshops. Everywhere there is evidence of the city's much older past. Due to the city's modern-day prosperity and temperate climate, almost half of Jordan's population is concentrated in the Amman area. The residential suburbs consist of mainly tree-lined streets and avenues flanked by elegant, almost uniformly white houses in accordance with a municipal law, which states that all buildings must be faced with local stone. The downtown area is much older and more traditional with smaller businesses producing and selling everything from fabulous jewellery to everyday household items.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 2 AM tour of Amman, then drive to Jerash and visit site

This morning we visit the cultural heart of the Hashemite kingdom with a tour of its vibrant capital. The origins of this remarkable city have been traced back some 9,000 years but it was the arrival of the Ammonites in 1200BC that saw the city begin its rise to prominence as the great city of Rabbath Ammon. The intervening centuries saw it fall under the influences of the Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Ptolomids, Seleucids and the Romans, under whose auspices it thrived as one of the 10 cities of the Decapolis. Our tour this morning will take in some of the highlights of ancient Amman (Philadelphia), including the Citadel and the Temple of Hercules, the 8th century Ummayad Palace and the Roman Theatre and Nymphaeum. This afternoon we depart the city and head north, towards ancient Jerash, located in the Gilead Hills. One of Jordan's major attractions, this beautifully preserved Roman city is considered to be the best preserved of the Decapolis, a confederation of ten Middle Eastern cities under the Emperor Pompey. One of the highlights of the Middle East, a triple arch gateway gives way to colonnaded streets, theatres, temples and baths and it is estimated that this represents only about 10% of the entire city, the rest is still to be uncovered. We will tour this magnificent site this afternoon with a local guide.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 3 Dead Sea visit and travel to Wadi Rum

Today we venture south to the Dead Sea. We will take some time to enjoy and float in the remarkable saline waters. At 418m below sea level this salty expanse of mineral rich water has been revered for centuries for its beneficial properties, and we will have an opportunity to experience a little something of its remarkable buoyancy as we enjoy a dip in its unique waters. We then continue on to the haunting vistas of Wadi Rum. We enter another world, one inhabited by the nomadic Bedouin peoples for generations and steeped in the legend of Lawrence of Arabia. Indeed scenes from the remarkable film of his life were shot here, deep in the fabulous purpleblack mountains that rise from the sand of the desert. On arrival we transfer into 4 wheel drive vehicles and cross the dramatic desert landscape, to marvel at the panoramas of what must surely be some of Jordan's most dramatic wilderness. Words struggle to adequately convey the beauty of this special place and, as dusk settles on our tiny Bedouin camp, dwarfed by the surrounding mountains, we can understand why this landscape was for Lawrence of Arabia so humbling and yet so inspiring. We arrive at our camp in time to watch the golden glow of the sunset cast its pall over the desert landscape and settle in to enjoy dinner and a night under the stars.

Overnight: **Basic Tented Camp**

DAY 4 Optional Camel Trek. Drive to Petra, walking tour of Petra and free afternoon.

This morning we have the option to take a camel trek to enjoy Wadi Rum in the early morning light. We then head back to the main road to drive to Petra, the most famous of Jordan's treasures. Abandoned centuries ago Petra was the rock cut stronghold of the Nabateans, a fortress city built to protect the lucrative levies its citizens imposed on the rich caravans heading north. Surrounded by imposing mountains and approached through a deep, narrow cleft in the rocks, known as the Siq, it is a unique and unforgettable place and, enhanced by the play of light and shadow, an altogether overwhelming experience. Entering the Siq on foot we follow its towering sandstone walls towards the site of the captivating and iconic splendour of the beautiful Khazneh (The famous Treasury). A guided orientation tour will then take us to some of the key parts of this remarkable and ancient site, one of the most impressive and exciting anywhere in the world, where we'll take in the Colonnaded Street and the Royal Tombs and enjoy the site of its amazing theatre, with its 8,000 seats carved from the solid rock. After our guided tour there will then be free time to explore and enjoy this amazing site.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 5 In Petra

Today you have a full free day at Petra ('rock' in Greek). Returning to the city you can climb steep paths to the sacrificial 'High Places' (altars) and hike to the top of Jebel Harin (1396m) for a stunning view over Wadi Araba and the Negev Desert. The Monastery is the largest of Petra's monuments and certainly worth the steep climb up to it. Towering to a height of 40m its doorway alone measures 8m in height, dwarfing anyone framed within it. It is a place to lose oneself in the atmosphere of the past. We also recommend a trip to El Beidha (or 'Little Petra' as it is known) or to an excavated Stone Age village where you can see the remains of houses, fireplaces and workshops dating from around 6000BC. After a full day's sightseeing, what better way to relax than with a traditional Ottoman Bath or perhaps return to the city this evening and enjoy an enchanting tour of the city by night (both optional).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 6 Aqaba

This morning we drive to Aqaba and have a day to enjoy the red sea. The day is your own but the tour leader will be on hand to offer advice on any optional activities to maximise your time here. You can explore both above and below the waves, taking a boat trip or hiring snorkelling equipment.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 7 Cross into Israel and visit Masada and Qumran.

