EXPLORE!

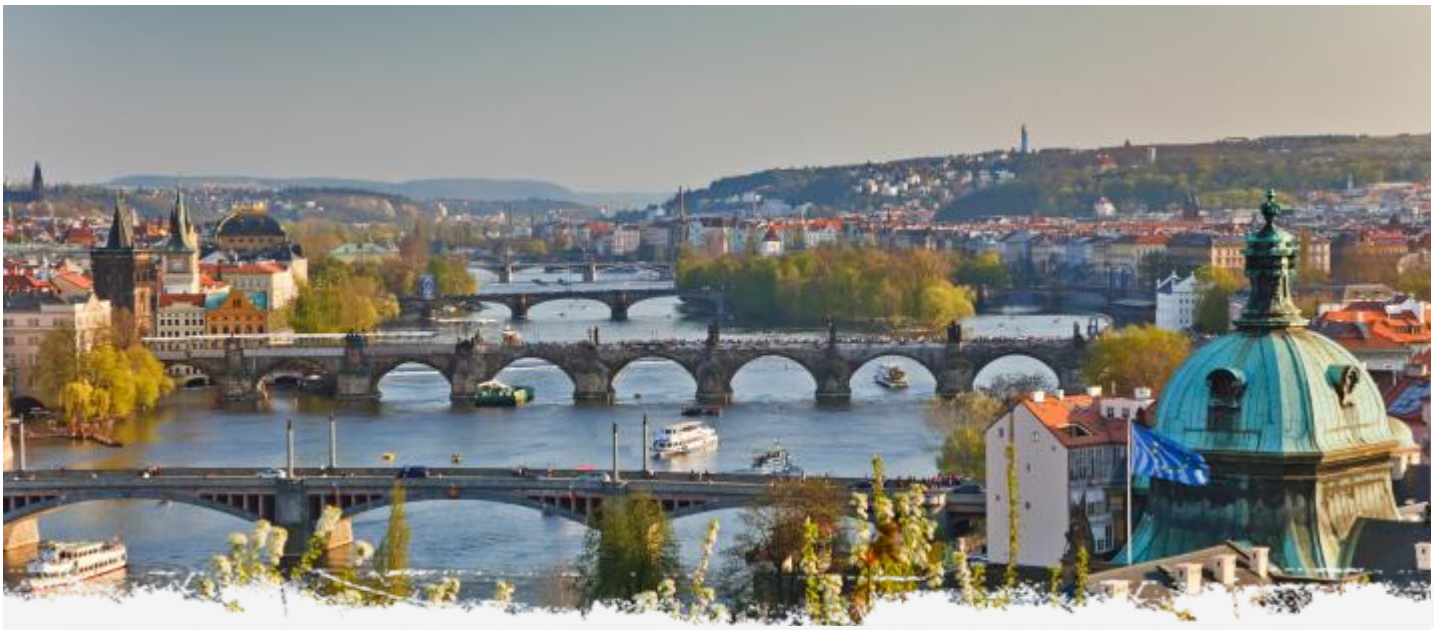
TRIP NOTES

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Highlights of Eastern Europe (CZ 2017)

CULTURAL DISCOVERY

TRIPDURATI
14
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: CZ

Trip Highlights - Highlights of Eastern Europe

- ✓ Krakow - Explore the Medieval city's maze of streets and sample the coffee culture
- ✓ Dunajec Gorge - Marvel at the impressive gorge while rafting along the Dunajec River
- ✓ High Tatras - Enjoy walks in the surrounding mountains
- ✓ Budapest - Learn about this fascinating city on a walking tour with a local guide. Discover Castle Hill, Old Town, Fisherman's Bastion and the Royal Palace
- ✓ Prague - Uncover the mysteries of the Old Town, Prague Castle, Charles Bridge, the Jewish Quarter and Astronomical Clock

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	9 nights Standard Hotel 4 nights Standard Guesthouse
Included Meals:	13 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Krakow
End Point:	Trip ends: Prague
Transport:	Bus, Train, Public Bus
Countries:	Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Austria

Highlights of Eastern Europe

On this trip we discover the historic European cities of Krakow, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and Prague. We'll have the chance to explore the Medieval town of Banska Stiavnica, admire ancient architecture in Krakow and wander through the cobbled streets in Budapest. We also enjoy walks amidst the spectacular scenery of the Tatras Mountains in Slovakia and experience rafting in the vast Dunajec River Gorge.

Why Book this trip

Making our way from Krakow to Prague, this trip takes in historic European cities and contrasting stunning mountain ranges and gorges. We discover a variety of cuisines and cultures on this highlights trip of Eastern Europe. Why not visit in winter to see these fascinating countries in a different light.

