EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Spirit of the Incas (QPS 2015)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOURDURAT
14
DAYS

Tour Style: Simply
Tour Pace: Moderate
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Simple
tour Code: QPS

Tour Highlights - Spirit of the Incas

- ✓ Machu Picchu - Travel by train to the 'Lost City', one of the New Seven Wonders of the World
- ✓ Cusco - Explore the ancient capital city of the Incas
- ✓ Arequipa - A chance to discover the fascinating Santa Catalina Convent and the magnificent Colca Canyon
- ✓ Lake Titicaca - Traverse the highest navigable lake in the world, visiting Uros and Taquile Islands
- ✓ Nazca - View the intriguing Nazca lines from platforms

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	3 nights Standard Hotel 7 nights Simple Hotel 1 night Simple Bus 1 night Simple Village House 1 night Simple Guesthouse
Included Meals:	0 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Lima
End Point:	Tour ends: Lima Airport
Transport:	Bus, Train, Boat, Public Bus
Countries:	Peru

Spirit Of The Incas

Join us as we discover the highlights of Peru including its impressive mountain citadel, Machu Picchu. We sail on Lake Titicaca, visiting the Indian communities on the Uros and Taquile Islands, where we overnight with a local family. We also discover the colourful cities of Cusco and Arequipa and search for condors at the majestic Colca Canyon.

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: Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, typically with en suite facilities.

Tour Style: Simply

If your idea of adventure travel is to experience everyday local life in a country then try one of our Simply Explore tours. These grassroots adventures are flexible, affordable and fun

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.

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 Join tour in Lima

Join the tour in Lima and check-in at the hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Public bus to Nazca

Departing Lima this morning we take a public bus south, following the Pacific coastline, before turning towards the fertile mountain valleys that lie around town of Nazca. Our journey takes us through some of the driest desert regions on earth and into the winegrowing landscapes of the Ica Valley, a region that produces some excellent vintage, as well as Peru's distinctive local tipple, Pisco, a particularly potent mix made from the white grape. Our final destination for today is the oasis town of Nazca, lying in the shadow of Cerro Blanco, which, at over 2000m, is the highest sand dune on earth.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 3 In Nazca; optional view Nazca Lines from viewing platform or Chauchilla pre-Inca cemetery, overnight bus to Arequipa

Some specialists have speculated that the Nazca Lines represent the world's largest astrological calendar. Huge birds, spiders, whales, other creatures and geometrical figures are represented in outline. Here there is the option to climb nearby viewing platforms for views out over the lines etched into the desert. There should also be time for optional visit to the nearby Antonini Archaeological Museum, the Chauchilla pre-Inca cemetry or the Nazca aqueduct. Later today we take another public bus, continuing south through the night towards the city of Arequipa and the volcanic landscapes of the Andean Mountains.

Overnight: **Simple Bus**

Included Meals: None

DAY 4 Arrive Arequipa; free afternoon for sightseeing

The beautiful city of Arequipa is spectacularly located at the foot of the volcanic slopes of El Misti, a perfect conical peak that rises to some 5822m above this grand colonial city, The city itself was founded by the Spanish in 1540, on the site of an old Inca settlement, and today is famed for its colonial architecture, including what is arguably one of the finest arcaded city squares anywhere in the Americas. Arriving this morning we will transfer to the hotel, after which the rest of the day is free to explore at your leisure, perhaps taking in the elegance of the Plaza de Armas and its immense twin-towered cathedral. You might also like to visit the striking 17th century churches of La Compania and San Agustin and the colonial grandeur of Casa de Moras, or perhaps pay a visit to the extraordinary Santa Catalina Convent, a miniature walled town in the heart of the city, which once housed 450 nuns and serving ladies in total seclusion for nearly 4 centuries. Riddled with a network of cobbled streets and lavishly restored with period furnishings and beautifully ornate touches, the convent is without doubt one of the highlights of any visit to the city. Other recommended sights are the old university and the archaeological museum, which has a fine collection of ceramics and mummies. Otherwise you may choose to take a seat at one of the cafes overlooking the main square and watch the comings and goings.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 5 Travel to Chivay, optional hot springs

Today we travel to Chivay. The afternoon is free to perhaps take a bathe in the hot springs (optional).

