EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Vietnam Explorer (VE 2015)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TOURDURAT
21
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard

tour Code: VE

Tour Highlights - Vietnam Explorer

- ✓ Hanoi - Wander through the bustling narrow streets of the Old Quarter lined with shop-houses
- ✓ Halong Bay - Traditional junk boat cruise through one of the most breathtaking limestone landscapes in South East Asia
- ✓ Hoi An - Charming ancient merchant's town on the banks of the Thu Bon River
- ✓ Kon Tum - Walk through cassava and sugar plantations to a Bahnar tribal village in the Central Highlands
- ✓ Mekong Delta - Riverside stilt houses and fascinating floating markets

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	14 nights Standard Hotel 2 nights Standard Boat 1 night Basic Overnight Train 1 night Standard Lodge 2 nights Basic Boat
Included Meals:	19 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 6 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Hanoi
End Point:	Tour ends: Ho Chi Minh city
Transport:	Bus, Train, Boat, Flight
Countries:	Vietnam

Vietnam Explorer

Take an in-depth journey across Vietnam visiting ancient colonial towns and experiencing traditional river life along the waterways. We follow part of the Ho Chi Minh Trail through the beautiful Central Highlands - we trek, raft, ride elephants and visit tribal villages. We also sea kayak in Halong Bay and cruise among floating markets on the Mekong Delta.

Why Book this tour

This three week adventure is perfect for travellers with more time to spare and who want to really get under the skin of the destination. The tour features all the main highlights from our Inside Vietnam (VN) holiday, but also takes you deeper into less visited areas such as the Central Highlands region where you will encounter tribal people. You also have the chance to spend two nights on a boat in Halong Bay and therefore able to venture further away from other tourist boats and also two nights on a boat in the fascinating Mekong Delta, a truly great place to watch the local life go by.

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.

DAY 1 Join tour in Hanoi

Arrive Hanoi and check-in at the hotel. Vietnam's bustling capital is architecturally styled like a French provincial town, with tree-lined boulevards and low-rise buildings. Hanoi is a wonderfully nostalgic city to explore and this afternoon we have some free time to do so. You may choose to take a walk around the shores of Hoan Kiem Lake.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Discover the sights of Hanoi including the Old Quarter

This morning we make a tour of the main sights of Hanoi. Among the interesting sights are the charming One-Pillar Pagoda and the Presidential Palace, a very fine example of French colonial architecture. Ho Chi Minh himself, a spartan-living and scholarly man, chose not to live in the Presidential Palace; he preferred instead a simple teak 2-storied stilt-house specially built for him in the grounds. In the afternoon we visit the Old Quarter of Hanoi. The streets are named after various crafts or specialities: Paper Street, Silk Street, Basket Street etc. The shops themselves have very narrow frontages but are actually quite deep; they are known locally as 'tube' shops.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Free time in Hanoi, drive to Halong Bay; overnight on boat

This morning we drive out towards the magnificent Halong Bay in the Gulf of Tonkin. Thousands of jagged limestone islands rise out of the jade green waters like the hairy scales of a submerged dragon. In fact Ha Long means 'where the dragon descends to the sea' as legend tells that the rugged seascape was created by the pounding tail of a dragon as he ran from the mountains into the sea, carving islands in his wake. We enjoy the romantic scenery while cruising amongst the islands. We'll have the chance to stop at a grotto beneath towering cliffs and perhaps pull into a beach where you will have time to swim, relax or kayak (optional). It is also interesting to see the curious assortment of boats, junks and wooden sampans, their sails hoisted, gliding through the waters. We enjoy an included seafood lunch on board the boat. In the evening we'll transfer to our overnight boat. Accommodation will be in twin cabins, bedding and mattresses provided.

Overnight: **Standard Boat**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 In Halong Bay; sea kayaking and visit floating village; overnight on boat

We'll have the chance to stop at an island or Three Peaches beach under towering cliffs and fringed with thick jungle. You will have the opportunity to sea kayak through stunning limestone scenery – we carry our own kayaks and lifejackets and instruction is provided (this activity is optional, but at no extra expense). Late in the afternoon we visit Cua Van floating fishing village to experience some local life of the people in this part of the bay. Again in the evening we'll transfer to our overnight boat.

