

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Comfort Itinerary Version (TM3)



TRIP DURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Type: Tailormade

Trip Code: TM3

Accommodation Grade: Premium

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Hotel
1 night Premium Hotel
2 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Lodge

Included Meals: 13 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 1 dinner

Transport:

Countries: Sri Lanka



Tailormade Sri Lanka Wildlife Discovery

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: Premium

Our comfortable accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service.

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.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Overnight flight to Sri Lanka

Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Colombo.

Gal Oya scenery



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Arrive in Colombo and transfer to Wilpattu National Park

On arrival in Sri Lanka's capital you travel straight out of the city to Wilpattu National Park. A journey of around four hours takes you north to the national park where you will head out in time for an afternoon safari. Despite Wilpattu National Park's location in Sri Lanka's dry zone, it boasts nearly 60 lakes and is renowned for leopard, elephant and sambar deer sightings.

The Sanctuary at Tissawewa

The Sanctuary at Tissawewa is a colonial property which opened in 1907 and has played host to many important guests including Prime Ministers, Presidents and even Queen Elizabeth II. While the property is comfortable, offering a large verandah, spacious rooms and 11 acres of landscaped gardens, there is an element of faded grandeur which adds to the hotel's charm. The hotel also a spa and restaurant available.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Morning game drive, afternoon Dambulla Caves visit

Early this morning you will go on a four-wheel drive safari in the hope of spotting the elusive leopard within Wilpattu National Park. We choose to visit this park, rather than touristy Yala National Park further south, because we believe it offers our customers a better experience. The same animals can be seen here as in Yala, however it is less crowded, making your visit more authentic, enjoyable and responsible. After your safari you have a two hour journey to Sigiriya where you will either visit Dambulla Cave or, between June and September, Minneriya National Park. Visit Dambulla to explore a great series of caves which have been turned into temples containing a large number of Buddhist images and a few sculptures of Hindu Gods dating from the first century BC. In Minneriya National Park you will go on a four-wheel drive safari to look for herds of wild elephant. Known as the 'elephant gathering', huge herds of these majestic animals congregate here to drink and feed, it is one of the greatest concentrations of Asian elephants in the world.

Sigiriya Jungles

Sigiriya Jungles has a perfect location with views of Lion Rock, spacious gardens, a large pool and a spa. Rooms are modern, comfortable and airy with either a balcony or terrace where guests can relax. There is a variety of dining options available, serving local and Western dishes, and a cocktail bar where you can watch the sun set over Lion Rock.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Morning Lion Rock climb, afternoon visit Polonnaruwa

An early start this morning as you climb Sigiriya Rock ahead of the crowds and while it is still cool. The ruins of this fifth century 'Sky Fortress' are one of Sri Lanka's major attractions, a stupendous sight to behold and a feat of consummate engineering skill. Built in just seven years as a fortified palace to protect the reign of merciless King Kassapa, who had assassinated his father and deposed his brother, it is seen as one of the world's best preserved examples of ancient urban planning. Unfortunately for the king, despite its impregnable reputation, he was defeated here by his brother after a reign of just 18 years. A switchback series of steps and steel stairways ascend to the top. Halfway up, tucked beneath a sheltering overhang of rock, are the famous frescoes - the Sigiriya Damsels, their colours still glowing. Before your final ascent to the summit, you pass between a set of enormous lion paws carved out of the rock - all that remain of an ancient gateway that gave Sigiriya, the 'Lion Rock', its name. Once at the 200m summit, magnificent views can be enjoyed of the surrounding jungle and countryside. This afternoon you explore the ancient city of Polonnaruwa, which reached its height of glory in the 12th century, when it was a thriving commercial and religious centre. The city still maintains many of its spectacular buildings and monuments, with arguably the most impressive being the Quadrangle. It contains a superbly decorated circular shrine which is one of the most ornate buildings in the country. The neighbouring audience hall and bathing pool are also worth a visit. Close by, the curious round structure of the Circular Relic House has a beautifully preserved moonstone carved at the foot of a flight of steps. Another famous feature of this deserted city is the group of carved images of the Buddha, known as Galvihara. These four colossal figures are all hewn out of solid granite and the Reclining Buddha alone is no less than 14m long.

