

Contrasts of Mexico (MX 2014)

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT



TOUR **DURATION** 15



Tour Comfort: Standard

Mexico City Anthropological Museum - An impressive collection of precolonial artefacts

Tour Pace: Busy

- Oaxaca A UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the streets and markets of this delightful colonial city
- Tikal (Guatemala) The Maya metropolis, where temples scattered over a vast area stand out tall above the surrounding jungle
- Palenque Arguably the most enchanting of the ancient Maya ruins, set in
- San Cristobal de las Casas A beautiful highland colonial market town, surrounded by modern day Maya villages

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 13 nights Standard

Hotel

1 night Simple Lodge

Included Meals: 1 breakfast, 0 lunches,

1 dinner

Start Point: Join tour: Mexico City **End Point:** Tour ends: Belize City

Transport: Bus, Boat

Belize, Guatemala, **Countries:**

Mexico

Contrasts of Mexico

This exciting journey explores the fiery and mysterious land of the Aztecs and the Maya. From the valleys of Oaxaca in Mexico to the jungles of Guatemala, we tour colonial cities, discover ancient sites and search out the perfect locations for some down time. We visit the impressive Mayan sites of Tikal and Palenque, as well as lesser known sites such as Monte Alban, Bonampak and Yaxchila, and the pyramids at Teotihuacan. We also take a boat trip through the impressive Sumidero Canyon and explore the historic city of Antigua.



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 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 organization throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or

Join tour Mexico City

Check-in at hotel in Mexico City. Modern day Mexico City was built on top of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan by the Spaniards, after their conquest of the city. Today this busy, lively, city boasts a wealth of historical buildings, museums and markets.







Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available

In Mexico City

On our first day in Mexico City we visit the Zocalo (main square) area. The Cathedral and National Palace with many of Diego Rivera's remarkable murals on the history of Mexico are all built on top of Tenochtitian the old Aztec capital. Afterwards we will visit the museum of Anthropology, one of the finest museums in the world, its exhibits offer a taste of the history ahead of us.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available



In Mexico City

The next day we will drive out to the mysterious pyramids of Teotihuacan. Although abandoned thirteen centuries ago, they are still an unbelievable sight. Once the largest city in the Americas with perhaps 100,000 inhabitants, its influence continued through Middle America, and Maya craftsmen borrowed its decorative motifs and building designs. Centuries later the Aztecs revered Teotihuacan as 'the Place of the Gods'. Returning downtown we visit the Basilica de Guadalupe.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available



Drive to Oaxaca

Leaving the capital we drive south through cactus country to Oaxaca, one of the most charming colonial cities in Mexico. Arriving in the afternoon, we will have some free time to explore the city on foot. The colonnaded Zocalo comes alive at night as families come to stroll in the shade, while street vendors and entertainers vie for their attention. Oaxaca also has several colourful markets.

Overnight: Standard Hotel **Single Rooms Available**



In Oaxaca

Colonial Oaxaca was built with stones taken from ancient temples a few miles away. We explore the complex of temples, pyramids and enigmatic rock carvings at Monte Alban, a high spur that looms over the fertile valley. This mystical site was created by Zapotec Indians, who flourished here a thousand years ago. There may be the chance to see some of the exquisite treasures of Monte Alban in the Regional Museum (known as the Louvre of Oaxaca) in town (optional).

Overnight: Standard Hotel **Single Rooms Available**



Drive to Chiapa del Corzo

During our full day journey, we stop to visit the 2000-year-old swamp cypress tree in Santa Maria del Tule and explore the Mixtec/ Zapotec site of Mitla. We continue through the hot and windy isthmus of Tehuantepec and on to our night stop in Chiapa del Corzo, the provincial capital of Chiapas state, which we aim to explore over the next few days.

Overnight: Standard Hotel **Single Rooms Available**

Visit Sumidero Canyon; then drive to San Cristóbal; optional visit to eco-zoo before heading to the

This morning we visit the spectacular Sumidero Canyon, a unique rift 41km long and 1000ft deep, cut by the Rio Grijalva. This is the spot where, in the 16th century, some 1000 Chiapa Indians committed suicide rather than submit to Spanish rule. We take a boat trip to fully appreciate the towering gorge, before driving up a scenic mountain road to San Cristóbal de las Casas. At 2210m above sea level, it can get quite cold at night!

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available

In San Cristóbal de las Casas

There is a unique atmosphere to this small colonial and Indian town, high in the scenic Chiapas range. The small restaurants and shops provide ample opportunity to wander. Indians from the surrounding hills fill the town and marketplace with their colourful dress including the distinctive Tzotzil Indians who still retain much of their Mayan customs and language. We travel by bus to San Juan Chamula then visit on foot where they practice an interesting blend of Catholicism and traditional religions. The Indians are noted for their bright textiles and weavings in bold designs and this is the place to bargain for some colourful souvenirs. In the afternoon you will have free time to visit the Na Bolom, the House of the Jaguar, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Lacandón tribe and displays many of their artefacts.

