

# EXPLORE!

## Tour Notes



### Cycle Tuscany - Florence, Chianti and Siena (CTY 2015)



TOUR DURATION  
**8**  
DAYS



**Tour Style:** Classic  
**Tour Comfort:** Standard

**Tour Type:** Small Groups  
**Cycling Grade:** Moderate

**tour Code:** CTY

#### Tour Highlights - Cycle Tuscany - Florence, Chianti and Siena

- ✓ Cycle Evocative Tuscan Landscapes - Through rolling forested landscape amongst vineyards and Cypress trees
- ✓ Florence - Explore this renaissance city par excellence
- ✓ Chianti Classico - Fine wine country
- ✓ Siena - Free day in wonderfully atmospheric medieval city
- ✓ La Toscana - Ride between medieval hilltop towns

#### Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:** 1 night Comfortable Hotel  
6 nights Standard Hotel

**Included Meals:** 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 2 dinners

**Start Point:** Join tour: Florence

**End Point:** Tour ends: Florence Airport

**Included Bike:** 27 gear Focus Black Hills mountain bikes with hybrid tyres and lockable front suspension

**Transport:** Bus, Bicycle

**Countries:** Italy

## Cycle Tuscany: Florence, Chianti and Siena

We discover the varied and beautiful scenery of Tuscany with a rewarding ride between cultural highlights. From the renaissance capital Florence we ride through Chianti vineyards, olive groves and forests to the medieval hilltop town of Castellina in Chianti. We spend time in the ancient city of Siena before heading further south through classic, rolling Tuscan scenery to the charming hilltop villages of Pieve a Salvi and Montepulciano.

### Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 282 km over five days (an average of 56 km per day). The terrain is hilly over the first two days and subsequent days are on the rolling Tuscan plain with ascents to hilltop towns. We cycle on tarmac roads (80%) and gravel paths (20%). A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour except on the circular route on day 6. 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.

### 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.

### 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 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.

### DAY 1 Join tour in Florence

We start our tour in Florence. Our hotel is situated in the centre of this beautiful city. We will have time for a briefing over tea before we settle into our rooms. Time to relax and unwind, prepare our bikes for the coming week and enjoy our first evening meal (not included).

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel  
Single Room Available**



 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 The Hills and Vineyards of Chianti

After breakfast we take to our bikes, leave Florence behind and head to Castellina in Chianti. We journey along quiet roads and lanes passing through vineyards. We pass via Impruneta, famed for its terracota production, and get to enjoy cycling through small rural villages before arriving in Greve in Chianti for lunch. With rested legs we continue through vineyards and forests before arriving in Castellina in Chianti for a glass of wine and a look around the town. We may have time to try some optional wine tasting. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3 Cycle South to Siena

Leaving Chianti this morning we head for Siena, an atmospheric city with magnificent Gothic architecture and medieval alleyways. Passing first through the famed wine estates of Fonterutoli we continue onto Radda along gravel tracks and forests. We then arrive at Castel di Brolio in time for lunch in a small local café (not included). After lunch we head towards Castelnuovo di Berardenga, before taking a back road, via Monteaperti, to Siena itself. Arriving sometime in the mid afternoon should give us time to have a look around the city and perhaps enjoy a drink in the Piazza del Campo, the focal point of the city, a semi-circular piazza surrounded by ancient buildings and overlooked by the 100m bell tower (Torre del Mangia). Once a rival to Florence in power and trade, Siena controlled the trade routes between France and Rome, as well as the southern Tuscan wool industry. The Black Death marked the beginning of a decline for the city, decimating it in the 14th century and killing a third of its population. Today it stands as a classic Italian city, with its magnificent central square and the awe inspiring grandeur of the Duomo overlooking the Via di Citta. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 54 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 4 Free day in Siena; optional trip to Florence

Today is free to spend at your leisure. You may wish to explore the delights of Siena. The centre of this city is traffic-free, making it ideal to wander around on foot, soaking up the many intriguing sights. The Piazza is also used for a horse race twice a year - the famous Palio, when horses and their riders hurtle dangerously around the square to the delight of the crowds. Alternatively you may prefer to visit Florence, the spiritual home of the Renaissance and considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in Italy. Florence is a city of superlatives: from the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest and most famous bridge in Florence and the only one that was not demolished during the German retreat of 1944, to the religious centre of the city and the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with its giant dome or 'duomo'. Close by are other artistic wonders, including the Baptistry, the East door (called the Gate of Paradise by Michelangelo) and Giotto's famous bell tower, as well as the Piazza della Signoria. For those of you that might prefer something a little more relaxing there is also the Treno Natura, a special old train that runs from Siena towards Southern Tuscany, dropping people off along the way and picking them up later for the return journey back to Siena. Plenty to choose from!

