# EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

## Contrasts of Colombia (BCO 2015 NEW ITINERARY)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOURDURAT
**14**
DAYS

**Tour Style:** Classic
**Tour Pace:** Moderate
**Tour Type:** Small Groups
**Tour Comfort:** Standard
**tour Code:** BCO

### Tour Highlights - Contrasts of Colombia

- ✓ Cartagena - Explore Latin America's colonial gem on the Caribbean Coast
- ✓ Villa De Leyva - Picture postcard colonial village in the Andean foothills
- ✓ Coffee Region - Lush green landscapes with coffee plantations
- ✓ Popayan - Discover this impressive colonial city, known as the 'Ciudad Blanca'
- ✓ Bogota - Visit its superb pre-Colombian gold museum and the historic streets of La Candelaria

### Tour Essentials

| | |
|---|---|
| **Accommodation:** | 11 nights Standard Hotel<br>2 nights Comfortable Hotel |
| **Included Meals:** | 13 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners |
| **Start Point:** | Join tour: Bogota |
| **End Point:** | Tour ends: Bogota |
| **Transport:** | Bus, Flight |
| **Countries:** | Colombia |

# Contrasts Of Colombia

The background hum of Latin beats and Caribbean rhythms combine with outstanding natural beauty to make Colombia one of the most exciting destinations in South America. Join us on a journey into the heart of Latin America. We discover the colonial cities of Cartagena, Bogota and Popayan, visit local coffee farms and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of Villa de Leyva, nestled in the Andean foothills.

## 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

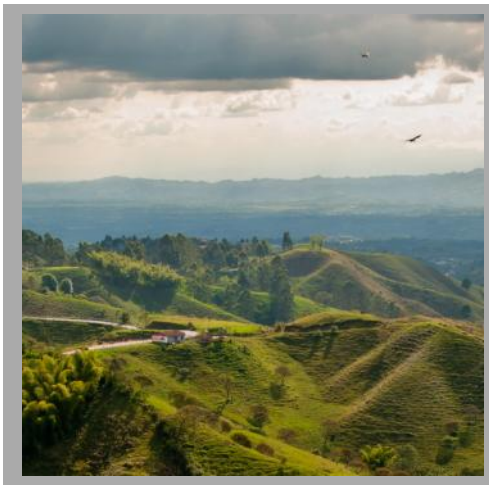
Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

### 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: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.



# 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 Bogota

Bogota is set at an altitude of over 2600m with the high ranges of the Cordillera Mountains lying to the east. Bogota's name comes from the Chibcha word Bacata. Bacata was the territory of the zipa (overlord) of the Muisca Indian tribes that inhabited the region before the arrival of the Spaniards. Gonzalo Jimenez of Quesada was the first European to set foot in the lands of the Muiscas nation in 1538. The capital city boasts grand colonial churches, impressive museums, futuristic architecture and a vibrant cultural scene. Arriving today we check-in to our hotel.

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

**Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 In Bogota; city tour. Cable car up Monserrate

This morning we head to the colourful colonial streets of La Candelaria for a tour of the city. Walking under the balconied houses from where local residents often observe the comings and goings below, we'll cross the vast Plaza de Bolivar encountering some excellent examples of colonial architecture, such as the Catedral Primada de Colombia and San Bartolome College. We'll also visit the Gold Museum, which is regarded as housing the finest collection of gold from pre- Hispanic times. Something not to be missed in La Candelaria are the many chocolaterias, where you could sample the famous Bogotano hot chocolate. In the afternoon we will head out of the town and take the cable car up Mount Monserrate for magnificent views of the city. On top of the mountain there is a church and this is a place of pilgrimage due to its statue of Senor Caido, the fallen Christ. If weather conditions allow you should be rewarded with fine views across the city and the countryside beyond.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3 Visit the Salt Cathedral at Zipaquira and the Guatavita Lagoon en route to Villa de Leyva

Today we journey to Villa de Leyva. Founded in 1574, this town is one of Colombia's colonial treasures. Nestled in the Andean foothills where time seems to have almost stood still, it was declared a national monument in 1954. It is easy to see why Villa de Leyva's local residents have been keen to preserve the thriving heart of this old town. Cobbled streets thread their way between whitewashed buildings and the colonial architectural style, with wood framed windows and balconies laden with flowers and plants, is a delight to behold. En route we will visit the Guatavita Lagoon. This lagoon was reputedly one of the sacred lakes of the Muisca and a ritual conducted there is widely thought to be the basis for the legend of El Dorado. Typical Lunch in route. In the afternoon, we will visit the Salt Cathedral at Zipaquira. This immense structure, carved out of solid salt, can accommodate over 8000 people and was part of the salt mines. Curving and twisting tunnels descend into the Roman Catholic Church, passing 14 small chapels representing the Stations of the Cross, illustrating the events of Jesus' last journey.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 4 Morning city tour of Villa de Leyva