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 6 Visit the Colca Canyon, continue to Puno

This morning we visit the Colca Canyon. A spectacular river gorge, the Colca Canyon measures twice the depth of the more famous Grand Canyon and at one time it was believed to be the deepest gorge on earth (until it was eclipsed by the deeper Cotahuasi Canyon). Largely unknown to the outside world until the latter years of the 20th century, today it affords us an opportunity to discover a world of Andean villages and Inca terraces that make up one of the most outstanding natural settings in the Americas. This is the world of the Altiplano, where the Rio Colca meanders through a landscape of towering volcanic peaks that offer a stunning backdrop to a land inhabited by Cabana and Collagua Indians. Home to the massive and majestic Andean Condor, these awe-inspiring vistas derive their name from the old Incan practise of storing harvested grain in natural vaults carved into the canyon walls, vaults that the Indians called colcas. This afternoon we drive east, heading towards the beautiful landscapes that surround the unique waters of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the word (3856m). Our destination is the town of Puno, a centre of Incan folklore nestling in a

bay at the northwestern tip of the lake and the perfect base from which to explore something of the cultural and historical significance of the lake itself.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 7 Boat trip on Lake Titicaca; visit Uros Islands and overnight on Taquile Island

An immense body of water, Lake Titicaca covers over 8,000 sq km and its shoreline has been the home to the Aymara and Quechua for millennia. Its sacred waters have long been a site of religious ritual and devotion, from the earliest civilisations to the Inca conquerors, who believed the lake to be the site where the legendary founders of their dynasty arrived on earth. The Uros people have lived on the lake itself for countless generations, on 'floating islands' of totora, a reed-like papyrus that grows in the shallows and is used in the construction of houses and boats. Today we'll explore something of their unique world with a visit to Los Uros and Taquile, hopefully learning something of a people whose traditions live on for the most part only in the myths and legends of their oral history. Driven onto the lake to escape the attentions of larger ethnic tribes and further isolated by the arrival of the Spanish, the Uros had little contact with the mainland for generations, preferring instead to isolate themselves amongst the reeds and waters of their marine environment. After our visit to the Uros Islands we'll then continue by boat to Taquile Island, a setting that has managed to preserve much of its Inca and pre-Incan heritage and where the locals still speak the language of the Inca-Quechua. This afternoon we will take a walk to the highest point of the island, where we can enjoy the sun bathing the lake in the golden glows of sunset. Later this evening there may be an opportunity to enjoy an optional folklore show. Please note that accommodation is limited to rustic, dormstyle facilities in a local house.

Overnight: **Simple Village House**

Included Meals: None

DAY 8 Morning on Taquile Island, afternoon return to Puno

This morning is free on Taquile Island to make the most of a setting where the local people still preserve a rich tradition of music and dance. You might like to take a walk up to the Inca ruins (optional), or visit the market, presenting an ideal opportunity to buy some of the locally made embroidery that is produced by the men of the island. Later this afternoon we then return to Puno by boat, where there is the chance to pay a visit to the restored British built Yavari Steamer (optional) or take a stroll through the markets in search of excellent llama and alpaca wool items.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 9 Public bus or Andean Explorer train (optional) to Cusco

Today we follow the legendary route taken by the first Inca ruler - Manco Capac - on his way to find Cusco, passing through a landscape that is both desolate and magnificent, where flocks of llamas and alpacas graze amongst the windswept meadows. We'll travel via the small market town of Ayaviri and La Raya, traversing the northern extremes of the Altiplano and crossing La Raya pass (4321m) and the continental divide, before beginning the descent towards Cusco along the Rio Vilcanota. There is also the opportunity to take the classic train journey from Puno to Cusco (optional) - one of the great railway journeys of the world. The full day journey covers some spectaular scenery over the high altiplano. Please note: the train must be pre-booked at time of booking and costs 115GBP per person. Please note that rail strikes in Peru are common and so there is the possibility that the train may not always be running. In the event you have chosen the optional train ride and it is not running, then you will join the group for the journey to Cusco by bus.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 10 Orientation tour of Cusco, rest of the day free