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 5 Siena to Pieve a Salti via Le Crete

Leaving Siena this morning we head out along quiet back roads, our journey enhanced by some wonderful views back towards the city. From here we enter an area known as Le Crete - the badlands of Tuscany with classic scenes of rolling landscape lined with Cyprus trees and farmhouses perched on the hilltops. We continue south, via Murlo, with fine open country around us as we enter the wine producing area of Brunello of Montalcino. Our route from Murlo follows the route of the Eroica bike tour on part tarmac and part gravel roads. From Buonconvento we ride along gravel roads with commanding views of the Val D'Orcia region as we make our way up to our base for the next two nights in an agriturismo located in a small locality called Pieve a Salti. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 54 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner




## DAY 6 Classic Tuscany loop ride

Today's ride takes us through some of Tuscany's most picturesque landscapes. From Pieve a Salti we descend gravel roads following the course of the Via Francigena in the direction of San Giovanni D'asso - a small town known for its truffle production. We continue along quiet roads towards Montisi and Trequanda enjoying fine views along the way until we reach the town of Asciano for our lunch stop. From Asciano, we then ride in the direction of Chiusure and a stop at the famed Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, where we will have the option to descend to view the abbey before continuing on our final and fast descent towards Buonconvento and the 3km back up to our farmhouse in Pieve a Salti. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 62 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 7 Cycle to Montepulciano

Bidding farewell to our farmhouse we enter the wine producing area of Brunello of Montalcino. Riding along gravel roads with commanding views of the Val D'Orcia region we make our way up to the charming hilltop town of Montalcino for a look around. From Montalcino, we descend via a lovely road, surrounded by Brunello vineyards to the small town of Torrenieri. Along our route this morning we will again be following some of the famous Eroica Route on some of the strade bianche or gravel roads typical of the area. We continue through San Quirico D'Orcia and ascend again, slowly but surely to the scenic hill top perch of Pienza. The birthplace of Pope Pius II, Pienza's piazza was transformed into a Renaissance centrepiece when the pope commissioned the architect Bernardo Rossellino to build a Duomo, papal palace and town hall. From Pienza we take a quiet, scenic road, passing through small villages to reach Montepulciano. Famed for the wine production of the VINO Nobile and also as the filming location for recent films, we pedal up hill to reach this lovely town where we will celebrate the final night of our tour. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 61 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 8 Tour ends Florence Airport

Today we transfer back to the airport in Florence where our tour ends.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation Rating

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, 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.

### 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.

### Italy

**Lunch £:** 8 - 10

**Dinner £:** 15.00 - 20.00

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## 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.

## Italy

**Bottle of Beer £:** 2.00

**Water £:** 1.00

## Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

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## Optional Excursions

Siena - Museo del l'Opera ticket £10 for the Cathedral; L'opera Museum with panoramic terrace and Baptistry; 7e to go up Torre Mangia in the Piazza del campo; Wednesday Market.

Florence - Uffizi and Accademia £10 per person. Please note that these tickets should be bought in advance to be sure of entry (£3 fee). This can be done online at [www.uffizi.com](http://www.uffizi.com). The earliest entry time you should book is 11.30 and anticipate leaving Florence at about 17.00 for your return to Siena. Your tour leader can help you book via telephone whilst on tour - although this method is slightly cheaper please note that the tickets may be sold out.

Greve - Wine tasting £8.

Bagno Vignoni - Piscina del Sole Thermal pool 15e plus swimming hat 1.50e, or jump into river below for more refreshing option!

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## Tipping - Tour Leader

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

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## Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised 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.

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## Foreign Exchange

### Italy

**ATM Availability:** Major towns.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Larger hotels and restaurants.

**Travellers Cheques:** Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

**Local Currency:** Euro.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** GBP.

**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.

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## 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.

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### 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](http://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>.

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### 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.

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>.

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

## 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. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit [www.explore.co.uk/insurance](http://www.explore.co.uk/insurance). Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website [www.fca.gov.uk](http://www.fca.gov.uk) or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

### Visa Information

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

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

### Vaccinations & Protection

#### Italy

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

## Preparing for your Tour

DAILY DISTANCES	
Day 2	51km
Day 3	54km
Day 4	
Day 5	54km
Day 6	62km
Day 7	61km

### Climate

#### Italy

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

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## Clothing

During the day you can expect to wear T-shirts and shorts. Bring long trousers, long-sleeved shirts and a fleece for cooler days and early, late season. Lightweight rain-wear for occasional rain.

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## Equipment

A lock will be provided as well as a few puncture repair kits – we recommend you bring your own helmet for the reasons outlined above (see “Cycling Safety” paragraph). We strongly advise that helmets are always worn whilst cycling. Water-bottles holders are often fitted onto the bike frame - check bike details to confirm. Wrap-around sunglasses help prevent insects or pollen getting in your eyes. A map and our day-to-day notes are provided at the start of the tour, but you should bring your own choice of guidebook to have with you during the day. Padded shorts, trousers or a personal ‘gel seat cover’ are recommended but not essential. Cycling gloves are strongly recommended as they will protect you from sunburn and may also help protect your hands if you fall.

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## Footwear

Trainers for cycling plus comfortable shoes for around town.

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## Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Total allowance: 44lb/20kg. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

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# General Information

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## Country details

### Italy

**Population:** 60,681,514

**Size of Country:** 301,338 Sq KM

**Major Language:** Italian

**Religion:** Roman Catholic

**Time Difference to GMT:** +1

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## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Italy

2 Pin Round

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# 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, 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.

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## 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 traditions, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

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## 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.

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## 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](http://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](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>
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## 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.

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### 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

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### 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

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### 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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