This morning, we visit the geological site of El Fossil and the Muisca Observatory, both of which are located only a few kilometers from the town itself. Long ago Villa de Leyva was deep below the ocean and over millennia it rose to form the Andean range and brought with it an abundance of fossils. Among these is a 170 million year old Kronosaurus - a 13m sea reptile - which is the most complete example in the world. El Infiernito, is another interesting site, it was used by the Muiscas, a people living in central Colombia at the time of the Spanish conquest, as an astronomical observatory and a place of worship. The observatory is home to thirty cylindrical stone monoliths and the site was used to plan planting seasons and harvests. Alternatively, you may wish to stay in town soaking up the laid back atmosphere, visiting one of its many museums and churches.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**
**Single Room Available**

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 5 Drive to Bogota and fly to Armenia

Driving back to the outskirts of Bogota, we'll take a flight to Armenia. Armenia is the capital of the Quindio department and important coffee growing centre, where we will spend the next three nights.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 6 Full day excursion to Cocora Valley and Acaime Reserve

After Breakfast, we spend time exploring the beautiful rainforest and creeks of the valley with the opportunity to see the wax palm, the national tree of Colombia, along with other flora and fauna. We will also visit the towns of Salento and Filandia to see their very characteristic architecture of this coffee growing region. We finish the day off with a spectacular view of the landscape at sunset from the Mirador of Filandia before returning for dinner at our accommodation.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 7 Full day visit to coffee farm and surrounding region

This is one of the most attractive parts of the country and today we will take a full day out to a local coffee farm and the surrounding area. During the visit to the coffee farm you will learn about the whole process from the planting of the beans all the way through the picking and roasting process finishing off with trying the fresh coffee. After our visit to the coffeee farm we will visit the two local towns of Beunavista and Pijao, here we will have the chance to explore the area, reknowned for its authenticity.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 8 Travel to Popayan, explore on foot

Transfer we drive to Popayan (around 7 hours). En route, we visit Buga. Buga, formally Guadalajara de Buga, is a city and municipality in the Valle del Cauca Department of Colombia. It is famous for its Basilica del Senor de los Milagros, which houses an image of Christ called el Senor de los Milagros (the Lord of the Miracles). Buga, which is the city´s formal name, is one of the oldest cities in Colombia; founded in 1555 under the order of the Spanish conquistador Sebastian de Belalcazar and known as Buga la Real (the Royal Buga ) or La Ciudad Senora ('the Lady City'). It was the home of many wealthy families coming from Spain and settling in the New World. Then we continue to Popayan. Popayan is well-known for its beautiful colonial architecture and is often referred to as the 'White City' due to the prevalence white-walled homes, buildings, and several churches in the historic center. Founded in 1537 by Spanish Conquistador Sebastian de Belalcazar, it played an important role during the colonial period as it was the mid-point of gold in the journey between Lima, Quito and Cartagena on its way to Spain. As result of its colonial importance, Popayan's historic center is one of the most beautiful and well-preserved in Colombia. There are stunning churches such as the Iglesia de San Francisco, the Iglesia de Santo Domingo, Iglesia de San Jose and the Iglesia La Ermita which is the oldest and dates back to 1546, the Cathedral Basilica Nuestra Senora La Asuncion neoclassical style and the attached Clock Tower, main symbol of the city. Although the city was damaged by an earthquake in 1983, most historic colonial architecture was completely restored. Popayán is also widely-known for the solemnity of its Easter Week sacred processions, a tradition dating back to colonial times (1558). In 2009 Popayan's Easter Week celebrations were declared by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. During Easter Week, Popayan also hosts the Religious Music Festival. The 'Morro de Tulcán' is the main archeological site, an ancient pre-Hispanic pyramid. On arrival, the Tour Leader will provide an orientation tour.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 9 Optional trip to Purace National Park

Today is a free day. We recommend visiting the Purace National Park. Located 45Km away from Popayan, it is an impressive natural reserve spanning 83,000 hectares including the mountain range 'Los Coconucos' and their volcanoes. The highest peaks are 'Pan de Azucar' (5000m), 'Coconuco' (4600m) and 'Puracé' (4,580m). The Sotara Volcano (4400m) is to the south of the mountain chain. Adding to this beautiful landscape there are waterfalls, lagoons and caves. We can take a break at 'Pilimbala' to enjoy the hot springs by the foothills of the snow-capped 'Nevado del Purace' which is surrounded by fascinating landscapes. Other optional excursions include half day tour of the haciendas and museums of Popayan and a half day trip to Termales de Coconuco thermal baths.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 10 Free morning in Popayan, fly to Cartagena

This morning, we have some free time to explore the city, perhaps walking through the colonial center visiting the Casa Museo Valencia or the colonial art museum. Later this afternoon we'll fly to Cartagena (via Bogota), hailed as one of the most fascinating colonial cities in Latin America. Located on the country's Caribbean coast, Cartagena de Indias was one of the first cities to be founded by the Spanish in South America and today is famed both for its history and beauty. Our hotel this evening is located in the heart of the old-town, surrounded by the reassuring city walls and the perfect spot from which to wander to one of the city's many fine restaurants and bars.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 11 In Cartagena: City tour; optional trip to fisherman's village of La Boquilla