The old capital of the Inca Empire, Cusco is the archaeological capital of the Americas and the oldest continuously inhabited city on the continent. Imbued with an atmosphere of mystery and grandeur, the Spanish-style city of today, with its attractive pink tiled roofs, arcaded plazas and steep winding alleyways, stands upon tremendous Inca foundation stones, its links with the Inca Empire everywhere to be seen, from the stone walls that line the city streets, to the museums filled with artefacts and relics of a long dead people. This morning we make a short orientation tour of the city with the tour leader pointing out the key sites, before some free time to continue exploring further. We will see the Inca wall of Hatunrumiyoc with its famous twelve-sided stone (its typical bevelled joints creating the patterns of light and shadow so typical of Incan walls), as well as the rich majesty of the Plaza de Armas and the incredible remains of Qoricancha, once the heart of Inca society. The city itself is filled with monuments to its more recent colonial past too, with churches and galleries in abundance, making it an ideal city to enjoy at your own pace (entrance fees not included).

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 11 Train to Aguas Calientes; visit Machu Picchu

This morning we transfer to the railway station to catch the train to Aguas Calientes, our gateway to one of the greatest of all archaeological sites. The train slowly meanders down the valley, following the tumultuous waters of the Urubamba River through a series of rock cut tunnels before emerging at the small town of Aguas Calientes, serenely nestling amidst a lush landscape of cloud forests. From here we take a public bus up to the mountain complex of Machu Picchu, the fabled lost city of the Incas and probably the most spectacular feat of engineering in ancient America. The rest of our time is then spent in this magnificent city, dividing our time between a guided tour (4 hours) and some free time to explore these spectacular ruins privately. Temples, stairways, palaces and gabled stone dwellings are scattered everywhere, testifying to the energy and ingenuity of the builders. Not without reason is this site probably the most revered tourist attraction in the Americas; its location alone is dramatic in the extreme, teetering on the saddle of a high mountain peak that towers above the valley below. Built in the mid 15th century by Pachacuti, the city was thought to have been a major agricultural centre for the Incan Empire and its inaccessibility seems to have preserved it from the looters of the intervening years, resulting in the remarkably well-preserved ruins that we see today. Returning by bus to our simple accommodation in Aguas Callentes, situated on the valley floor below, this evening then affords a chance to relax in the local thermal baths (optional).

Overnight: **Simple Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 12 More time to discover Machu Picchu (optional); train back to Cusco

This morning there's the option to re-visit Machu Picchu for sunrise when the site is largely free of crowds. It is also possible to climb the steep and difficult peak of Huayna Picchu to look down on the Temple of the Sun. This must be pre-paid at time of booking. If you change your passport between your time of booking and prior to travel please take your original passport with you to avoid being fined. Alternatively, you can walk along part of the Inca Trail to the Gate of the Sun or hike to the ruins of Winay-Wayna, a four hour return journey that will take you down a granite Inca stairway to an impressive site overlooking the terraced fields of Intipata. A walk down to the Gate of the Sun (Inti- Punku), affords some spectacular views back towards Machu Picchu itself, set against the dramatic backdrop of the Andes. This afternoon we catch the train back to Cusco.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 13 In Cusco; optional whitewater rafting

