

# EXPLORE!

## Tour Notes



### Moscow and St Petersburg (WR 2014)



TOUR  
DURATION  
**8**  
DAYS



**Tour Style:** Classic  
**Tour Pace:** Moderate

**Tour Type:** Small Groups  
**Tour Comfort:** Standard

**Tour Code:** WR

#### Tour Highlights - Moscow and St Petersburg

- ✓ Moscow - Explore the city's main sites, such as the Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral, Lenin's Mausoleum and the Kremlin
- ✓ St. Petersburg - Visit the world-famous Hermitage Museum and the gargantuan Winter Palace. Soak up the culture of this stunning city with an optional visit to the ballet or opera
- ✓ Pushkin - Visit Catherine the Great's famously opulent palace

#### Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:** 6 nights Standard Hotel  
1 night Basic Overnight Train

**Included Meals:** 6 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

**Start Point:** Join tour: Moscow

**End Point:** Tour ends: St Petersburg

**Transport:** Bus, Train

**Countries:** Russia

## Moscow and St Petersburg

On this short tour, we explore Russia's two most important cities in-depth. In Moscow, we take in the Kremlin, the 16th century St Basil's Cathedral and have the chance to see Lenin's embalmed body in its Red Square mausoleum. Later, we discover the contrasting architecture of St Petersburg, with its European influences and vast, flamboyant palaces.

### 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.

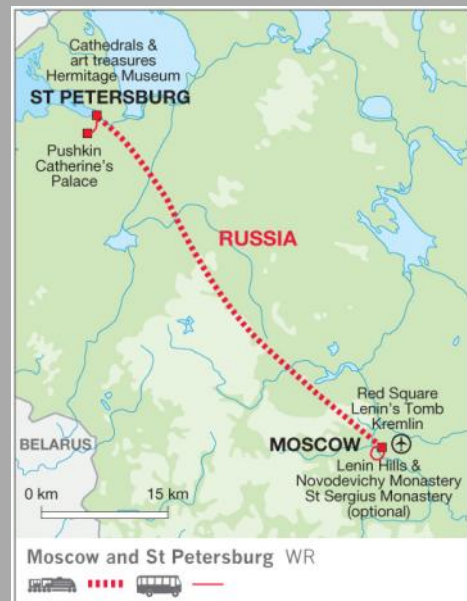
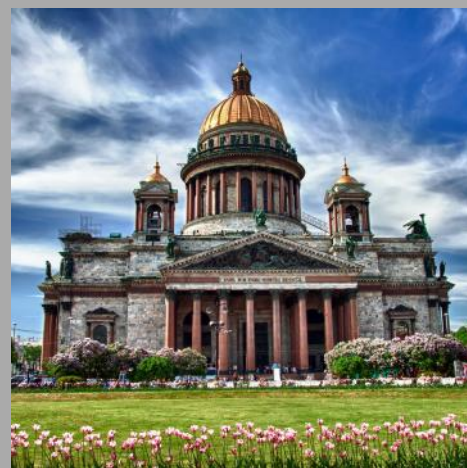
### Your Tour Leader

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 in Moscow

After checking in to our hotel in Moscow and meeting the rest of the group, there may be time to explore some of Russia's capital at our leisure. Moscow is one of the largest cities in the world. It has grown rapidly in recent decades, creating a sprawl of high-rise suburbs. However, its historic centre remains relatively compact, maintaining a great deal of its fascinating architecture.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Rooms Available**



 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Orientation tour of Moscow including the Red Square

Moscow is the pivotal centre of Russia and there is much to see and do here. Rather than battle with the traffic on a bus tour, we will use the metro system to get around this morning - an experience in itself. Many of the stations are cavernous underground halls, elaborately decorated with chandeliers. Our metro tour will end in the famous Red Square, still paved in its original stones, where we can gaze in awe at the colourful onion-domes of St Basil's Cathedral. Surely one of the most remarkable architectural edifices in the world, Ivan the Terrible commissioned the work in the 16th century. Living up to his name, legend has it that he gorged out the eyes of its architect once completed, so that he could never again design a building of such brilliance. After the opportunity to grab some lunch in the famous GUM department store, we head to the outskirts of the city by bus, where we should get a great panoramic view of the city from the Lenin Hills. On our return to the city, we will pass Novodevichy Convent - a beautiful cloister that has remained intact since the 17th century and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This evening, you may choose to experience Moscow's vibrant nightlife, which truly offers something for everyone. There are wine bars, blues bars, exceptional restaurants and classical concerts, to name just a few options. Your tour leader will be able to offer you advice.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Rooms Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3 Take Moscow's metro to the Kremlin