Considered by many as one of the world's most beautiful cities, Cartagena was founded in 1533 by Spanish conquerors as a main port to transport people and their goods into South America, and export gold, silver and all sorts of plants, animals, minerals and handicrafts from all over the continent across the Caribbean and on to Europe. The city quickly became a major trading port, particularly for precious metals. Gold and silver from the mines in New Granada and Peru were loaded in Cartagena on galleons bound for Spain via Havana. It was also a slave port; Cartagena and Veracruz (in México) were the only cities authorized to trade in slaves. This business necessitated the construction of defences and massive fortified walls surround the old city which has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today we will take a half day tour with our guide around the old town visiting, among other things, the San Felipe Fort, Convent de la Popa and the Convent de San Pedro Claver. There's plenty to do including travelling on fisherman's canoes through mangrove swamps to the old fishing village La Boquilla.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 12 Free day, optional trip to the Rosario Islands, evening horse drawn carriage tour

Today, we have more time to explore this city. Alternatively, we can take an optional tour to the Rosario Islands. This archipelago has some great snorkelling, nice beaches and beautiful Carribean views. This evening, we will take a relaxing horse drawn carriage ride round the beautiful and historical colonial district of Cartagena.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 13 Morning optional El Totumo mud volcano tour, afternoon fly to Bogota

Today is free for further exploration of Cartagena or to visit the Totumo Volcano (optional) which is unusual because it has no lava and is filled with liquid mud. We may be able to walk to the top (15m) and bathe in the mud which is supposed to have healing properties. This afternoon, we fly back to Bogota.

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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 14 Tour ends Bogota

The tour ends in Bogota this morning after breakfast.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

# Accommodation and Meals

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 1 lunch,3 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.

#### Colombia

**Lunch £:** 5.00

**Dinner £:** 10.00

## 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.

### Colombia

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.60

**Water £:** 0.40

## Other Sightseeing & Activities

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

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

## Optional Excursions

Popayan - Half day excursion to Haciendas US$106 (min 3 pers) US$67 (10+) Half day Coconuco Thermal Pools US$180 (1 pers) US$90 (4 + pers) US$82 (10+ pers) Full Day Purace National Park - US$180 (min 3 pers); US$166 (5+ pers); US$104 (12+pers) Cartagena - Half day canoe trip to fishing village La Boquilla - 50 US$ pp (5 pers +); Full day boat trip to Rosario Island - 95 US$ pp (5 pers +), 80US$ (16 pers +) (pending flight depature time) Totumo Volcano excursion - US$106 (3 pers +) US$69 (5 pers +)

## Tipping - Tour Leader

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

## Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. In restaurants and hotels a 'voluntary' 15% tax for service is included on bills. On top of this, it is common to leave no more than a further 5% for good service. Also, some local staff look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.
Accordingly you should allow approx. US $30 for gratuities for local staff.

## Foreign Exchange

### Colombia

**ATM Availability:** Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Most major hotels, restaurants and stores accept credit cards.

**Travellers Cheques:** Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

**Local Currency:** Colombian Peso (COP).

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US$400-$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

**Where to Exchange:** Your tour leader can also advise you on arrival.

# Joining your Tour

## Flight Information

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

## Booking a land only package with Explore

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.

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. 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 or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

### Visa Information

Columbia: 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 re-boarding 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

#### Colombia

We recommend protection against malaria, Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria (eg. Paludrine, Chloroquine, Mefloquine etc.). Dengue Fever is endemic in Latin America and across the Caribbean; no vaccine against Dengue Fever currently exists. The best protection is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes. 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

### Colombia

The dry season in Colombia roughly runs from December to March/April and also a slightly 'dryer' period from July to September. These are among the best times to travel, although visits outside of these months are very manageable. The Caribbean coast is very hot and humid all year round (always around or above 30ºC), although the offshore breeze between December and March makes this a more popular time to visit. Due to the high altitude locations of places like Bogota, Manizales and Armenia temperatures here can be quite cool during 'winter' months (Nov to Mar/ Apr) and the nights are cool to cold at anytime of the year. The coffee harvest seasons are March to May and September to November; it is during these periods that it is possible to see the red coffee beans and watch the whole process of coffee production.

## Clothing

Lightweight clothing is essential for the Caribbean coast with long sleeve shirts and trousers ideal to provide protection from the sun and insect bites. Warm clothing is essential the Andean section of the tour, especially in the evenings - the temperature can drop at night and it has been known to snow on the high ground. A waterproof is essential as it can rain at any time of year.

## Equipment

A torch, water bottle, good quality sunglasses, sun hat, insect repellent and high factor sunscreen are all essential. Don't forget your swimming things and a small towel.

## Footwear

Comfortable hiking boots/trekking shoes, shoes and/or sandals.

## Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

# General Information

## Country details

### Colombia

**Population:** 43,000,000

**Size of Country:** 1,141,748 sq km

**Major Language:** Spanish.

**Religion:** Roman Catholic.

**Time Difference to GMT:** -5

## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Colombia

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, self-guided, private journeys & 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: 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.

## 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

- 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 andÂ security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. ForÂ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link atÂ 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 LicenceÂ  granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

## 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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