We leave Jordan behind and cross into Israel and the Palestinian terretories. Our first stop will be the isolated hilltop fortress city of Masada. The last stronghold of the Zealots, against the Romans during the First Revolt AD70. Originally fortified by Herod the Great the fortress gained renown for withstanding a further two years of assault after the crushing of the Jewish resistance in Jerusalem by the Romans. Rather than surrendering, the entire population (around 1000 people), all commited suicide. Taking a cable car up to the citadel we get some stunning views of the surrounding desert, Mount Moab and the Dead Sea. We will explore the ruins before heading back to the bus. Our next stop on the journey towards Jerusalem takes us to Qumran, home of the Essenes, a strict and devout Jewish sect who lived in the area until early in the 1st century AD and who are believed to have been the authors of the 2,000 year old manuscripts found amongst the hillside caves in 1947. The Dead Sea scrolls are amongst the most important biblical records ever discovered, providing historians and archaeologists with an incredible insight into the development of the Bible and its historical context. Our night stop is in a traditional Kibbutz

Overnight: **Simple Kibbutz**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 8 Visit Jericho, Bethlehem and Jerusalem

This morning we travel through the Jordan Valley to the ancient city of Jericho, lying amidst the hotly contested settlements of the West Bank. This was the first city to fly the flag of the newly formed Palestinian state and its antecedents stretch back some ten millennia, making it not only one of the oldest cities on earth, but at 250m below sea level also the lowest. We drive on to Bethlehem where we will have the chance to visit the Church of the Nativity. We travel up to the Mount of Olives for a superb view down over the Old City, before descending down into the Josaphat Valley to visit the Pater Noster Church, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations. Journeying to Jerusalem from here we take the opportunity to visit the new Western part of the city, spending time at the Israel Museum and Parliament House before checking into our hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 9 Full Day sightseeing in and around Jerusalem

Today we take a walking tour of this most hallowed of settings, passing through Herod's Gate and making our way along narrow winding streets that overflow with street vendors and shops to the Via Dolorosa, traditionally believed to be the route taken by Christ on the day of his execution. We will follow the 'Stations of the Cross' to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the holiest site in Christendom itself and the reputed place of the crucifixion, burial and eventual resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jerusalem is unique in that it is a place held sacred by the three great monotheistic religions of the world and after having visited Christendom's most sacred site we move on to that of Judaism, the Western Wall. Believed by Jews to be the last remaining remnant of the second Temple, the wall is considered the most revered of all sites for the Jews and is a place of constant prayer. From here we continue, if access is allowed, onto the Dome of the Rock and Islam's claim to this holy trinity. This is believed to be the site of Mohammed's ascension to heaven and is the third holiest site in Islam, not to mention one of the most impressive examples of Islamic architecture in the world. Our final visits of the day is to Mount Zion visiting the Last Supper rooms and to King David's Tomb. After a full and exciting day we return to our hotel to relax.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 10 Full free day for exploring, optional trips to Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Caesarea

Today you have a full free day to explore more of Jerusalem or to take an optional trip to Tel Aviv or Jaffa and Caesarea. Again your tour leader will be there to help organise the last full day of you Middle Eastern adventure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

DAY 11 Tours ends Jerusalem

Tour ends in Jerusalem after breakfast.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

The tourism infrastructure is well developed in Jordan, Israel & Palestinian Territories and standards are generally good. Our accommodation throughout this tour is in modern mid-range hotels with en-suite facilities and air conditioning. We start in a good hotel in Amman. The hotels used in Israel & Palestinian Territories also are mid-range hotels with en-suite facilities and air conditioning, starting with a comfortable hotel in Jerusalem. A desert camp in Wadi Rum boasts a stunning and little visited part of the Wadi. We camp in a communal Bedouin tent and all bedding is provided. There is even a proper toilet! Our final hotel in Petra enjoys a good location, close to the entrance to the site so perfect for exploring.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 10 breakfasts, 0 lunches,2 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.

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.

International Departure Taxes

The Jordanian government levies on all travellers a departure tax of JD8.00 per person. For travellers departing by air this is usually included in the taxes on the airline ticket and thus nothing will be collected from you at the point of departure. For those travellers departing by land, this will be collected by the immigration authorities at the port of departure from Jordan.

There is a $25 departure tax payable when leaving Israel & Palestinian Territories for Jordan.

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

Jerusalem - City tour by night £20.
Petra - Ottoman bath £24, ‘Petra by Night’ £12.
Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Caesarea - Full Day tour £85

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

We would recommend around $3-$4 a day should you feel you wish to tip your leader

Tipping - Local Crew

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 approx £35 for gratuitites.

Foreign Exchange

Jordan

ATM Availability: ATMs are widely available, but do not always work.

Credit Card Acceptance: In hotels and some larger shops/restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques, although still the safest way of carrying money, are difficult to cash in Jordan. There are high commission charges on Travellers Cheques on a per cheque basis so if using them we suggest you take high denomination cheques. Proof of purchase may be necessary for encashment of Travellers Cheques.