This morning, we take the metro to the massive Moscow Kremlin - a city within a city. The triangular walls enclose an incredible complex of buildings, including three fine palaces, cathedrals, belfries and towers that represent Russia throughout its glorious past. Whilst here you may choose to visit the Kremlin Armoury Museum, which contains a stunning collection of Imperial jewels and regalia. Included in this exhibit is the 16th century English silver sent to Ivan the Terrible by Queen Elizabeth I, with an eye towards securing matrimony. This afternoon is free to discover more of Russia's capital on your own. You may choose to visit the State Central Museum of Contemporary History, where you can gain a good insight into Russia's history from the beginning of the 19th century to the present day.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Rooms Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 4 Free in Moscow; overnight train to St Petersburg

Today has been left free for you to explore the many other sights Moscow has to offer. With the exception of holidays, Mondays and Fridays, you have the opportunity to visit Lenin's Mausoleum. Open between 10.00 and 13.00, entry is free, but there is often a bit of a queue. Other options include a visit to one of the many fine art galleries, the Bolshoi Theatre or Gorky Park. Maybe you will revisit the impressive GUM department store, with its beautiful glass roof. Alternatively, you might like to take an optional tour to Sergiev Posad - the beautiful monastery 60 kilometres from Moscow that is one of the most important pilgrimage sites in the country. This evening, we reunite to transfer to Moscow's main station to board the train bound for St Petersburg. Our accommodation is in four-berth compartments with bedding provided.

Overnight: **Basic Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 5 Orientation tour of St Petersburg

Built on the hundred islets that form the delta of the Neva River, St Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) was founded by Peter the Great as his 'Window on the West'. Regarded as one of the most beautiful and romantic cities in the world, its picturesque canals and baroque and neoclassical architecture give the city a European feel. St Petersburg has always been a city of ideas and ideals. Not only was it the home of great writers such as Pushkin and Dostoyevsky, but it was here that the Russian Revolution began, and where, arguably, the first shoots of democracy sprouted, 70 years later. After arriving into the city by train, a guided coach tour will show us some of the highlights of this great city. We will take in St Isaac's Cathedral, Alexander Nevsky Convent, the Church of the Saviour of the Spilled Blood and Palace Square. Our afternoon is free to explore any of these places in more detail. Alternatively, you may choose to relax before an optional visit to the ballet or opera this evening.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Rooms Available**

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 6 Visit to the Winter Palace and Hermitage Museum

We have some free time before our visit to the Hermitage Museum later in the morning. You may choose to visit the St Peter and Paul Fortress - the original 18th century citadel of St Petersburg. The Hermitage is unquestionably one of the finest art galleries in the world, containing the works of masters like Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Raphael, Velázquez, Rubens and Rembrandt, as well as contemporary pieces by Matisse and Picasso. Collections are split between buildings, with much on display at the Winter Palace. The official residence of Russia's Tsars from the 18th century until Nicolas II's forced abdication in 1917, this monumental building contains no less than 1,500 rooms. Stormed by Red Army soldiers in a defining moment that marked the beginning of the Soviet era, the following month-long looting of the palace's wine cellars led to what some describe as 'the greatest hangover in history'. This afternoon is free to enjoy the city at your leisure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Rooms Available**



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 7 Excursion to Catherine the Great's Palace at Pushkin

This morning we visit Pushkin, named after the eminent author and home to his 19th century wooden house. Formerly 'the Tsar's Village', the royal estates were built here, including the summer residence of Catherine the Great, a majestic palace styled in blue and gold rococo. After viewing its sumptuous interior, including the grand gold and crystal ballroom, we may stroll around the lakes and gardens of the palace. This afternoon is free to explore more of St Petersburg. If you have not already done so, you should spend time wandering down the main street of Nevsky Prospekt, with its three miles of shops, cafés, waterways, elegant buildings and historic monuments. There is also the option to visit Yusupov Palace, the city residence of one of Russia's wealthiest families. The tour includes the state rooms, private apartments and its beautiful theatre, as well as the basement apartments where the 'mad monk' Rasputin was murdered in the early 20th century. Please note: In some instances, entrance time allocations at Catherine's Palace may require us to switch around today's itinerary, so that we visit Pushkin in the afternoon and have a free morning.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Rooms Available**



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 8 Tour ends in St Petersburg

Our tour ends in St Petersburg this morning, after breakfast.



