EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Wine, Walks and Tapas in Spain (CWW 2016)

WALK & TREK

TRIPDURATI
11
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Trek Grade: Easy

Trip Code: CWW

Trip Highlights - Wine, Walks and Tapas in Spain

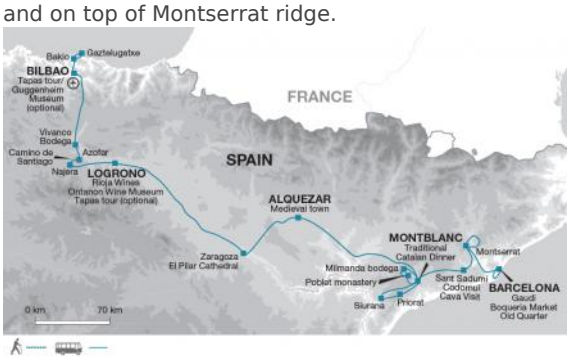
- ✓ Logrono, Rioja - Walking and wine tasting in one of Spain's most distinguished culinary hotspots
- ✓ Montblanc - Traditional Catalan dinner with a local family
- ✓ Freixenet Cava Winery - Wine tasting at one of the Penedes region's most famous estates
- ✓ Bilbao - Admire the spectacular architecture of the Guggenheim Museum
- ✓ Barcelona - Home to the astounding work of Antoni Gaudi and the colourful 'La Boqueria' food market

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	10 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	10 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner
Start Point:	Join trip: Bilbao
End Point:	Trip ends: Barcelona
Transport:	Bus, Public Bus, Taxi
Countries:	Spain

Wine, Walks and Tapas in Spain

Some of Spain's best food and wine can be found in the provinces of the Basque Country, La Rioja and Catalunya. On this journey from Bilbao to Barcelona we blend easy walks through wonderful scenery with wine tasting for a great introduction to the quality wine regions of La Rioja, Montsant, Priorat and Cava. There is also a special focus on local cuisine along the way, from the ever-innovative Basques, to La Rioja tapas and to the stylish and modern Catalans. The walks are varied and rewarding, from coastal scenes, along the Camino de Santiago, through vineyards and on top of Montserrat ridge.



Suitability

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

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

Accommodation Grade: 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.

Trek Grade: Easy

Suitable for most people in good health, these easy walks are predominantly on good paths, at low altitude and on undemanding terrain. Previous walking or trekking experience is not necessary.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

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

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organization 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 the Basque city of Bilbao

Arrive in Bilbao and check-in at the hotel. Situated on the banks of the Nervión River, on the northern edge of the Iberian Peninsula, Bilbao is home to the iconic magnificence of the Guggenheim, one of the world's most famous museums and one of its most spectacular architectural creations. Lying amongst the verdant landscapes of Vizcaya Province, the city is the largest and most culturally dynamic in the Basque region, providing us with the perfect start to this cultural and gastronomic journey.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Coastal walk with views across the Bay of Biscay

Boarding a local bus to Bakio this morning we head north, to take in the views across the Bay of Biscay and walk up onto the steep cliffs of Gaztelugatxe. Returning via another route, we then have a free afternoon back in Bilbao, where we have an opportunity to visit the world renowned Guggenheim Museum. This evening we have the option to join our tour leader for a gourmet tour of the city, taking in the local tapas bars and sampling for ourselves the famous Basque 'pintxos'. Walking: approximately 3 hours/9 kilometres, +/- 350 metres.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Visit to Rioja vineyard. Walk on the Camino de Santiago

Turning south this morning we begin with a visit to the Vivanco Bodega, one of the most renowned vineyards in the Rioja region. We will have an opportunity to do some wine tasting in Laguardia village before we continue driving into the heart of La Rioja for two photo stops outside the most emblematic bodegas in the whole region - Ysios (built by Calatrava) and Marques de Riscal (built by Frank O'Gehry). Later we reach Azofra and the famous pilgrimage route of the Camino Santiago. Walking part of the route towards Nájera, we have a chance to pay an optional visit to the monastery of Santa Maria de Real, the final resting place of many of Navarre's medieval kings, before completing the journey on to the town of Logroño. Walking: approximately 2.5hours/9 kilometres, +/- 100 metres.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Explore Logrono, capital of La Rioja region