Overnight: **Standard Boat**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Arrive in Hue; boat along Perfume River to Thien Mu Pagoda

This morning we board local rowing boats cruising through Bai Tu Long Bay. Enjoying our brunch while on the boat we get to see Bai Tho mountains and Ha Long market. During our cruise we sail to the beautiful caves of Hang Luon. We then return to Hanoi where we have day rooms before boarding the overnight sleeper train for the journey to Hué - bedding provided.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Arrive Hue; afternoon boat trip on Perfume River

We arrive in Hué, one of the great cultural and religious centres of Vietnam, a quietly impressive place and a major highlight of our trip. The Perfume River divides the city in two and it has been the inspiration for poets and painters for many centuries. In the afternoon we take a trip by boat on the Perfume River to the Thien Mu Pagoda. This lovely monastery is the oldest in Hué.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 7 In Hue, visit the Imperial Citadel; free afternoon

To appreciate Hue's fascinating history we'll tour the Old Citadel in the morning. The citadel/palace built by the Nguyen dynasty (early 1800's to 1945) has formal moats and impressive ramparts and was an exact copy of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Although most of the Inner City was destroyed during the Tet Offensive (1968), the vast outer walls and the West Wing remain and are an eloquent reminder of the palace's former glory. The afternoon is free to wander at your own pace. You may choose to hire a bike or wander the back streets and lively markets (optional).

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Scenic drive via Danang to Hoi An

This morning we enjoy a scenic drive across the spectacular Col des Nuages (the pass of Ocean Clouds) to Danang, once the centre of the important Kingdom of Champa (2nd century AD – 1720). We visit the Cham Museum to see the extraordinary Cham sculptures. Not far from Hoi An are the magnificent Marble Mountains which are dotted with Buddhist pagodas and shrines, and were a haven for the Vietcong troops and the scene of many battles. We will also stop at China Beach. Later we drive on to the historic merchant town of Hoi An.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 From Hoi An, visit ancient My Son; free afternoon in Hoi An

The Portuguese arrived here in the 16th century and by the 18th century it had become one of the busiest international trading ports of South-East Asia. Hoi An still retains its medieval charm with old buildings and colourful markets. During our stay here we include an excursion to My Son. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, My Son is a striking complex of tower temples located in a secluded valley. The rest of our time is left free for personal exploration.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Free day to explore Hoi An; optional visit to My Lai

Bicycles here are inexpensive and a great way to get out into the surrounding countryside or perhaps take a trip to the nearby beaches. Hoi An is also renowned for its many craft and tailors' shops. You may wish to take an optional excursion to Quang Ngai, the site of the My Lai Massacre Memorial. The massacre was a significant turning point in the Vietnam War and the horrific story is told through a photo presentation - an emotional experience.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Drive through mountains to Kon Tum in Central Highlands

Our journey takes us inland through the mountains of the Central Highlands to the market town of Kon Tum. It is a long day of travel but the stunning scenery and opportunity to see this rural area more than make up for it.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 In Kon Tum, walk through tribal villages

On our second day here we walk out to Kon Ko Tu, one of the many Bahnar tribal villages in the surrounding area (approx 5 hours walking, graded easy to moderate). We walk through cassava and sugar plantations and pass several stilted villages en route. After lunch there is an opportunity to float back to the village on local dugout canoes. In the evening we can visit the Village Rong or communal house which is the most important building in the village – not only is it used for festivals and village meetings, but it acts as the court where people are tried for tribal offences.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 Drive to Western Highlands; take boat on Lake Lak

We drive south today through the Central Highlands, to Buon Me Thuot, Dak Lak Province's administrative centre and the Western Highlands' unofficial capital. Although a nondescript town, there are many minority Ede villages in this region, and we head south to Lak Lake to spend a night in a bungalow near the shores. During our time here we will take an elephant ride to a nearby village and a relaxed boat (pirogue) excursion on Lak Lake. There is also time for some personal exploration of the area.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 14 Drive to coastal Nha Trang

Our drive today sees us descending to the coastal plains as we make our way to the fishing town and beach resort of Nha Trang. Some of the most impressive Cham towers can be seen on the outskirts of the town on our arrival.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 In Nha Trang, boat cruise on Ninh Van Bay

Today we enjoy this seaside town, famed for its clear warm water, delicious seafood and white sand beach. We plan a boat trip to some of the outlying islands to swim and relax (dependent on local weather conditions).

