EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Golden Beaches and Jungle (TTE 2017)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TRIPDURATI
10
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Relaxed

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: TTE

Trip Highlights - Golden Beaches and Jungle

- ✓ Bangkok - Explore the glittering Grand Palace and temple of the Reclining Buddha
- ✓ Kanchanaburi - Visit an Elephant sanctuary and see the Bridge over River Kwai
- ✓ Khao Sok National Park - Trek through the jungle and swim in the river
- ✓ Koh Phangan Island - Find stunning bays, beautiful beaches, waterfalls and forests
- ✓ Koh Samui Island - Relax on perfect palm fringed beaches

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	2 nights Hotel 1 night Simple Overnight Train 2 nights Standard Lodge 4 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	8 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Bangkok
End Point:	Trip ends: Bangkok
Transport:	Bus, Train, Boat, Flight, Ferry, Tuk Tuk
Countries:	Thailand

Golden Beaches and Jungle

On this short summer holiday to Thailand not only do we discover the bright lights of Bangkok, we travel to Kanchanaburi were we can feed and bathe elephants and head deep into Khao Sok National Park where we explore unspoilt rainforest. Our journey also takes us to the beautiful islands in the Gulf of Thailand, where we discover hidden coves on Koh Phangan Island and relax on picture perfect tropical beaches of Koh Samui.

Why Book this trip

This short adventure to Thailand is a great escape during our summer months and a great adventure for first-timers to the country as you sample the culture and bright lights of Bangkok, experience feeding and bathing elephants in Kanchanaburi, trek through rainforest jungle in Khao Sok National Park and see some of the beaches and islands in the Gulf of Thailand. You will travel using a mixture of overnight train, airplane, public ferries, local taxi and private buses giving you a real flavour of being in the destination, and a real sense of adventure!

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.

Tour Pace: Relaxed

Easy paced tours with plenty of time to relax and absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings.

Your trip itinerary

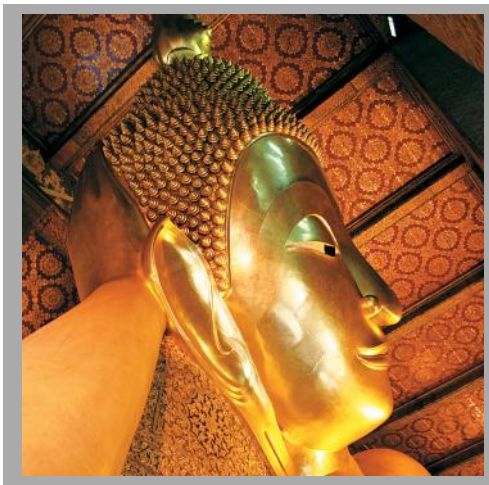
Tour itinerary notes

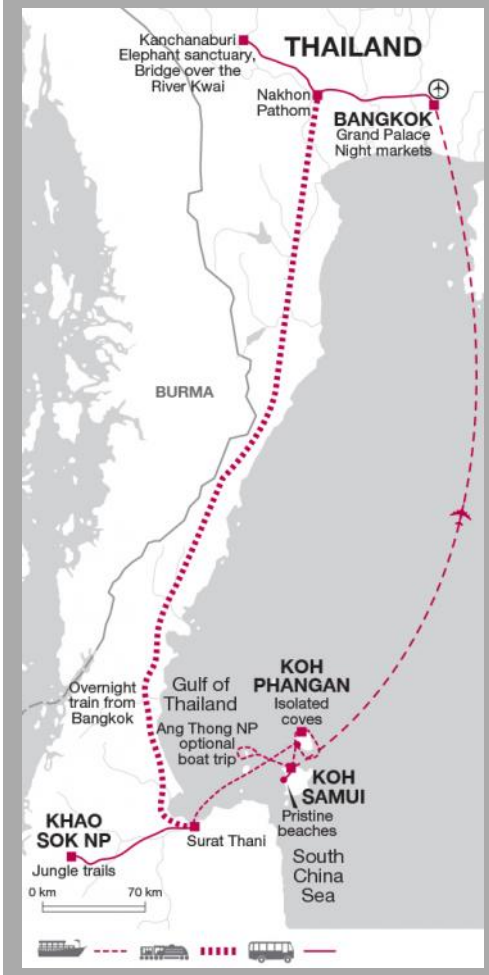
While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

