EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Cycling the Baltic States (CBS 2016)

CYCLING

TOURDURAT
9
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard
Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Easy
tour Code: CBS

Tour Highlights - Cycling the Baltic States

- ✓ Three Baltic capitals - Explore Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn
- ✓ Trakai Castle - Cycle the Historical National Park, Island Castle and Trakai Castle
- ✓ Curonian Lagoon - A bird watcher paradise in early spring and late autumn
- ✓ Amber - See the largest collection of Amber in the Baltics at the Palanga Botanical Park
- ✓ Jurmala white sandy beach - Cycle 12 km along the sandy beach
- ✓ Lahemaa National Park - Cycle in Estonia's first and largest national park

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	8 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	8 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Vilnius
End Point:	Tour ends: Tallinn
Included Bike:	7 gear Kalkhoff Jubilee hybrid bikes with front suspension
Transport:	Bus, Boat, Bicycle
Countries:	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Cycling the Baltic States

Explore the Baltic States by bicycle on this guided route through Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Cycle through national parks and medieval towns, past feudal castles and picturesque fishing villages. The mild climate makes touring by bicycle an especially appealing way to discover the lovely countryside and coastal cycle routes of the Baltics.

Why Book this tour

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

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 241 km over seven days (an average of 34 km per day) with a further optional 22 km available. We generally follow flat cycle paths and quiet asphalt roads. A support vehicle will accompany our rides where possible and transports our luggage throughout the tour. We have graded this route as easy.

Suitability

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

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

Tour Comfort: Standard

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

Tour Style: Classic

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

Cycling Grade: Easy

Suitable for cyclists who enjoy easy and relatively short rides on flat or gently undulating terrain. Ideal if you simply want to explore a region by bike at a relaxed pace.

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 Vilnius, Lithuania

Arrive in Vilnius and check into hotel, our base for two nights. Vilnius is known for its old town of beautiful architecture, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

It has a strong historical Jewish influence and Napoleon named it 'the Jerusalem of the North' as he was passing through in 1812. In the year 2009, Vilnius was the European Capital of Culture, together with the Austrian city of Linz.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Trakai Historical National Park and castles

This morning we drive 28 kilometres from Vilnius to Trakai Historical National Park. Outside the capital we find a peaceful land of forests, lakes, rivers and farmsteads. Our first stop is at the Uzutrakis Manor House, built 1897-1902 by count Jozef Tyszkiewicz. When the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in 1940, Uzutrakis manor was nationalized and after the war the manor became a sanatorium for soviet security officers. Here we prepare our bikes and get comfortable on a short cycle around the park before continuing 10km to Trakai town around the shores of the lake along a mixture of quiet back roads and dedicated cycle paths. Trakai was an important seat of power in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the 14th and 15th centuries, ruling an empire that stretched all the way down to the Black Sea. We will pedal around Trakai visiting the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Island Castle - a Lithuanian 'must see' and the peninsular Trakai Castle ruins. There are many cafés and restaurants to choose from for a lunch break. After visiting the principal sites and having lunch (not included), depending on time we will either drive straight back to Vilnius or cycle firstly back to Uzutrakis Manor House then take the bus back to Vilnius. The route today goes along asphalt roads with light traffic and some biking paths. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Cycle Curonian Lagoon, Bird watching and Klaipeda

This morning we see more of Lithuania's countryside with a 4 to 5 hour drive towards the Baltic Sea to Kintai village where we have lunch before getting our bikes ready. After lunch we cycle for about 10 km on the flat and beside the Curonian Lagoon, along a quiet paved road to Vente Cape. Vente Cape is a small peninsula on the eastern side of Curonian Lagoon. More than 50,000 visitors come each year in order to get acquainted with one of the most important spots for bird migration in the region. We make a visit to Ventes Ragas and 19th century lighthouse and the Ornithological Station (closed for renovations until 2015) where the migration patterns of many bird species are tracked and recorded. Huge nets are used to catch the birds they tag. We then cycle back the same 10 km route to Kintai village. From here we join a forest bike track and continue along this bumpy gravel track through the fishing villages of Priekule, Surmai to Dreverna where the group ride finishes and we rejoin our vehicle for the transfer to Klaipeda. Klaipeda is the third biggest city in Lithuania, an important port and Lithuania's chief gateway to the Baltic Sea. It has a long history from a tribal fishing village and later arrival of German Crusaders who seized this land and built their castle here in 1252, later known as Memel. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 39 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Curonian Spit National Park