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Accommodation and Meals

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 6 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

## Budgeting for your Tour

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

### 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

Moscow - Kremlin Armoury museum 35 Euros (40 Euros for groups under 10). Opera or Ballet 50-150 Euros; visit to Sergiev Posad 35 Euros (40 Euros for groups under 10). Russian Musical Art Through the Ages 25 - 30 Euros, a concert of Russian musicians held in various galleries or museums of Moscow (Please note this optional is subject to availability and your tour leader will advise of this on arrival. The cost shown is just for the ticket to the concert and museum/gallery entrance fee, transport will be paid for separately and locally.)

St. Petersburg - St Peter and Paul fortress 25 Euros; Opera or Ballet 40-180 Euros; Yusupov Palace 28 Euros; Alexander Nevsky Lavra

**EXPLORE!** The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7



(Monastery) 5 Euros.

Prices for the above optional trips include guide fee, entrance fee to the site and necessary transport unless it states otherwise.

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### **Tipping - Tour Leader**

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

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### **Tipping - Local Crew**

You should allow approximately 20 Euros for tips.

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## **Foreign Exchange**

### **Russia**

**ATM Availability:** Cash can be withdrawn both in Moscow and St. Petersburg

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Local currency (Russian Roubles) can also be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in both Moscow and St Petersburg.

**Travellers Cheques:** Travellers cheques are accepted in Moscow and St Petersburg but are very time-consuming to change and attract unfavourable exchange rates

**Local Currency:** Rouble.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** We recommend that you take your money in Sterling, Euros or US Dollars cash. For US Dollars notes should be in good condition (not torn or marked), issued after 1990 (pre-1990 are often refused) and ideally in small denominations. Euros, Sterling and Dollars are easily transferable into the local currency, Roubles.

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

## **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.

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### **Booking a land only package with Explore**

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

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### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Clients booked on '**Land Only**' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate '**Joining Instructions**' for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

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### **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. Your insurer may charge an additional premium for certain activities.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

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### **Visa Information**

Russia: A single entry visa is required for Russia by all nationalities. It takes at least 4 weeks to process a Russian visa therefore we will not be able to accept bookings within one month of travel. Explore will provide an authorisation consisting of a Russian travel

voucher and confirmation approximately 6 weeks in advance of travel in order for you to apply for a visa.

**Please Note:**

It is the customers' responsibility to supply Explore with the correct passport information to enable us to request an authorisation travel voucher and confirmation, as well as pre book the included train tickets. There are fees for making corrections and amendments to visa authorisations. Also in order to purchase train tickets for customers, passport numbers and full names as per passport (including all middle names), date and birth and place of birth are required; if customers renew or reissue their passports from the details initially given to Explore, train tickets must be cancelled and purchased again, which involves extra costs and may result in customers being in differing train carriages to the rest of the group.

If arriving in Russia more than 72 hours before day 1 of your Explore holiday, and staying at a different hotel to the joining hotel, or with friends, then please contact Explore to provide us with the address of your accommodation before you begin to apply for your Russian visa.

Visas can be obtained through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK; Visaswift, at <http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx>.

If applying directly to the Russia Visa Application Centre in the UK, please note they will only accept their own visa forms. You will need to visit the website <http://www.rusemblon.org> where you must fill in the application online which can then be downloaded.

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

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## Vaccinations & Protection

### Russia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

## Preparing for your Tour

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### Climate

#### Russia

In European Russia snows usually start in November and stay till late March/early April, when a great thaw occurs with temperatures ranging from about 5°C in October and April to -15°C in January.

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### Clothing

Pack warm jumpers, gloves, scarf, hat and a warm waterproof coat for trips in the winter. Ladies should take a headscarf for entering churches and in some locations, it is also necessary to wear a skirt. Sometimes it is possible to hire skirts and headscarfs locally.

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### Equipment

Spare camera batteries can be useful as these do not last long in cold weather. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/ emergencies.

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### Footwear

Comfortable shoes.

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### Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of luggage and a daysac for personal items.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

## General Information

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### Food

The prices for meals and 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. 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.

#### Russia

**Lunch £:** 20.00

**Dinner £:** 30.00

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## Drink

### Russia

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.67

**Water £:** 1.50

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## Country details

### Russia

**Population:** 143,600,000

**Size of Country:** 17,075,400 sq km

**Major Language:** Russian

**Religion:** Orthodox Christianit, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism

**Time Difference to GMT:** +3

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## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Russia

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 & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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.

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## 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 traditions, 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: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

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## Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. [www.coolearth.org](http://www.coolearth.org)

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## 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](http://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](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

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## 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 <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 Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. 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.

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 2013 and 31st December 2014.

### 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: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

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