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16 Fly to Ho Chi Minh City; explore Old Saigon; free afternoon

Today we fly to Ho Chi Minh City where we have a walking tour of the city’s central sights including the National Assembly, Hotel de Ville, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Independence Palace and the War Crimes Museum. The afternoon is free for you to walk around this charming city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 17 Drive to Mekong Delta; cruise Mekong River; overnight on boat

This morning we drive to Can Duoc, where we board our specially chartered river boat. Travelling along the backwaters by boat is by far the best way to see the delta, passing villages of stilted houses, abundant rice fields and a variety of cottage industries as we go. We travel down the Mekong River to Cho Gao, where we disembark for a walk around the local market. We then continue to Thoi Son Island where we’ll meet the friendly locals and take a sampan ride through palm-shaded creeks. Back on our boat, we’ll cruise to Cai Be, where we moor up for the night. Our accommodation is simple dormitory-style bunks on board the boat.

Overnight: **Basic Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 18 In Mekong Delta, option to visit early morning floating market; overnight on boat

It is worth rising early to see the superb floating market at Cai Be. As it links the various towns and provinces, Cai Be is a very social and colourful place with the vendors advertising their wares on long poles. We spend some time paddling through the market and enjoying the friendliness of the locals before continuing on our boat journey. We stop off several times today to visit rural islands and some of the many family businesses along the canals. We then continue down the river to Long Xuyen Sadec, where we visit the Quach Temple and the colourful local market. We continue through the Lap Vo Canal to Long Xuyen.

Overnight: **Basic Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 19 Drive to Ho Chi Minh City

This morning we bid farewell to our boat crew and rejoin our vehicle and make the long journey back to Ho Chi Minh City, where we have the further chance to enjoy this bustling city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 20 From Ho Chi Minh City, visit Cu Chi Tunnels

This morning we'll take a short drive out of the city to the famous Cu Chi Tunnels, which formed an amazing underground command base for 10,000 Viet Cong troops and were a major part of the 1968 Tet Offensive. We then have a final group night before our adventure ends in Ho Chi Minh City.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 21 Tour ends in Ho Chi Minh City

Tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may wish to pick up some last minute bargains at Binh Tay Market.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 19 breakfasts, 5 lunches,6 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.

Vietnam

Lunch £: 4.00

Dinner £: 9.00

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.

Vietnam

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

Hanoi - Water Puppets Show from US$5; Cyclo tour of Old Quarter US$6
Hoi An - Half day trip to My Son from US$25; Cookery class US$15
Nha Trang - Mud baths from US$6

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. Acoordingly you should allow US$40.

Foreign Exchange

Vietnam

ATM Availability: There are ATMs virtually everywhere in Vietnam and in Cambodia, though we also recommend bringing cash.

Credit Card Acceptance: Some shops in Hanoi, and Hoi An. The occasional restaurant.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques can usually be changed in the towns, but only during bank opening hours.

Local Currency: Dong.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Carry your money in US$ Dollars cash. You can also take GBP but US$ are easier to exchange. (Dollar bills can be used in some hotels and shops; change is often given in local currency).

Where to Exchange: Most towns.

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

Vietnam: Visas are required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and must be obtained prior to departure. Visas can be obtained through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK; Visaswift, at http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx. 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

Vietnam

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. 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.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Vietnam

As Vietnam is a long, narrow country from north to south climate conditions vary considerably. The climate can be divided into three distinct patterns between the north, central and south regions. The climate in the north is generally humid and subtropical, although the winter months from November to March can be colder with temperatures from 10 - 15 degrees. Summer months, May to September can be quite hot with temperatures from 30 - 35 degrees. Meanwhile south Vietnam enjoys a tropical climate all year round, with little variation throughout the year (around 27 - 32 degrees), however May to November is the rainy season when short, heavy downpours are quite frequent. Central Vietnam lies somewhere in between. The coastal strip is usually dry and hotter from April to October while November to March is wetter and cooler. A light rain jacket and small umbrella are recommended year round.

Clothing

From December through to February warmer clothing is needed for the North. Bear in mind that the region is tropical (humid) and can be hot. Lightweight rainwear is advisable at all times. The north is cold at night during the winter and the Central Highlands can be chilly. Casual clothes are the most practical.

Equipment

Bring a small torch. Even though bed linen is provided on the train journey, you may want to bring a cotton sleeping sheet (it can be purchased in Hanoi) and a small travel towel.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of lockable baggage, an overnight bag for your two night trip to Halong Bay and the Mekong Delta when your main luggage is left behind, and a daypack.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Vietnam

Population: 90,549,390

Size of Country: 331,698 sq km

Major Language: Vietnamese

Religion: Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism

Time Difference to GMT: +7

Electric Supply & Plugs

Vietnam

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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