DAY 1 Join tour in Bangkok

Arrive in Bangkok and check-in at the hotel. The rest of the day is free. You may choose to take an optional cruise along the city's Klongs (canals) in a traditional longtail boat. This is the ideal way to explore Bangkok's network of meandering waterways that branch off from the main channel of the Chao Phraya River. The excursion will also include visits to the Royal Barge Museum and the iconic Wat Arun, the Temple of the Dawn, which was built to represent the towering slopes of Mount Meru, the home to the gods of Khmer mythology.

Overnight: **Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**





Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Drive to Kanchanaburi, spend the day with elephants; visit Bridge over River Kwai; take sleeper train south to Surat Thani

We make an early start today to head to Kanchanaburi to visit a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of rescued elephants. Depending on the needs of the elephants on any given day we have the opportunity to see these magnificent creatures in a beautiful natural environment where we can perhaps watch them bathe, assist in preparing their food and take part in feeding them their afternoon tea of sticky rice balls! Those happy to get wet and dirty could take the elephants into the river to scrub them clean - so a change of clothing in your day bag would be highly recommended. After saying a fond farewell to the elephants, we drive a short distance to see the legendary Bridge over River Kwai. The building of the bridge and the Death Railway, as it has become known, is one of the most infamous episodes of the Second World War. We make a brief stop to see the bridge before continuing on our journey to Nakhon Pathom, where we board our sleeper train which will take us through the night south to Surat Thani.

Overnight: **Simple Overnight Train**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3 Arrive in Surat Thani; drive to Khao Sok National Park; afternoon jungle walk

On arrival in Surat Thani this morning we will drive to our riverside jungle lodge in Khao Sok National Park. Covering an area of some 65,000 sq km the park is one of the oldest and most bio-diverse jungles in South East Asia, boasting a lush rainforest that is older than those of either the Amazon or Central Africa. This afternoon we take a walk with our park ranger along jungle trails, and learn something about the flora and fauna of the park. The park is home to a rich diversity of wildlife including elephant, tiger and Malaysian sun bear and with some 180 species of birds it is a haven for keen birdwatchers and novices alike, although of course wildlife viewings can never be guaranteed.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: None

DAY 4 In Khao Sok National Park; free day in the jungle with canoeing and swimming options

Today has been left free. There is the option to hire canoes and take them on the river. Alternatively if a more relaxing day is preferable then it is possible to swim in the river near the lodge, or simply relax and enjoy the idyllic jungle surroundings with the noises of the rainforest all around and the sight of monkeys descending from the surrounding canopy to drink at the waters edge. This evening we aim to take a night safari walk.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Ferry to Koh Phangan Island; free afternoon

Driving back to Surat Thani this morning we catch a ferry to Koh Phangan and on arrival taxis, which are converted pick-up trucks known locally songthaew, will take us to our hotel on a quiet bay on the north western side of the island away from Koh Phangan's notorious full moon parties. The afternoon is free to relax and enjoy the picturesque white palm fringed beaches and warm tropical waters of the Gulf of Thailand.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 From Koh Phangan, boat trip around the island

Today we explore this beautiful area by traditional long tail boats as we make our way around the island, stopping at secluded bays where we can swim and snorkel as well as find waterfalls that can only be reached by boat. Some of the waterfalls were once considered so beautiful that they attracted the attentions of the Thai kings of old and a number of them can be found with the carved insignia of these regal visitors etched into boulders and rocks. Snorkelling equipment and life jackets are provided and a simple lunch of rice and fruit is included.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7 Ferry to Koh Samui Island; free afternoon with optional cooking class

