EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Undiscovered Balkans (KOA 2015)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOURDURAT
14
DAYS

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

Tour Highlights - Undiscovered Balkans

- ✓ Balkan Capitals - Discover the capitals of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia
- ✓ Valbona Valley - One of the most beautiful alpine valleys in Albania
- ✓ Decani Monastery - Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ✓ Prizren - Explore the postcard pretty town of Prizren by wandering along its cobbled streets
- ✓ Rahovec Wine - Enjoy wine tasting in Rahovec, the wine cellar of Kosovo
- ✓ Lake Ohrid - A stunning lake and mountain setting boasting many cultural monuments

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	10 nights Standard Hotel 2 nights Simple Hotel 1 night Hotel
Included Meals:	13 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Kruja
End Point:	Tour ends: Tirana
Transport:	Bus
Countries:	Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia

Undiscovered Balkans

Discover three fascinating countries on this two-week tour, including one of the world's newest countries: Kosovo. Independent since 2008, Kosovo is often referred to as 'newborn.' Along with Albania and Macedonia, this is a region that is off the beaten track and most travellers still know little about. On this tour you'll have the chance to get to know them by exploring their varied treasures from their rich history to their incredible scenery including dramatic mountains, lakes and pretty valleys.

Suitability

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

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

Tour Comfort: Standard

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

Tour Style: Classic

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

Tour Pace: Moderate

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

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

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

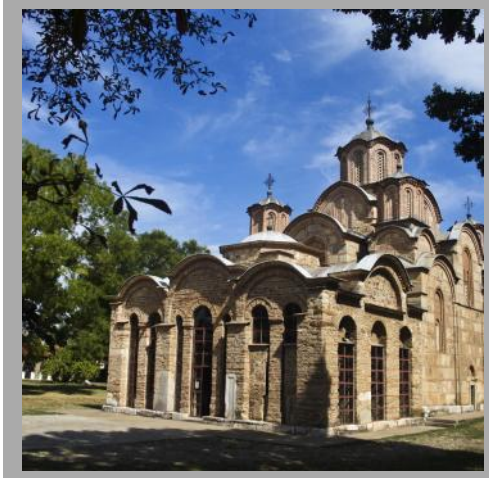
Your Tour Leader

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 Kruja

Join tour Kruja and check in to our hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 Explore Kruja. Continue to Shkodra; visit the Rozafa Fortress; free afternoon

The main highlight in Kruja is the citadel, from where Albania's greatest hero, Skanderberg, led the resistance against the Ottoman domination. He succeeded in ousting the Turks in 1443 and Albania was free for the next 30 years. Today the fortress is a place of pilgrimage and inspiration for Albanians; it enjoys a classic setting high on a ridge staring out to the Adriatic coast, approached via pine clad hills. We will visit the fortress and the bazaar before continuing to Shkodra. Shkodra is the traditional centre of the Gheg cultural region and is one of the oldest cities in Europe. We visit the Rozafa fortress, which enjoys a panoramic views of the town and lake. The afternoon is free to explore.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Journey to the Valbona Valley

Today we leave Shkodra and head for the Valbona Valley. We take the National Road through the scenic mountain landscape and cross the border into Kosovo and onto Gjakova where we have time for lunch. This afternoon we continue our journey and pass through the small town of Bajram Curri, as we enter the picturesque Valbona Valley. We check-in to a mountain hotel located in the centre of the valley, amidst the jagged peaks of the Accursed Mountains and enjoy the afternoon exploring the village on foot.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4 Valbona Valley

Valbona is one of the most beautiful alpine valleys of Albania. Today we will hike to the side valley of Kukaj, making our way through forest towards alpine pastures that offer breathtaking views of the valley and the surrounding mountains. We will have a picnic lunch and later visit a shepherd's family to taste a cup of fresh mountain tea. In the afternoon there is time to relax before a traditional dinner of lamb on the spit is served (vegetarian options also available).