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: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

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

An Explore Leader is an integral part of any Explore trip and your trip will be led by one of our experienced Explore Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Explore Leaders are the key to the success of our trips; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Explore Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this trip fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join the trip in Krakow, Poland

Our adventure begins in the beautiful Polish city of Krakow, where we spend the next two nights. It was Poland's former capital until 1596 and due to its very distinctive character it is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Its historic architecture survived World War II unscathed, unlike most other Polish cities, and its rich culture has been preserved to the present day. It was the residence of Polish kings and has nearly one hundred churches, as well as the country's oldest university. Among its most important architectural treasures are Saint Mary's Church, which contains the world-famous altarpiece carved by Veit Stoss, the Medieval buildings of the

Jagiellonian University and Wawel Castle and Cathedral. In the city centre you will find numerous good Polish restaurants and the 'pierogi', Polish dumplings, are especially tasty. There are also many bars selling a range of local beers and of course a wide range of vodkas. Such as Chmiel, which is a basement bar beneath the forecourt of Wawel Castle, C.K. Browar, which is a popular micro-brewery or Starka Restaurant and Vodkas where you can try out an array of homemade flavoured vodkas.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Walk in the Old Quarter; option to visit Wieliczka Salt Mine

This morning our Explore Leader will take us on a short orientation walk around the city's stunning Old Quarter to help us get our bearings. The rest of today is left free for you to explore Krakow and further afield if you wish. The Jewish Kazimierz district, the setting for the film Schindler's List, has many points of interest, including the Old Synagogue and the Museum of Jewish Life. You may like to make an excursion to Oswiecim, the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp, which is a haunting reminder of the terrible atrocities that took place here during World War II. Alternatively it's possible to visit the Royal Castle, perched high on Wawel Hill, which overlooks both the Old Quarter and the Vistula River. Constructed in Renaissance style, the castle houses exquisite treasures collected through the ages by Polish monarchs. Next to the castle is Wawel Cathedral, which is the final resting place of the Polish Kings. Another option is to visit the fascinating Wieliczka Salt Mines, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. At up to 300 metres underground you'll see a 400 year old chapel, a subterranean salt lake and chambers large enough to hold the Eiffel Tower! The Chapel of Saint Kinga is the mine's most spectacular feature and you'll no doubt be amazed by what can be sculpted from salt. Please note that there are 350 steps down into the mine at the beginning of the tour and then a further 450 on the route through the various corridors and 20 chambers visited. The temperature underground can be much cooler than on the surface, so be sure to bring a jumper.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Rafting in Dunajec Gorge; arrive in the Tatras Mountains, Slovakia

This morning we depart for an inflatable rafting trip on the Dunajec River to a point close to the Polish border near Lesnica. It's a chance to get active and probably get wet as well as enjoying the picturesque surroundings. Bring a change of clothes and shoes that you don't mind getting wet and a towel with you today. This river has been a famous attraction since the middle of the 19th century, when tourists came here to cruise on log built rafts. We meander along the bottom of the spectacular canyon that bears the river's name, passing a landscape of towering limestone cliffs, blanketed in lush forests of fir, beech, larch and spruce. Part of the Pieniny National Park, the gorge is one of the most stunning in Europe and its verdant slopes attract a diverse collection of wildlife including lynx, wolf, stag and some 14 species of bats. Birdlife includes eagle and pygmy owls, three toed woodpeckers and rare black storks can sometimes be spotted along the river's edge. We will also pay a visit to the impressive Spis Castle. Sat on a hilltop above the town of Spisske it was once home to the Hungarian kings and it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the ruins show both Romanesque and Gothic architecture. We then board our bus and continue to Tatranska Lomnica in the High Tatras Mountains. This area of Slovakia can justly claim to be the Switzerland of the country. Snow-capped for most of the year, the compact High Tatras range is sliced by beautiful valleys and lakes. An ideal region for winter sports, in summer the network of well-marked trails is a hiker's delight.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Hiking in the Tatras Mountains

Today we take a public bus to Biela Voda and from here we'll start our full day trek in the beautiful Tatras Mountains. We begin with an uphill walk to the picturesque Green Lake. We take in the view and have the option to have a picnic lunch here. For those that wish to walk further there is then the possibility to continue to the Great White Lake before returning to Biela Voda on foot. We return to Tatranska Lomnica by public bus for the evening. The trek is graded moderate. The first section is 5 kilometres long and goes from 915 metres to an altitude of 1550 metres and should take approximately 2.5 hours. If you continue to the Great White Lake it's a further 2 kilometres and goes to an altitude of 1615 metres and should take an extra 35 minutes. We then need to walk the same distance back to the original starting point of the walk, so we will cover between 10-14 kilometres and walk for 5-6 hours in total today. Please make sure you bring comfortable walking shoes or boots and you may also find walking poles useful. Alternatively if you'd prefer a shorter walk then you can take a local train to Lake Strbske and enjoy a gentle walk around the lakeshore. This large glacial lake offers great views over the surrounding pine covered Tatras Mountains with their jagged rock peaks.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Train to Banska Bystrica with an orientation walk on arrival