This morning we take a ferry to the neighbouring island of Koh Samui. The largest of the islands in the Samui Archipelago, Koh Samui is the most developed and it is a distinctive mix of quiet palm fringed beaches, backpacker resorts and coconut plantations. This afternoon is free and you may wish to partake in an optional Thai cookery course, where an expert cook will teach even the most inexperienced the fundamentals of Thai cookery so that the fabulous cuisine can be recreated on your return home. Should anyone feel the need for shopping and nightlife, local songthaew taxis ply the route to the shops, bars and clubs of Chaweng, and the town of Na Thon is just a 20 minute walk along the beach from where we are based.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 On Koh Samui; free day with option to take a boat trip into Ang Thong National Marine Park

Today is left free for you to enjoy exploring and indulging at your leisure. Koh Samui is slightly different from many of the other islands in southern Thailand, owing in some part to the influence of the Hainan islanders who first settled the island some 150 years ago. The Chinese influence is still visible in some of the buildings in Na Thon and some descendants of the original settlers still live in the area. While relaxing on a tranquil beach might be order of the day there is also the opportunity to take an optional boat trip to Ang Thong National Marine Park, inspiration for the book 'The Beach'. Snorkelling equipment is provided and there are ample opportunities to swim in this stunning protected area.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Fly to Bangkok; afternoon visit to Grand Palace and see reclining Buddha at Wat Pho

This morning we fly back to Bangkok. In the afternoon we will see Bangkok's major sights including the Grand Palace, probably the most impressive of all the historical monuments in Bangkok with its collection of palace buildings, golden stupas, Wats (temples) and decorative statues. The most impressive of the Wats is Wat Phra Kaeo, otherwise known as The Temple of the Emerald Buddha. We will also visit Wat Pho, one of the largest Wats in Bangkok and famous for its 46 metre gold-plated reclining Buddha. The evening may be best spent at a night market bartering for souvenirs or on a roof terrace bar with views of the bright lights of the city at night.

Overnight: **Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Tour ends in Bangkok

Our tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may wish to explore the backpacker haunt of Kao San Road, go shopping either at one of the many modern shopping malls or markets, or simply wander through Chinatown for a different flavour of the city.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches,0 dinners 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.

Thailand

Lunch £: 3.00 - 5.00

Dinner £: 4.00 - 8.00

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.

Thailand

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 0.50

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

Bangkok - Long tailed klong boat trip including the Royal Barge Museum £14
Khao Sok - Canoe hire £6; Koh Phangan cookery course £32
Koh Samui - Thai cookery course £40, Ang Thong Marine Park trip £32

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. Accordingy you should allow US$25

Foreign Exchange

Thailand

Major Language: Thai

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

Credit Card Acceptance: Major stores and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

Local Currency: Thai Baht

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US$.

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

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.

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

Thailand: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens for a stay of less than 30 days. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry to Thailand 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

Thailand

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. 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 Trip

Climate

Thailand

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at http://www.explore.co.uk/weather.

Clothing

Pack for essentially for hot weather. Bear in mind that the region is tropical (humid) and that days can be very hot. Lightweight rainwear or an umbrella is advisable all year. Casual clothes are the most practical (something with long sleeves, and long trousers for evenings), and tight fitting garments should be avoided. Laundry facilities are available on the islands. A swimming costume is a must. Shorts and open backed sandals are not permitted in the Grand Palace.

Equipment

A small torch, insect repellent, water bottle. Bring a beach towel and high factor sunscreen. If you intend to do much snorkelling we recommend you bring your own mask and snorkel, as local equipment is not always top quality. A disposable waterproof camera can be useful whilst snorkelling. Any qualified divers should remember to bring logbooks and certification with them if intending to dive.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals. Flip-flops are useful when hopping on and off boats.

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

Thailand

Population: 67,000,000

Size of Country: 514,000 sq km

Major Language: Thai

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

Religion: Buddhism

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Electric Supply & Plugs

Thailand

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: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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