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Journey to Wasgamuwa National Park, afternoon safari

This morning you'll depart Sigiriya and head south to Wasgamuwa National Park. The name Wasgamuwa comes from the Sinhalese 'WalasGomuwa' which literally translate to 'woods of bear' as this was once an area with a healthy population of sloth bears. Although sloth bears can still be seen in the park they are rarely spotted these days, however, the tropical, dry evergreen forest, with its small water tanks and temple ruins provides a haven for elephant, leopard, purple-faced langur, sambar and crocodile. This afternoon you head into the park for a game drive with your guide who will hopefully help you to spot some of the resident animals and birdlife.

Far Cry Resort

Far Cry Resort is located just 25km from Wasgomuwa National Park entrance. Being within such close proximity to the park means wildlife and birdlife often come into the gardens. Far Cry is part of a working farm and wandering around the area you will see lots of fruits and vegetables growing. Rooms are basic, yet perfectly adequate for a couple of nights' stay. There is a large pool and restaurant serving local and international cuisine.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6 Morning game drive, afternoon transfer to Kandy

This morning you'll have another game drive in the park. Wasgamuwa National Park is one of Sri Lanka's important bird areas. 143 species have been recorded here, five of which are endemic to the Sri Lanka. The red-faced malkoha, jungle fowl, storks, ibis and spoonbill can all be spotted here. After your morning safari your journey continues south for three hours, to Kandy. Sitting on a plateau 500m above sea level and 112km north-east of Colombo, it is, in climatic and cultural terms, a world apart from Colombo. Serving as the capital of the last Sinhalese kingdom until falling to the British in 1815, it is a place of cultural and spiritual importance. Buddhists from all over the world come here specifically to visit the Temple of the Tooth, the Dalada Maligawa. The costly jewelled shrine of the Holy Tooth, said to be Buddha's left canine, is kept in the upper floor of the original building. This relic was brought from India 1500 years ago and every year, at the time of the August full moon, it is paraded round the town with great pomp and circumstance. You will have a brief city tour taking in Kandy Lake and a viewpoint over the city before heading to the Temple of the Tooth in time for evening puja, where devout Buddhists lay offerings of flowers in front of the tooth chamber while prayers and music fill the air.

Amaya Hills

Built in the style of a Kandyan Palace and set among the picturesque hilltops of Kandy, Amaya Hills offers a breathtaking retreat with stunning views of the forested surroundings. Along with an open-air restaurant and bar the hotel benefits from a spa and fitness centre. There is a large pool overlooking the valley and plenty of space to relax poolside.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Drive to Nuwara Eliya, optional trek to World's End

Leaving Kandy behind, you continue to Nuwara Eliya. Known as 'Little England', here you will find red telephone boxes, Victorian colonial architecture and pretty rose gardens - legacies from its era as a hill country retreat for homesick Brits. The cool climate provided a sanctuary in which to immerse themselves in familiar pastimes, such as polo, golf, cricket and fox hunting. This part of Sri Lanka is also an important tea growing area and plantations stretch over rolling hills for as far as the eye can see, interspersed with the occasional tea-making factory. En route to Nuwara Eliya you'll stop at a tea plantation to learn something of the history of the tea growers and pickers, and you may even have the chance to taste some brews. In the afternoon you have the option (cost not included) to take a trek on Horton Plains. This unique and beautiful plateau of wild grassland and thick forest is famous for its biodiversity, with many plant and bird species exclusive to this area. You will trek World's End - an awe-inspiring escarpment dropping a vertical distance of 880m, providing incredible views over the plains below.

Hill Club

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Journey to Gal Oya National Park

This morning you head east to Gal Oya National Park. An area of incredible natural beauty, Gal Oya National Park is made up of dense evergreen forest, open grasslands and a large reservoir dotted with islands. Gal Oya is not on the normal tourist trail and so a safari experience here is much more authentic and unique. You may choose to go for a bike ride to a small lake, take a night safari or join Gal Oya Lodge's animal monitoring team who set up camera traps around the lodge. (Please note there is an additional cost for some excursions).

Gal Oya Lodge

A beautifully designed eco-lodge, Gal Oya is located in a wonderful mountain landscape and decorated sympathetically to suit its surroundings. This luxurious jungle hideaway is the perfect place for nature lovers. The bungalow rooms are simply furnished, in keeping with the jungle setting, and situated to make the most of the views. The lodge has a restaurant serving delicious local and international dishes, a bar, swimming pool and a range of excursions.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Boat safari and optional excursions

The benefit of having a huge lake means Gal Oya National Park is the only park in Sri Lanka where you can embark on a boat safari, giving you the opportunity to witness elephants crossing from one island to another, sea eagles coming down to fish and wild boar and langurs coming to the water's edge to drink. Today there is an included boat safari on the lake, the rest of your time here is free to choose from an array of excursions. There is a wide range of birdlife at Gal Oya, including kingfishers, eagles, kites, herons and

cormorants so perhaps you might chose to go on a birdwatching hike. Alternatively take a four-wheel drive excursion through the park. (Please note there is an additional cost for some excursions).