This morning we travel by rail to Banska Bystrica (the journey will involve changes of train). On arrival our Explore Leader will take us on an orientation walk of the city. The pretty town is set on the Hron River and is surrounded by mountains. The main square is a hive of activity in summer and the City Castle, which is one of the main attractions, is located on the edge of the square. Back in 1944 it was in Banska Bystrica that the Slovak National Uprising began against the invading German forces and their own collaborationist government. Although most were defeated a few members managed to hold on until 1945 when the Soviet, Czechoslovak and Romanian armies arrived and liberated the country from under Nazi rule. Whilst here you might like to try the traditional and delicious folded potato pancakes followed by the original 'Tatratea' liqueur, which a tea based strong herbal drink that originated in the High Tatras Mountains, as a way of keeping warm on cold winter evenings.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Excursion to Banska Stiavnica and visit to the Mining Museum

Today we depart on an excursion to Banska Stiavnica - a preserved Medieval town that is yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town is unusually located in the centre of a huge caldera of an ancient collapsed volcano and is surrounded by dense forested hills. Whilst here we will visit the Open Air Mining Museum, which dates back to the 17th century and offers an interesting two kilometre long underground excursion. The museum not only explains the mining history of Slovakia but also the cultural heritage of the town itself.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Drive to Budapest, Hungary and take a guided walking tour

We start our day with a visit to the Hronsek Wooden Church and then stop in the small village of Sebechleby where you may choose to go wine tasting. From here we continue our journey to Budapest. Situated on a beautiful stretch of the Danube River, Hungary's capital consists of two parts: Buda and Pest. Buda is the older, more graceful part, with cobbled streets and Medieval buildings, whilst the latter is the modern business centre. Utilising local transport, this afternoon's guided walking tour takes in the major sites of this impressive city. We discover the Basilica of Saint Stephen and the Parliament buildings before crossing the Chain Bridge to the Castle District and Watertown. Here lie Buda's most ancient gems - Castle Hill with the Old Town, Fisherman's Bastion and the Royal Palace.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Free day in Budapest with the opportunity to visit a thermal bath

Today in Budapest is left free for you to further explore its many attractions. You may like to visit one of the city's famous thermal baths or take a boat cruise on the Danube. Another recommended attraction is Szentendre; an artist's town with a Serb minority located on the bank of the river, which can be reached by train or bus.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Drive to Bratislava, Slovakia with a walking tour on arrival

After the journey from Budapest we will spend a nice leisurely afternoon in historical Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia. It used to be the capital of the former Hungarian Kingdom and was known as 'Pressburg' and went through tough times at war with the Ottoman Empire. We will walk through the Old Town's maze of pretty Medieval streets and squares surrounded by numerous cafes and trendy bistros. We pass by Michael's Gate which is the only remaining old entrance to the city, the pretty Main Square, Neoclassical Primate's Palace and Cathedral of Saint Martin. After the walk you can continue your discovery by visiting one of the oldest castles in Slovakia or by enjoying a birds eye view from city's most famous landmark, the so-called UFO bridge, which affords views over the 'panelaky' typical communist era blocks of flats and various other fairly radical urban projects.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Train to Vienna, Austria; chance to travel back by boat

This morning we take a short train ride (about 1 hour) to Austria's capital, Vienna, where we enjoy a walking tour of the Old City with a local guide. This should offer a good initial overview of the history and the structure of the city. Sights during the walk will include the Karlsplatz, Heroes Square, Hofburg (Imperial Palace Complex), Imperial Treasury, National Library, Spanish Riding School, Vienna's ancient housing estates, Saint Stephens Church and the Opera. We won't have time to enter any of these places on our tour but afterwards you will be free to return to visit any that you wish. You can choose to return to Bratislava by train at your leisure (we will provide a return ticket) or you may prefer to book a boat trip back along the Danube River (taking approximately 2 hours).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Visit to Lednice-Valtice and wine tasting in Mikulov, Czech Republic

We start our day with a train trip (taking around 1 hour), followed by a short bus journey to the beautiful town of Mikulov. Filled with history embodied in architectural monuments, this small town offers something for everyone. Situated in the very heart of the wine region, it has plenty of walking paths with local and family run wine cellars or wine tasting centres along the way. En route to Mikulov we stop at Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's one of the largest artificial landscapes in Europe and here we will take a walk around the castle park of Chateau Lednice. In the afternoon we visit the Jewish Cemetery in Mikulov with centuries old tombs and it is the final resting place of many prominent rabbis. Following our visit we'll enjoy a wine tasting of Mikulov's local produce.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Train to Prague and explore on foot