Logrono lies at the centre of the Rioja wine trade and this morning after an orientation walk we visit the fascinating Ontanon Wine Museum and bodega. Here we visit the museum and enjoy a wine tasting. The afternoon is left free to explore Logrono or join your tour leader for an optional visit to Bodegas Franco Espanolas, one of the oldest and long established Rioja bodegas in the town. As well as its historic antecedents, Logroño enjoys a reputation as one of Spain's most distinguished culinary hotspots. One of its more interesting dishes is 'Pochas a la Riojana', a local style dish consisting of beans and vegetables.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Drive to medieval town of Alquezar via Zaragoza

Travelling by bus today we head next for Zaragoza, a city that was heavily influenced by the Moors, a factor wonderfully illustrated by its numerous examples of Mudéjar architecture. We have a short walking tour of the town, including the impressive El Pilar cathedral. In the afternoon we continue driving into the Sierra de Guara to medieval Alquazar, where we have some free time to explore this unique town built around an Arabic fortress. **Please note that for CWW18AUG there will be a different itinerary on Day 5. In the morning we will drive to Arguedas village in Navarra (1 hour and 15 minutes) where we will make a two hour walk in one of Spain's driest, most desert like areas in the protected Bardenas Reales Natural Park. After a picnic lunch we will drive for approximately an hour to Zaragoza where we will explore the historic centre before overnighting there.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Gorge walk. Drive to Montblanc. Enjoy a local Catalan meal

This morning we take a short walk along a gorge and the River Vero. We then drive a short distance Laus bodega, known for its striking architecture, before continuing on to the charming medieval town of Montblanc, lying close to some of the finest wine regions in Catalunya. After a chance for some free time, we then meet at a local 'Fonda' to enjoy a traditional Catalan dinner with a local family. Catalan cuisine is a wonderfully rich mix of dishes and sauces that are generally followed by deserts of fresh cheese and honey. Walking time: Approximately 1.5 hours/ 3 kilometres. +150/-150 metres. ** Please note that for CWW18AUG there will be a slightly different itinerary on Day 6. After an early morning drive to Alquezar (1 hour and 45 minutes) we will visit the town and the gorge, before continuing with the normal itinerary.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7 Walk through vineyards to Poblet Monastery

Walking from the hotel this morning we head out through the local vineyards to the monastery of Santa Maria de Poblet, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the largest Cistercian monasteries in Spain. There is an opportunity to visit the monastery, then after a picnic lunch of local produce we drive back to Montblanc where there is free time to explore this well preserved, medieval town. In the afternoon we visit Mas Foraster, a famous local wine producer, where we have a wine tasting. Walking time: Approximately 3 hours/ 10 kilometres. +250/-150 metres.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 8 Discover Bodega Scaladei. Walk to Cartuia Monastery

This morning we begin the day with a drive to Siurana, a fascinating medieval village built on a rock in the heart of the Sierra Montblanc. This was one of the last Muslim strongholds of the region before their final expulsion in the 17th century. We make a short walk around the village before continuing to Priorat, which next to la Rioja, is probably one of the most famous of Spain's wine growing regions. Here we walk to the 17th century monastery at Cartuia (approximately one and a half hours) before we visit the Bodega Scaladei to enjoy some of their famed produce and learn a little about the sophisticated art of wine and olive oil production. We return by bus to Montblanc. Walking time: Approximately 2.5 hours/7 kilometres. +/-150 metres.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Visit Freixenet winery. Walk at Montserrat Monastery

