

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Cycle Tuscany - Pisa to Florence (CTY 2017)



TRIPDURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Easy to Moderate

Trip Code: CTY

Trip Highlights - Cycle Tuscany - Pisa to Florence

- ✓ Cycle Tuscany - Along peaceful roads, cypress tree-lined country lanes and lovely bike paths
- ✓ Florence - Explore this renaissance city par excellence
- ✓ Pisa - The magnificent Piazza dei Miracoli in Pisa with the leaning tower and Cathedral
- ✓ Lucca - Cycle on the city's Renaissance walls and discover magnificent villas
- ✓ Vinci - The charming medieval town where Leonardo da Vinci was born
- ✓ Local delicacies - Tuscan wine-tastings and olive oil tasting

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 5 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Premium Hotel

Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Pisa

End Point: Trip ends: Pisa Airport

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

Transport: Bus, Bicycle

Countries: Italy

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Cycle Tuscany: Pisa to Florence

We discover the varied and beautiful scenery of Tuscany with a rewarding ride between cultural highlights. From the Leaning Tower of Pisa we follow the Serchio River to the charming walled town of Lucca. We ride on country lanes to the birthplace of Leonardo in Vinci, before arriving into renaissance capital Florence.

Why Book this trip

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

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 202 km over five days (an average of 40 km per day). The terrain is mostly rolling Tuscan Hills and plains. The first two rides follow river paths and are fairly level. As we leave Lucca the rides have more ascents passing through small villages and hamlets as we get closer to Vinci and Florence. We cycle on tarmac roads (90%) and gravel paths (10%). A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour except on the circular route on day 4 and optional ride on day 7. We have graded the route as easy to moderate.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

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

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Cycling Grade: Easy to Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate rides on the same tour. You'll be cycling through flat or gently undulating terrain, with the occasional more energetic ascent.

Your trip itinerary

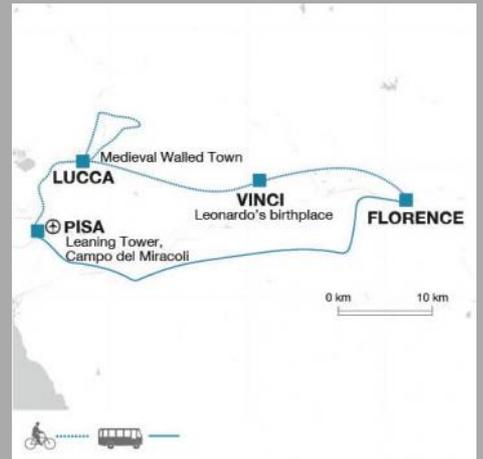
Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

DAY 1 Trip starts in Pisa; time to explore

We start our trip in Pisa and for those who arrive early today there is time this afternoon to explore the narrow streets, pastel coloured houses and churches of this historic town. There may also be time to ascend the leaning tower to enjoy the views. We will meet at our hotel for a welcome briefing and bike allocation, before heading out for our first evening meal together (not included).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Pisan Aqueduct and Colline Pisane countryside cycle

After breakfast we start our first ride, heading out from Pisa to explore the countryside of the Colline Pisane region on a picturesque circular cycle route. We follow the old Pisan Aqueduct out of the city before heading into the hills for a scenic ride towards Calci. On arrival we have the chance to see the National Museum of Certosa and the Romanesque church of San Emolao provided they are open. With rested legs we continue towards the villages of Buti and Vicopisano, before starting our return journey back towards Pisa, following a cycle path along the banks of the river Arno. The rest of the day is free for you to enjoy a glass of Chianti, relax or explore Pisa. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (total 240 metres ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Cycle from Pisa to Lucca; city tour

Leaving Pisa this morning, we first cycle along quiet level roads to Pontasserchio and then from here we cross the River Serchio, and skirt the base of the hills across to Massaciucolle Lake. Here we have free time for lunch and an optional short walk in Lipu wildlife reserve on the edge of the lake. Back on the bikes, we ride through low forested hills to Balbano and Nozzano Castello where we will meet up with our cycle route that is in part a gravel track, this follows the River Serchio. Travelling along this path we pass through the fluvial park of the Serchio and arrive into the great Tuscan walled city of Lucca. Arriving at the Pont San Quirico we will then turn towards the city and ride into the centre of Lucca and head up onto the famous walls which encompass the old town of Lucca. We complete a full circuit by bike (nearly 4km in length) then we will have a short cycle tour through the city, passing the Amphitheatre Piazza and main historical sites before arriving at our accommodation for the night. After settling into our hotel there is some free time before we meet up for an included pre-dinner wine tasting in the amazing cellars of Vanni Enoteca. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 40 kilometres (total 110 metres ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Explore the surrounding hills and villas of Lucca