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Enter Kosovo, Visit Decani Monastery

Today we cross the border into Kosovo where we spend the next five days. Kosovo is the world's newest country and has been independent only since 2008. Unfortunately, to most people Kosovo is most known for its war. However, it is a fascinating country boasting lots of treasures from past empires including Greek, Roman, Turkish and Ottoman. Driving through the town of Gjakova, we will than stop to visit the 'kulla' of Junik (traditional Albanian mountain houses) before arriving at the beautiful Decani Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Monastery was established in 1327 by the Serb King Stefan Uros III Decanski and is a superbly situated showpiece of Orthodox art. Then, we drive to the town of Peja. The afternoon will be spent visiting the town's attractions on foot.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Visit the highlands of Peja

Today we will visit the highlands of Peja. As we exit the town we stop to visit the church complex of Peja Patriarch, surrounded by the peaks of the Rugova Bjeshk (highlands), the Kosovo part of the Accursed Mountains and boasting amazing frescoes. Our day will continue with an impressive drive through the dramatic Rugova Gorge to the alpine location of Boga, where we will stop and start a short hike to a nearby lake. In the evening, we return to Peja and spend the evening in town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Continue to Pristina visiting the Gracanica Monastery en route, free afternoon to explore the city

We leave Peja and visit the waterfall of Drini Bardhe near the Montenegro border. The drive will than continue towards the outskirts of Pristina where we visit the Kosovo battle memorial. The memorial devoted to the martyred Serb knights is located where the Battle of Kosovo took place on 28th June 1389. Verses praising the heroism of the Serb knights are chiselled in bronze letters on the stone slabs and can be read in the interior of the monument. Next we visit the splendid monastery of Gracanica, one of the finest examples of Byzantine architecture. Then we arrive in Pristina, the Kosovo capital which largely escaped damage in the war. Free afternoon to explore and relax in its many bars and restaurants.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Drive to Rahovec visiting local wine makers en route; continue to Prizren

We leave the capital driving through rolling hills till we reach the region of Rahovec – the wine cellar of Kosovo. Here we will visit a few wine makers before making our way to the village of Hoqa e Vjeter – a serbian enclave village, where we will visit a monastery that also makes wine. In the afternoon we drive to Prizren – a town dominated by ottoman villas – perhaps the most typical town of Kosovo, and spend the evening there.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Exploring Prizren and visit to Tzar Dushan fortress

This morning, we stroll the streets of historic Prizren, an eclectic mix of Mediterranean, Orthodox, Ottoman and Islam flavours. It is a pretty town with many mosques, monasteries and narrow cobbled alleys. There is also some residual damage from firings in 1999 and 2004 which leave a scar upon the town. We will visit the Prizren League Museum, the Turkish Hammam, the old mosques, and the Bogoslavia church. There is then some time to explore at your own pace, perhaps visiting its myriad of small shops selling everything from jewellery to oriental sweets. In the afternoon we will visit the fortress of Tzar Dushan, located inside a narrow gorge. We then return to Prizren for the evening.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Short walk in Brezovica in Sharr National Park; arrive in Macedonia

The day will start with a wonderful drive from Prizren through the forests of Sharr National Park till we reach Brezovica, which in winter is a skier's heaven. It also has beautiful trails that can make great walks in the summer with breathtaking views. A short walk on a forest trail will bring us to the meadows of Potok where we can taste a picnic lunch, with Sharr Mountains fresh produce, and enjoy the stunning scenery around. In the afternoon we will continue to drive on a beautiful forest road that will lead to the border crossing of Globocic, where we will say farewell to Kosovo and hello to Macedonia. We will head for the capital city of Skopje.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 11 In Skopje, transfer to Mavrovo National Park

Today we visit the main attractions of the Macedonian capital including the Kale Fortress, the Ottoman Bazaar and the Sveti Spas monastery. A short transfer will than bring us to the town of Teovo, where we will visit the colored mosque. Drive to the picturesque location of Mavrovo National Park, where we can have leisurely walks before dinner.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Explore Lake Ohrid

We leave Mavrovo and take the scenic road towards the Debar region, continuing along the lakes of the Black Drin river that generates most of the hydropower of the country. We stop in Struga to visit the springs of the river. In the afternoon a short transfer will bring

us to Lake Ohrid where we will stop for lunch. The lake is situated against a dramatic mountain backdrop. Founded over 2400 years ago, Ohrid has a wealth of heritage and is today an important cultural and spiritual centre. To help its protection both the town and lake were classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980. Lake Ohrid is one of the oldest in the world and allegedly there are some 365 churches, monasteries and other religious sites around the lake. We will visit the city's main attractions as well as St Naum Monastery before transferring to Pogradec for overnight.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Drive to Tirana

Before starting the climb of Thana Pass, we will visit the fisherman village of Lin where the ruins of a paleochristian church are found as well as Roman mosaics. We will than continue the drive through the valley of Shkumbin and Elbasan town, until we reach Tirana. Tirana was made the capital of Albania in 1920 in order to provide a power base in the geographical centre of the country. There has been a fortress on the fertile Plain of Tirana since Roman times, although the city only really came in to its own in the 18th century. Today it is Albania's largest city. Today we will take an escorted walking tour of the government buildings and the mosque. This evening you may wish to visit the sky tower with views of the city.