With a full free day in Cusco there’s the chance to go white water rafting on the Urubamba River; grade 2-3 (optional), or perhaps visit the market town of Pisac, strategically located at the head of the Urubamba Valley (optional). Pisac once controlled the road connecting the Inca Empire with Paucartambo on its eastern borders and the magnificent Inca ruins that once so dominated this valley still occupy the mountainside above the town, providing a worthy match for any of the temples of Machu Picchu. Other alternatives include a full day visit to the outlying Inca sites at Qenqo, Puka Pukara and Tambo Machay, or maybe a visit to the fortress-citadel of Saqsaywaman. Built to defend the Inca capital, Saqsaywaman broods high above the town, its huge, zigzagging stone walls broken into 66 sharply projecting angles to catch attackers in a withering crossfire. Meant to represent the head of a puma, 20,000 conscripted workers toiled for 90 years to finish it and it was the site of one of the most fiercely fought battles of the Spanish conquest, when the Incas made one last ditch attempt to drive out the Spanish, an attempt that ended in defeat and death for thousands of them. Otherwise you may want to chill out in Cusco and enjoy the atmosphere of this lively town.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 14 Fly to Lima Airport where the tour ends

The tour ends in Cusco this morning.

Included Meals: None

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 0 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 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.

Peru

Lunch £: 9.00

Dinner £: 13.00

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.

Peru

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 1.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

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

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

Optional Excursions

Nazca - Antonini archaeological museum entrance fee US$ 8 (US$ 23 for guided tour - includes entrance fee); Chachilla pre-Inca cemetry US$ 26 (includes guide, transport and entrance fee); Nazca aqueduct US$ 22 (includes guide, transport and entrance fee).
Arequipa - Visit to Santa Catalina Convent US$ 14
Puno - Yavari Steamer US$ 5; Andean Explorer train to Cusco GBP£115 - must be paid at time of booking.If you change your passport between your time of booking and prior to travel please take your original passport with you to avoid being fined..
Aguas Calientes - Thermal Springs US$ 3.
Machu Picchu - second entry- approx US$ 54 and subject to availability, bus and entry US$ 25 return. Huayna Picchu - £60; Machu Picchu Mountain £55 (both including transport) - Subject to availability - these must be pre-paid at time of booking. If you change your passport between your time of booking and prior to travel please take your original passport with you to avoid being fined.
Cusco - Whitewater rafting US$ 40/45; Trip to Pisac US$ 40-60 depending on numbers.

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. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.
Accordingly you should allow approx. US$ 45 for gratuities for local staff.

Foreign Exchange

Peru

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

Credit Card Acceptance: In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques are not always easy to exchange.

Local Currency: Nuevo Sol

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 for your tour, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will 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 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.

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

Peru: 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

Peru

We recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, polio, infectious hepatitis and malaria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.We recommend protection against yellow fever. There have been very few cases reported, but local authorities do recommend travellers get immunised against yellow fever. 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

Altitude Description

As this tour reaches altitudes of over 3800 meters, we strongly recommend that travellers with heart or lung conditions, anaemia, asthma, high blood pressure or on the pill should seek the advice of their GP.
You must have adequate travel insurance for your trip. Please ensure that your insurance policy covers you to the maximum altitude indicated above. If you have Explore insurance you will be covered to this altitude.

Climate

Peru

There is a rainy season from Dec - Mar however on the coast it rarely rains. Jun-Oct is damp and misty, but temperatures never drop below 10°C. At high altitudes although there are sunny days temperatures can drop dramatically, and conditions can change suddenly.

Clothing

The highlands enjoy dry sunny days but extremely cold nights so thermal underwear, a well insulated fleece/jacket and a thick jumper are essential. Bring something warm to sleep in. A light raincoat is recommended. A sun hat and sunglasses are advisable as is high factor sunscreen, due to the thinness of the atmosphere. Bring a swimming costume for the thermal baths at Aguas Calientes.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor suncream, good quality sunglasses and a lipsalve with sun protection. Mosquito nets may not be available, so you may wish to bring your own.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and 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

Peru

Population: 29,496,000

Size of Country: 1,285,216 sq km

Major Language: Spanish

Religion: Catholicism

Time Difference to GMT: -5

Electric Supply & Plugs

Peru

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 www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

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

These tour notes were printed on 05/09/2015 04:07:29