Today we will explore the scenic area that surrounds Lucca and visit one of the grand villas to be found here. We start cycling directly from the hotel, re-joining the Serchio bike path to ride as far as Ponte a Moriano. After crossing the Serchio River here we cycle along lanes following the Bio Giro bike route through the Luccan hills and past historic grand villas, such as Villa Napoleon. Continuing through the small town of Marlia we pedal along lovely backroads, passing olive groves that make the oil for which Lucca is famed, as well as vineyards producing Colline Lucchese wine. Our route takes us through many small villages and towns such as Segrominio in Monte before arriving at Colle Bordocheo, where we have included a wine and olive oil tasting to try local produce. We then ride on to Villa Torrigiani, where we stop for an optional visit of this magnificent 16th century villa and its ornate gardens. From here it is an easy ride back into Lucca along the Via Delle Ville, taking a nice quiet route back into the city. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres (total 280 metres ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Ride from Lucca to Vinci via Fucecchio wetlands

Our ride from Lucca today is slightly more hilly with some gradual ascents and relaxing descents. We initially follow the Nottolini Aqueduct from Lucca towards Pieve di Compito, famed for its Camellias and annual flower festival, then along country roads through pretty villages, stopping for a morning coffee en route. Later we ride alongside the Fucecchio Nature Reserve, one of the largest inland wetland reserves in Europe with lakes and marshes covering around 1,800 hectares. The wetlands are home to hundreds of bird species and protected plant life and play an important role in the annual migration of birds through the continent. Picturesque Tuscan country roads then take us the rest of the way into Vinci, arriving in time to explore the hilltop village and its museum dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci (optional). Our total cycling distance today is approximately 48 kilometres (total 305 metres ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Cycle Vinci to Florence; cycle River Arno path

Leaving Vinci this morning on our bikes, we pass through more classic Tuscan countryside seeing vineyards, peaceful olive groves and small terracotta villages. Then our route follows the River Arno valley course, with the final section of this ride travelling along the River Arno cycle path to then pass through the Parco Le Cascine and into the heart of Florence, cycling through the historic centre to our hotel. Florence is the spiritual home of the Renaissance and is considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in Italy. It 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. We will have time in the afternoon to explore Florence and visit some of the world famous landmarks such as the Duomo and the Ponte Vecchio. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 42 kilometres (total 365 metres ascent).

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Free day in Florence; optional Chianti cycle ride or Siena visit

Today is free to spend time exploring the wonderful city of Florence. Perhaps take time to visit the Uffizi Gallery or peruse the interesting streets on foot. There is the option for a self-guided moderate grade cycle ride into the famous wine growing area of Chianti Classico, journeying to Impruneta and Greve in Chianti. The route from Florence to Impruneta does climb quite steadily but allows one to enjoy far reaching views back across the city of Florence. An easier section of road takes you to Strada in Chianti. From Strada, the road again climbs with a steep section over a pass followed by a long descent into the heart of Chianti and its main town - Greve in Chianti. You can return by the same route to Florence. Alternatively there are easier self-guided rides in and around Florence that the Tour Leader can explain. An alternative option is a day trip to Siena by train. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres (total 605 metres ascent) (optional).

Overnight: **Premium Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Trip ends Pisa Airport

Today we drive back to Pisa Airport where our trip ends. For those of you that have an afternoon or evening flight, there is the opportunity to travel back into Pisa before returning to the airport for your flight. The airport has luggage storage facilities and regular, inexpensive shuttle buses into town. This is at your own expense and unaccompanied but the leader will be able to assist with information.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

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

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Italy

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 10.00 - 14.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Italy

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00 - 4.00

Water £: 1.00 - 2.00

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.

Optional Excursions

Florence - Uffizi and Academia GBP 10 per person. Please note that these tickets should be bought in advance to be sure of entry (GBP 3 fee). This can be done online at 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.

Leaning tower of Pisa - 18 Euros.

Cathedral Florence - Torre Guinigi Lucca - 4 Euros. Villa Torrigiani : 12 Euros.

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a 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.

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.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

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

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

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

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

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

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

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

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

Important Information

Travel Insurance

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

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The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

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 Trip



Bike Details

Your included bike is an 27 gear Focus Black Hills mountain bike with hybrid tyres and lockable front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour except on the optional rides. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Climate

Italy

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

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.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On Tour

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

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Italy

Population: 60,681,514

Size of Country: 301,338 Sq KM

Major Language: Italian

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Italy

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

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

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

These trip notes were printed on 18/08/2017 07:14:11