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Drive to Udawalawe National Park, via Elephant Transit Home

Departing Gal Oya National Park today you'll journey to the Elephant Transit Home. Located in a scenic area just outside Udawalawe National Park, the Elephant Transit Home is a refuge for orphaned and sick elephants, where they are fed and cared for until strong enough to be released back into the wild, usually around the age of four years old. Supported by the Born Free Foundation, the home offers care and medical attention the elephants need at this young age. We will time your arrival you can see the calves being fed, they drink around 40 pints of milk a day! Afterwards you'll continue to Udawalawe National Park for a late afternoon game drive. Surrounded by mountains with a mix of rolling grasslands, teak plantations, rainforest and scrubland, the park is home to around 600 elephants, buffalo, mongoose and crocodiles.

Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort

Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort is a large property located just a few minutes from the Elephant Transit Home and a short drive to the national park. Rooms are basic but comfortable. There is a large pool with wet bar, and a relaxed restaurant and bar with outdoor seating. With lush gardens there is a lot of natural wildlife within the resort's grounds, keep an eye out for birdlife, monkeys and lizards.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Morning game drive, continue to Unawatuna

After an early morning game drive in Udawalawe National Park, you will be driven south to the coast. After all the game drives and sightseeing it's time to relax on Sri Lanka's sandy beaches.

Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort

Calamander Unawatuna Beach Resort is a light, bright and modern property located right on the beach. It is a large resort with a number of rooms, a range of bars and restaurants, and three pools, including the glass-fronted Blu Pool which overlooks the beach and sea. Rooms have a balcony or terrace, and Wi-Fi is available too. There are free kayaks and paddleboards which can be borrowed from the resort, or you could arrange yoga lessons, snorkelling or diving trips, or whale watching excursions.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Free day, optional whale watching

Today has been left free for you to relax. Alternatively you could take a trip to Galle to explore the old fort. Between November and April you could go to nearby Mirissa where it is possible to see humpback and blue whales - Please speak to your Tailormade regional specialist to arrange a whale watching trip.

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Free day to relax

Today has been left free for you to relax on the beach or by the pool in your resort.

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

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DAY 14 Journey to Colombo, via Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery

Leaving the beach behind, you follow the coastline to Colombo airport. En route you'll visit the turtle hatchery at Kosgoda to see the breeding process of the endangered sea turtles. Kosgoda was established in 1988 to protect Sri Lanka's turtles from extinction and to date have released approximately 3.5 million baby turtles back into the wild. October to April is the main laying season, although some eggs can still be found here later in the year. After your visit you'll continue to Colombo for your evening flight.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Arrive home

 **Included Meals:** None

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 1 dinner 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.

Sri Lanka

Lunch £: 6.00

Dinner £: 9.00

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.

Sri Lanka

Bottle of Beer £: 3.50

Water £: 1.00

Foreign Exchange

Sri Lanka

ATM Availability: Yes, usually in major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards can usually be used in most large shops and restaurants. Please note that Foreign Office advice warns about the problem of credit card fraud in Sri Lanka so please consider this when deciding if to pay by card while on tour.

Travellers Cheques: Are not easy to change and where they can be changed the exchange rates can be poor.

Local Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US\$ and UK£ are equally good

Where to Exchange: In most major towns.

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.

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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, 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.

EXPLORE!
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 Introducer Appointed 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.

Vaccinations & Protection

Sri Lanka

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on malaria and dengue. We strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellents containing DEET as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. 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. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Sri Lanka

Year round high temperatures in coastal regions: Colombo averages 27°C. It is much cooler in the hills with Kandy averaging 20°C and Nuwara Eliya down to 16°C. Springlike temperatures in the hill country, but chilly evenings. Two monsoon periods: Apr-Sep when rain is confined to the southwest; and Oct-Mar when it falls in the northeast.

Luggage allowance on trip:

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company

General Information

Country details

Sri Lanka

Population: 20,238,000

Size of Country: 65,610 sq km

Major Language: Sinhala, Tamil

Religion: Buddhism

Time Difference to GMT: +6

Electric Supply & Plugs

Sri Lanka

3 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: 3 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 3. 4/ itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 4.

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