Today we take a short ride by bus to the harbour and take the 5 minute ferry ride to the Curonian Spit National Park then drive for about 1 hour to Nida. We stop en route briefly at the Hill of Witches in Juodkrante to see a colony of grey herons and cormorants. We get on our bikes in Nida to explore the village. Nida is a charming fishing village with a number of well-preserved old wooden fisherman's houses and with only approximately 1650 inhabitants is the largest on the Curonian Spit. A peaceful and relaxing atmosphere pervades throughout the Curonian Spit. Here we can visit the amber gallery, Thomas Mann house, the highest dune for views over the surrounding landscape and giant sundial, Panirdzio and the old town. We continue by bike through the forested Curonian Spit national park (UNESCO World Heritage Site) on asphalt dedicated bike paths mostly on the flat. We will cycle alongside giant sand dunes, hundred year-old pine forests and hill pine trees, white sand beaches; learn about its unique culture and architecture and you may like to try some of the typical local smoked fish. We leave the bikes for a short walk along a wooden path to the Dead Dunes beyond Pervalka where a panoramic view of both the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon opens up. After relaxing in Juodkrante you have the choice to take the bus to our hotel or cycle the remaining 12 km from Juodkrante to Smiltyne then take the ferry back to Klaipeda harbour, ending with a final 2 to 4 km to the hotel. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres, with a further optional 22 km available.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 To Sventoji via Palanga by bike then drive to Riga

After a short transfer from our hotel in Klaipeda we cycle along the coastline on a dedicated and paved cycle route through the Giruliai Forest to the popular summer resort of Palanga. Along the way we visit the Seaside Regional Park including the Dutchmen's cap - a 24-metre-high cliff, the fishing village of Karkle, Plaze Lake and the former lifeguard station in Nemirseta. Before lunch we explore Palanga Botanical Park and the biggest Amber Museum in the Baltics, J. Basanavièius Pedestrian Street and a pier heading 470 hundred metres into the sea in Palanga. Palanga's population swells enormously in the summer months as it is the premier beach destination in Lithuania and boasts a beautiful sweeping beach. From Palanga after lunch we continue cycling a further 15 km on cycle paths and finish in Sventoji town before we drive to Riga. The bus journey to is approximately 4 to 5 hours long. Riga is the capital and largest city of Latvia and infact the largest city of the Baltic states. It boasts superb architecture spanning over six centuries and has an impressive collection of beautifully decorated Art Nouveau buildings. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 42 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Cycle Jurmala sandy beach

After breakfast we drive to Jurmala where todays cycling takes place. One of the largest resort towns in the Baltics with 32 km of white sandy beach fringed by pine forests, the area is known for the interesting architecture of its old wooden summer cottages and more recently built villas. Jurmala's reputation as a spa destination began in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Wealthy landowners began the tradition of relaxing at the seaside, and Russian army officers came here to rest after the Napoleonic Wars, returning later with their families. The peak of the Jurmala area's development was the opening of the Riga - Tukums railway in 1877 (which still passes through Jurmala) that gave a great boost to the numbers of visitors, and thus a boost to the development of the town as a resort. Jurmala also gained a reputation as a health spa. The sea breeze, pine aroma, mineral springs and sandy beach encouraged many sanatoriums to develop within the city. We start on our bikes with an exploration of the town itself and its interesting buildings, before heading down towards the Bulluciems Peninsula and back. We then cycle along the beach for about 12 km, picking the hardest sand right on the shoreline of the Baltic Sea that is perfect for cycling. You can have drink, ice cream and swim stops along the way. We meet our bus at a beach café rendezvous point before we drive back to Riga and have free time to explore the city. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 28 kilometres , just under half of which is on the beach.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Bike trails in Lahemaa National Park

This morning we drive for about 6 hours to Lahemaa National Park, Estonia's first and largest national park. The park is an interesting mix of coastal bluffs, dense forest, 7000 year old bogs, 18th century manor houses, fishing villages and numerous lakes and rivers. The rocky coastline is strewn with erratic boulders, some very large, that were carried here by glaciers thousands of years ago. Most of the cycle routes are on well paved roads that have little traffic. Once we arrive we check into our hotel then head out on our bikes on a circular route to explore the park. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 41 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Lahemaa National Park, drive to Tallinn

This morning we continue to explore the vast natural beauty of Lahemaa National Park by bike. Established in 1971, it was the first national park in Estonia and two-thirds of the land is covered by forest. There are four large peninsulas in Lahemaa and one of them constitutes the northernmost point of continental Estonia. The park is home to moose, boars, brown bears, lynxes, foxes, beavers, the Ural Owl and Black Woodpecker. We plan to cycle another circular route before rejoining our bus. When we have finished in the park after a short lunch in a local cafe we drive for about 1.5 hours to Tallinn. Todays cycle route is planned first thing in the morning so we can check into our hotel in Tallinn in time to enjoy a free afternoon in this wonderful city. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Tour ends Tallinn

The tour ends in Tallinn this morning after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

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

Food & Drink

Included meals: 8 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.

Estonia

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Latvia

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Lithuania

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 15.00

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.