Overnight: Standard Hotel **Single Rooms Available**



Drive to Palengue

Leaving the highlands, we descend through the tangled forests of Chiapas, stopping on the way at the little visited ruins of Tonina, where the main pyramid stands 73m high. The road is slow and winding, but there are scenic views as we descend from the highlands to the jungles of Palenque. We plan to bathe at the waterfalls of Agua Azul before driving on to our hotel. The river tumbles over a series of limestone travertine's, forming natural jacuzzis, and is a popular Sunday picnic spot for Mexicans and travellers alike.

Overnight: Standard Hotel **Single Rooms Available**





At Palengue

One of the highlights of our tour is today's guided visit to the famous jungle ruins of Palenque, a fascinating and important Mayan site. Once the choking forest was cleared, the ruins revealed the tomb of the high priest Pakal, his body adorned with a marvellous jade death mask - one of the most prized relics of the Maya culture, discovered only in 1952. The entire site, shrouded by the steamy rainforest, has an aura of deep mystery. During the afternoon you can continue to explore the site, or take a bus back to the waterfall of Misol Ha for a refreshing swim (optional). The stunning 30m high waterfall was featured in the titles of the movie 'Predator'.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available

Drive to Frontera Corozal; boat trip to Yaxchilan

Today we head into the Lacandon area to the ruins of Bonampak. The discovery of the well preserved murals at this site had a profound impact on our understanding of the Mayans. Continuing to Frontera, we board our lancha (river boat) on the Ucumacinta river and head for the remote site of Yaxchilan, famous for its stelae and roof combs. We continue back up the river through the rainforest to our overnight lodge near where we boarded our boat earlier today.

Overnight: Simple Lodge

Drive to Flores

Our Mayan rainforest experience continues up river by boat to the small settlement of Bethel on the Guatemalan side before progressing by road to Flores, on Lake Peten Itza. The afternoon can be spent enjoying a leisurely boat trip on the blue waters of the lake (optional).

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available

Visit Tikal

Today we visit Tikal, the great Maya metropolis set in the midst of the rainforest, which can justly be compared with the celebrated ancient cities of Egypt and Greece. Initially settled in about 600BC, Tikal was abandoned by its rulers around 890AD and totally deserted a hundred years later. The city covered an area of 16 square kilometres. Re-discovered in 1848, only a few of its great temples and pyramids have been excavated. The site is extensive, so we include a guided tour in the morning with the afternoon free to let you explore. We can appreciate the prolific birdlife in the surrounding rainforest and take in amazing views of the forest canopy from the tops of the pyramids.

Overnight: Standard Hotel Single Rooms Available



Drive to San Ignacio in Belize

Today we drive over the border to San Ignacio in Belize. Here canoeing activities are available on the Macal river (optional) that passes through San Ignacio Town or alternatively venture deep into the Mayan underworld cave canoeing in nearby Barton Creek Cave. You may also like to visit one of the nearby and little visited Mayan sites of Cahal Pech or Xunantunich.

Overnight: Standard Hotel

**** Tour ends

This morning we drive to Belize City where the tour ends.

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 1 breakfast, 0 lunches,1 dinner 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

Mexico: MX - there is a US\$28 departure tax payable pre entry to Guatemala.

Guatemala: MX there is an entry tax of US\$2. MX Land only and MXY - there is an Exit charge of U\$D2 pre entry to Belize

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

Oaxaca - Folk dancing US\$ 15, Regional Museum US\$ 4.

Palenque - Misol Ha waterfall approx US\$ 10.

Flores - Boat trip on Lake Peten Itza US\$ 10 including zoo:

MX - Land only - San Ignacio - Canoeing, half day US\$ 40; Caving at Barton Creek, half day US\$ 35.

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

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 US\$ 30 for group tipping if on MX, 15% is expected in restaurants.

Foreign Exchange

Belize

ATM Availability: In major towns only.

Credit Card Acceptance: In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: US\$ Travellers Cheques can be exchanged in most major towns.

Local Currency: Belize Dollar

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We strongly advise taking your money in small denomination US Dollar Travellers Cheques along with some US Dollar Cash. US dollar notes are legal tender in Belize.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.



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Guatemala

ATM Availability: Available in most cities and towns. We do not recommend relying on them as your sole source of spending money.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are of limited use, but may be brought along 'just in case'.

Travellers Cheques: We do not recommend

Local Currency: Quetzal

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry your funds in U.S. currency (NOT Sterling, which is almost impossible to change). It is advisable to bring at least US\$300 - \$400 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denomination notes (in good condition). Note: US dollar bills with the series CB-B2 year 2001 will not be accepted for exchange. Also be aware that \$100 bills are often not accepted.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns. Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. Exchanges at border.