Overnight: **Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 14 Tour ends Tirana

The tour ends in Tirana this morning after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 2 lunches,4 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.

Albania

Lunch £: 4.00

Dinner £: 10.00

Kosovo

Lunch £: 6

Dinner £: 13

Macedonia

Lunch £: 4.00

Dinner £: 8.50

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.

Albania

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

Kosovo

Bottle of Beer £: 1.20

Water £: 1.00

Macedonia

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

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

Some free time has been allowed for you to explore on your own or with your travelling companions.

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. Accordingly, you should allow approximately 20 Euros for tipping.

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

Albania

ATM Availability: Most larger towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are not widely accepted in Albania.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques are not widely accepted in Albania, though you should take some as a back-up in case of emergencies.

Local Currency: Albanian Lek.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Sterling, US Dollars and Euros cash is widely accepted in bureaux de change in major towns and cities. Most transactions in Albania are done on a strictly cash only basis using the Lek.

Where to Exchange: Bureau de change in major towns and cities.

Kosovo

ATM Availability: Most large towns

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are not widely accepted

Travellers Cheques: Travelleres cheques are not widely accepted , though you should take some as a back-up in case of emergengies

Local Currency: Euro

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Sterling, US Dollars and Euro are all widely accepted in bureaux de change in major towns and cities.

Where to Exchange: Bureaux de change in major towns and cities

Macedonia

ATM Availability: Most larger towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Unreliable

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques are accepted at all banks

Local Currency: Macedonian Denar.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars and Euros cash is widely accepted in bureaux de change in major towns and cities.

Where to Exchange: Bureau de change in major towns and cities.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

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

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

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

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

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

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

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

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

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

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

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

Kosovo: 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.

Vaccinations & Protection

Albania

We recommend protection against hepatitis A, typhoid, polio and tetanus. Rabies vaccination is recommended by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office due to the large number of stray dogs in Albania. You should seek further advice from your travel clinic. 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. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Kosovo

We recommend protection against hepatitis A, typhoid, polio and tetanus. Rabies vaccination is recommended by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office due to the large number of stray dogs in Albania. You should seek further advice from your travel clinic. Tickborne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check the 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.

Macedonia

We recommend protection against hepatitis A, typhoid, polio and tetanus. Rabies vaccination is recommended by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office due to the large number of stray dogs in Albania. You should seek further advice from your travel clinic. 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.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Albania

Albania has a mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers (ranging from 9 - 11 hours of sunshine a day in Tirana). Temperatures can reach up to 40°C in July. October to April is much cooler and can be wet. Albania is a mountainous country and the high peaks are snow-capped all year. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at http://www.explore.co.uk/weather. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

Kosovo

Kosovo has very cold winters, with temperatures reaching below zero and soaring to the mid-30's in the summer. The winters are cold and snowy and the summers hot and dry.

Macedonia

Macedonia has a transitional climate from Mediterranean to continental. The summers are hot and dry and the winters are moderately cold. Average annual precipitation varies from 1,700 mm (66.9 in) in the western mountainous area to 500 mm (19.7 in) in the eastern area. There are three main climatic zones in the country: temperate Mediterranean, mountainous and mildly Continental.

Clothing

Weather is changeable in the mountains and it can be cool, especially at night, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A raincoat is essential at all times in case of the odd shower. You should dress with respect in the rural villages so bring some long trousers. Don't forget your swimming costume.

Equipment

Take a water bottle, a sun hat and suncream. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/emergencies.

Footwear

Lightweight walking/trail boots for any optional day walks and comfortable shoes or sandals for visiting the sites and towns.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack.Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage
so don’t overload yourself. Please bear in mind there are lots of stairs in Albania and no portarage in the hotels.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Albania

Population: 4,000,000

Size of Country: 28,748 sq km

Major Language: Albanian, Greek, Vlach, Romani, Slavic dialects

Religion: Muslim, Albanian Orthodox, Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Kosovo

Population: Around 2 million

Size of Country: 4,212 square miles

Major Language: Albanian and Serbian

Religion: Islam and Christianity

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Macedonia

Population: 2,055,004

Size of Country: 25,713 sq km

Major Language: Macedonian

Religion: Orthodox Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Albania

2 Pin Round

Kosovo

2 Pin Round

Macedonia

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 http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

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

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

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

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

Reserving your place

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

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

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

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

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

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

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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