Estonia

Bottle of Beer £: 2.40

Water £: 0.50

Latvia

Bottle of Beer £: 3.0

Water £: 0.50

Lithuania

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

International Departure Taxes

None

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

Estonia

ATM Availability: Cash can be drawn from ATM's in most cities.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are generally accepted only in the larger hotels and restaurants.

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

Local Currency: Euros.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: EUR, GBP or USD

Where to Exchange: US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euros can be changed in most places.

Latvia

ATM Availability: Cash can be drawn from ATM's in all major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: In major restaurants and shops.

Travellers Cheques: Are very difficult to cash on this tour.

Local Currency: Euro

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We suggest you take most of your spending money in cash (in small denominations). US Dollars and Euros are more easily converted than Pounds Sterling. N.B. US$ notes should be in good condition (not torn or marked). Notes prior to 1990 (of any currency) are often not accepted.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Lithuania

ATM Availability: Cash can be drawn from ATM's in most cities.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are generally accepted only in the larger hotels and restaurants.

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

Local Currency: Euros

Recommended Currency for Exchange: EUR, GBP or USD

Where to Exchange: US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euros can be changed in most places.

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

Lithuania: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Latvia: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Estonia: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

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

Visa regulations in the Baltics are often subject to frequent change to check before you go. During this tour we enter Estonia and Latvia twice and Lithuania once, so please ensure your visas are valid for the required number of entries.

Vaccinations & Protection

Estonia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus and hepatitis A. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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.

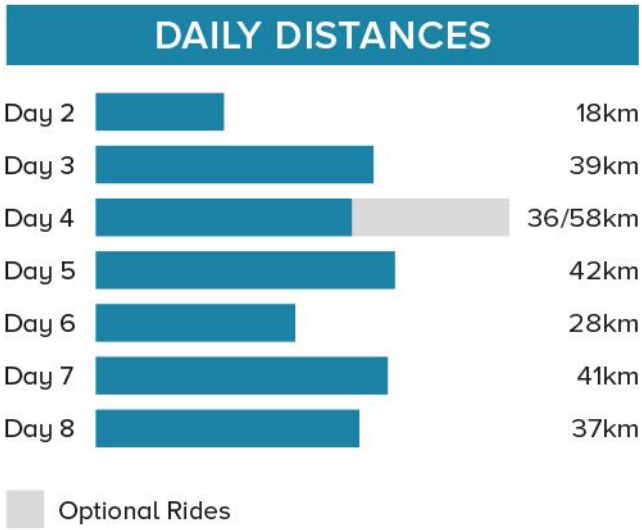
Latvia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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.

Lithuania

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus and hepatitis A. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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



Bike Details

Your included bike is a 7 gear Kalkhoff Jubilee hybrid bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A rear pannier is included and there is the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Climate

Estonia

Summer days in the Baltics are warm though changeable and only light clothing is needed. Temperatures can reach the mid 30's in the summer (though usually in the mid to high 20's). At night temperatures can drop, so bring a warmer sweater. Being a maritime climate it can rain at any time of the year so make sure you have a waterproof or umbrella.

Latvia

Summers in Latvia a are generally hot and sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures reaching 30oC. In fact, the early autumn period is often to be compared with a true Indian Summer, dry and sunny. The first snows usually start in November. Late August, early September can, however, be quite cold.

Lithuania

Summer days in the Baltics are warm though changeable and only light clothing is needed. Temperatures can reach the mid 30's in the summer (though usually in the mid to high 20's). At night temperatures can drop, so bring a warmer sweater. Being a maritime climate it can rain at any time of the year so make sure you have a waterproof or umbrella.

Clothing

Lightweight clothes during the day plus some warmer clothes for colder nights. Take a lightweight rain-jacket. Ladies should take a headscarf for entering churches.

Equipment

Insect repellent. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/emergencies. Sunglasses. Eye mask for sleeping during white nights. Please note that a rear pannier or handle bar bag can be provided. There is a 10 or 15 Euro cost per pannier respectively. Please arrange this with your tour leader and payment is made on tour.

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes or sandals for cycling and walking shoes for optional walks.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac for personal items. Total allowance: 44lbs/20kgs. Remember that you'll have to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Estonia

Population: 1,340,194

Size of Country: 45,227 sq km

Major Language: Estonian

Religion: Evangelical Lutheranism

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Latvia

Population: 2,245,357

Size of Country: 64,589 sq km

Major Language: Latvian

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Lithuania

Population: 3,203,857

Size of Country: 65,200 sq km

Major Language: Lithuanian

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Electric Supply & Plugs

Estonia

2 Pin Round

Latvia

2 Pin Round

Lithuania

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

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

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & 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: 2016 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2016. 2017/18 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2017.

These tour notes were printed on 26/11/2015 08:42:34