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in main towns/cities. Credit Card Acceptance: Limited to major towns and cities.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can be difficult to exchange outside the major cities.

Local Currency: Mexican New Peso

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry all your funds in U.S. Dollar travellers cheques and US Dollar cash (NOT sterling, which is not so readily exchanged) It is advisable to take some US\$300-400 of your total spending money in cash in mixed denominations. US\$ bills must be cleanand not have any nicks or tears.

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

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

Mexico: Citizens from UK, New Zealand, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada require a Mexican Tourist Card to enter. This is obtained from the consular office or at the check-in desk of the airline you are travelling with and will need to be kept until exit.

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



The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

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

Other 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.

USA (If flights transit): According to US law, passengers will have to disembark, collect luggage and clear immigration before reboarding for the onward flight.

Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This applies if you enter the country by sea or by air on a carrier participating in the visa waiver scheme, holding a return/ onward ticket. The passport requirements are that it must be machine readable, and must contain a digital photograph of the holder and also an integrated circuit chip that stores biographic information.

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

When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line. Anyone applying for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ESTA) to travel under the Visa Waiver system will be charged a fee of 14USD (9GBP).

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

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

Vaccinations & Protection

Belize

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

Guatemala

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on malaria. Please note: If you are entering from any of the following countries (Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, French Guyana, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia and Sudan) are now required to produce an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis documenting yelllow fever vaccination before entry to Costa Rica will be granted. Certificates are valid 10 days after the date of vaccination. 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.

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. 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

Relize

Sub-tropical with a brisk prevailing wind from the Caribbean. Summer highs are rarely above 35°C, winter lows rarely below 15°C. Annual rainfall ranges from 107cm in the north to 364cm in the south and humidity can be high at any time of year. The rainy season extends from June through October with a short dry period in August, but some rain can be expected throughout the year.

Guatemala

In the high plains (1524m-1981m) the climate is temperate all year round. In lower areas the climate is semi-tropical. The mountains can be cool especially at night. In general, the dry season in Guatemala lasts from Nov - April. From May to October there are often fine mornings and clear evenings but afternoon rains tend to be heavy. The Peten lowlands tend to be rainy all year round though less so from February to April.

Mexico is a country whose weather is very much determined by its geological make-up. Whatever time of year you visit the weather produces a range of diverse contrasts. The summer months (June to October) are generally the wettest, with the areas around

Mexico City and Guadalajara averaging some 6 inches of rain in July, whilst the coastal areas like La Paz only get at most an inch. Temperatures at this time of year can also vary greatly, from the mid 70s F in Mexico City, to the high 90s at La Paz. Winter is generally the busiest period, when rainfall is at a minimum and the daytime temperatures average a pleasant 72° across the region. Do bear in mind that at altitude the temperatures can drop appreciably at night and sudden changes can occur at anytime.

Clothing

From Nov-Apr warmer clothing is needed in the highlands (San Cristobal and Mexico City), which are mostly mild, but temperatures can drop dramatically at night. Pack a fleece and some long sleeved clothing for protection from sun and insects. Lightweight rainwear is essential. In general, winter is dry and summer wet. Casual clothes are acceptable. Shorts are acceptable everywhere except in

Equipment

An umbrella is useful for tropical downpours. A torch and waterbottle are recommended. Bring insect repellent, sunscreen and a sunhat.Binoculars.

Footwear

Bring walking boots if you have them, otherwise comfortable shoes/trainers with a good grip and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember - you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. Please note that in the Yucatan luggage is stored on a roof rack and you must be able to lift it.

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.

Belize

Lunch £: 13.00 Dinner £: 20.00

Guatemala

Lunch £: 9.00 **Dinner £:** 17.00

Mexico

Lunch £: 7.00 Dinner £: 13.00

Drink

Belize

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50 Water £: 1.00

Guatemala

Bottle of Beer £: 1.20

Water £: 0.70

Mexico

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00 Water £: 0.70

Country details

Belize

Population: 333,200 Size of Country: 22,966



Major Language: English Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -6

Guatemala

Population: 13,276,517

Size of Country: 108,890 sq km Major Language: Spanish Religion: Catholic and Protestant Time Difference to GMT: -6

Mexico

Population: 110,000,000

Size of Country: 1,972,000 sq km

Major Language: Spanish is the official language, but around 50 languages/dialects are also spoken by the indigenous peoples of

Mexico.

Religion: Roman Catholic, Protestant

Time Difference to GMT: -6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Belize

2 Pin Flat

Guatemala

2 Pin Flat

Mexico

2 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures & 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% nonrefundable 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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