Driving into the Penedes region this morning we enter the heart of Catalan Cava production. This region is home to some of the finest Champagne style wines in the world and a visit to the Freixenet vineyard introduces us to one of its most famous estates. A guided tour and some cava tasting give us a good insight into the winery and its products. Next stop is the monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat, the most famous religious retreat in Catalonia, where we take a walk along the mountain ridge to enjoy the stunning views before completing our journey to Barcelona. Walking time: Approximately 3 hours/7 kilometres. +250/-500 metres.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Explore Barcelona, including La Boqueria food market

The second largest city in Spain, Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia and this morning we take an orientation tour around the old city. Home to no fewer than nine World Heritage sites, the city can boast a rich cultural heritage, the spectacular architectural creations of Antoni Gaudi and one of the best food markets anywhere in Spain - 'La Boqueria'. Today this cultural landmark is a visual and culinary delight, with over 200 stalls selling everything from fish and meat to tapas and beetles (yes, really). Later this evening we have the opportunity to enjoy a final meal at one of the city's popular restaurants.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Tour ends in Catalonian capital, Barcelona

Tour ends after breakfast. If there is time you have another chance to explore some more of this vibrant city, perhaps a stroll down Las Ramblas - the city's central boulevard lined with bars and restaurants.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch,1 dinner included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Spain

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

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.

Spain

Bottle of Beer £: 2.50

Water £: 1.40

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

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.

Foreign Exchange

Spain

ATM Availability: In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques: Not recommended.

Local Currency: Euros

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where to Exchange: We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

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

Booking a land only package with Explore

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

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

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

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

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

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

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

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

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

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

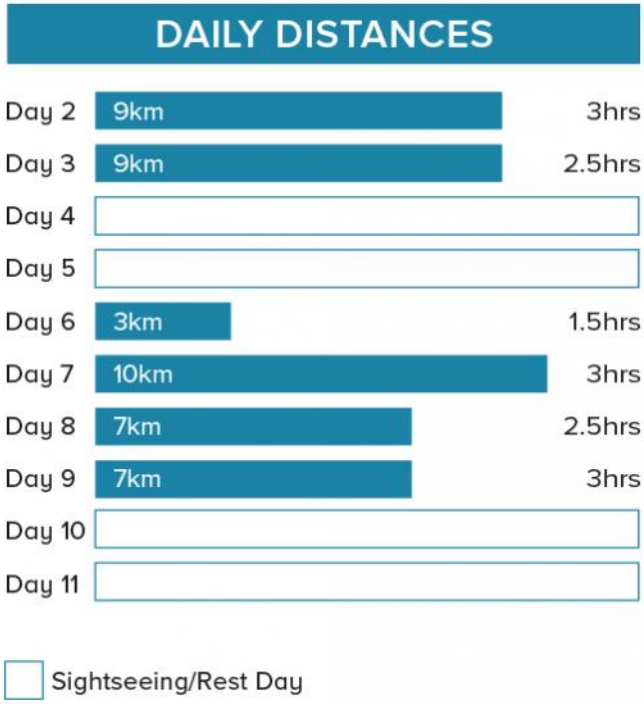
All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spain

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. 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. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Trip



Trekking Details

There are included walks on five days. The walks are between 2.5 and 3 hours and the terrain is generally gently undulating although on one of the walks we descend 500 metres. We have graded this tour as easy. It is possible to opt out of any of the walks.

Climate

Spain

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Clothing

Lightweight cotton clothing is best from June to September, light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, but especially after the start of September, and a warm fleece/light jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights at the beginning and end of the season. Don’t forget a swimming costume.

Equipment

We also recommend taking a water bottle, insect repellent, and sun cream. You may find a walking pole useful.

Footwear

Walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, trainers and/or sandals for travelling and general wear.

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 trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spain

Population: 46,030,109

Size of Country: 504,782 sq km

Major Language: Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spain

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, 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, 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 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

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

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

Please note: 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 trip notes were printed on 30/08/2016 09:28:18