Local Currency: Jordanian Dinar

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Sterling and US$ are widely accepted though exchange rates tend to favour the US$. It is worth taking some money in cash. You may be able to order Dinars from your bank although the rate will usually be lower than purchasing currency in country.

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities.

Israel

ATM Availability: ATM's are widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are also generally accepted.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques are easily exchanged at banks and exchange offices.

Local Currency: Shekel (NIS).

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars are the easiest to exchange, but most major currencies are accepted.

Where to Exchange: Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

Palestine

ATM Availability: ATM's are widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are also generally accepted.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques are easily exchanged at banks and exchange offices.

Local Currency: Shekel (NIS).

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars are the easiest to exchange, but most major currencies are accepted.

Where to Exchange: Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

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

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

Jordan:
The following information relates to EU passport holders and those who are travelling on flights arranged by Explore:
Subject to a minimum of five people travelling on the same arriving AND departing flights, free visas can be arranged on arrival - if Explore receives your passport details a minimum of 10 days before arrival. Unfortunately we will not know until the commencement of your tour whether the minimum number is attained, therefore we recommend that you allow JD20.00 (approximately £20.00) in case an individual visa will need to be purchased on arrival. Please note that those qualifying for a group visa will be met by a representative to take you through the immigration process. Due to the new security procedures in the airport the representative may not be able to meet the group immediately, so please wait for the representative to come through and assist you with the group visa. This normally takes up to 30 minutes, but could be longer depending on the number of tour groups coming through, so please be

patient. If you proceed through without the representative, you may affect whether the group can still use their group visa and you will all then have to pay for your own individual visas, so please wait until the representative has been let through to assist you.

The following information relates to non-EU passport holders and those who are travelling Land Only:
If you have not bought your flights through Explore, you are not on the group flights or hold a non-EU passport then you will be required to purchase an individual visa on arrival. Visas can be bought on arrival at Amman's Queen Alia Airport or any border crossing point (current cost JD20.00, approximately £20.00).

All nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Israel & Palestinian Territories:
Visas are not required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Note: If you do not want your passport stamped by Israeli immigration, ask for a visa card instead (some Arab countries will not accept your passport if it has an Israeli stamp), and specify 'No stamp, please'.

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

Vaccinations & Protection

Jordan

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

Israel

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

Palestine

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

Climate

Jordan

Jordan during April-November days are generally sunny and hot without rain (some showers December-March) with temperatures around 32°C. Spring and autumn evenings can be cool and night temperatures can drop suddenly especially in the desert. Expect cold nights in winter (December-February) when temperatures can drop to around zero degrees celsius. Some rain should also be expected at this time of year.

Israel

Israel has a Mediterranean climate. Summer is hot with fairly high humidity in coastal regions. Rainfall is mostly from November to March: during this period temperatures can drop quite sharply, particularly in December, so pack accordingly.

Palestine

Palestinian Territories has a Mediterranean climate. Summer is hot with fairly high humidity in coastal regions. Rainfall is mostly from November to March: during this period temperatures can drop quite sharply, particularly in December, so pack accordingly.

Clothing

For Jordan pack essentially lightweight clothing, with a sun-hat and neck protection, though a sweater and light jacket are advisable for Wadi Rum. Early mornings can be very chilly when camping in the desert and winters in Jordan can be cold, so please bring suitable warm clothing. We recommend a waterproof jacket in winter. Women are advised not to wear shorts or dresses that are too revealing as this can attract unwelcome attention in the streets of Muslim towns - loose fitting trousers or slacks are ideal. Women should also cover their head and shoulders when entering a mosque and men should wear long trousers. For Israel and the Palestinian Territories convention demands that long trousers are worn in some Jewish and Christian holy places, and women must cover their arms, legs and head. During winter (October to March) medium weight clothing and rainwear is advisable. A fleece will be useful during this time for early mornings (Masada visit) when it can be chilly.

Equipment

Sleeping bags, blankets and mattresses are provided, but we suggest you bring your own sleeping sheet. A personal water bottle and small torch are useful for the nights camping. In addition a high factor suncream and sunglasses.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or boots, trainers and sandals.

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.

Jordan

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Israel

Lunch £: 20.00

Dinner £: 25.00

Palestine

Lunch £: 20.00

Dinner £: 25.00

Drink

Jordan

Bottle of Beer £: 3.45

Water £: 1.50

Israel

Bottle of Beer £: 2.50

Water £: 0.60

Palestine

Water £: 0.60

Country details

Jordan

Population: 6,407,085

Size of Country: 92,300 sq km

Major Language: Arabic

Religion: Muslim

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Israel

Population: 6,200,000

Size of Country: 21,000 sq km

Major Language: Hebrew, Arabic, English.

Religion: Jewish, Muslim, Christian.

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Palestine

Population: 6,200,000

Size of Country: 21,000 sq km

Major Language: Hebrew, Arabic, English.

Religion: Jewish, Muslim, Christian.

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Electric Supply & Plugs

Jordan

2 Pin Round

Israel

2 Pin Round

Palestine

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 & 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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