A train journey takes us to our final destination of Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic. Our train travel today will involve a change of trains and take approximately 4.5 hours in total. Twelve centuries have adorned it with a labyrinth of old streets and wonderful palaces and bridges. We enjoy a guided city tour, which will take in some of the main highlights including the Old Town Square and City Hall, set amid antique houses and arcades. Other sites include the Astronomical Clock, Powder Tower and Prague Ghetto, which includes the Jewish Cemetery and Synagogues. We also see Charles Bridge, the most handsome bridge over the Vltava River and the area of Hradcany which contains the castle of the Bohemian Kings.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Free day in Prague with the option to visit Konopiste Castle

On our second day in Prague you are free to enjoy the city at your leisure. You may wish to head by local train to the 700 year old Konopiste Castle. The castle was once owned by Archduke Ferdinand, whose assassination in Sarajevo triggered the start of World War I. A boat trip on the Vltava River is another possibility. There are also many classical music concerts to be found. If the timing is right, you may be lucky to see a performance in one of the old atmospheric churches. There the option of visiting the Bunker Museum, where a range of Cold War relics are on display from an age when paranoia and spying was at an all-time high, which is housed in a former communist bunker underneath the city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 14 Trip ends in Prague

Your trip ends today at our hotel in Prague.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Included Activities

This trip is designed to acquaint you with the highlights of five fascinating countries in 14 days. There's so much to enjoy and a lot of ground to cover, so please be prepared for the busy nature of this enthralling and varied holiday.

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 0 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.

Poland

Lunch £: 08.00

Dinner £: 18.00 - 22.00

Slovakia

Lunch £: 07.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Hungary

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 18.00

Czech Republic

Lunch £: 8.00

Dinner £: 12.00

Austria

Lunch £: 12.00 - 16.00

Dinner £: 27.00

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.

Poland

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50 - 3.00

Water £: 0.80

Slovakia

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 1.00

Hungary

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 1.10

Czech Republic

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 1.00

Austria

Bottle of Beer £: 2.85

Water £: 1.80

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

Krakow - Visit to Auschwitz approximately £28.00; Wieliczka Salt Mine £20.00; Wawel Castle entrance fee £5.00
Budapest - Thermal Baths £10.00; Danube River cruise £15.00; Tasting of four wines and lunch £15.00
Prague - Theatre tickets £5.00 to £60.00; concert tickets £15.00 to £70.00; train to Konopiste £3.00; guided tour of Konopiste Castle £8.00; boat trip on Vltava River (including dinner) £20.00
Also allow about £20.00 for various museum and site entrance fees during the trip.

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly you should allow approximately £25.00 for tips. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Foreign Exchange

Poland

ATM Availability: Available in all major cities

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are widely accepted in all major cities

Travellers Cheques: Easily exchanged

Local Currency: Polish Zloty

Recommended Currency for Exchange: British Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are all accepted at exchange offices and banks

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

Slovakia

ATM Availability: Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival, but please be aware that some ATMs will charge 5% commission and outside of the main cities ATM's can sometimes be difficult to find

Credit Card Acceptance: At most shops and restaurants

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be difficult to exchange

Local Currency: Euro

Recommended Currency for Exchange: British Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are accepted at exchange offices and banks

Where to Exchange: Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival

Hungary

ATM Availability: All the main towns and cities have ATM's for cash withdrawal

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are widely accepted

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be exchanged in the main banks

Local Currency: Hungarian Forint

Recommended Currency for Exchange: British Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can be exchanged locally for Euros

Where to Exchange: GBP, USD and Euros cash are accepted at exchange offices

Czech Republic

ATM Availability: Most major towns

Credit Card Acceptance: Most major credit cards are accepted, but ask first

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and exchange shops

Local Currency: Euros; Czech Koruna

Recommended Currency for Exchange: British Pounds Sterling and US Dollars are readily exchanged

Where to Exchange: In most major towns. Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival. When exchanging money always keep your receipts for changing the money back

Austria

ATM Availability: All main towns and cities have ATM's for cash withdrawal.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are widely accepted.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be changed in main banks.

Local Currency: Euro

Recommended Currency for Exchange: GBP, USD and Euros cash are accepted at exchange offices and banks.

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.

Travel Aware

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
We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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

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

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

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

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

Czech Republic: Visas are not required by UK, Canadian, US, Australia, New Zealand and Japanese citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. Please note that you should carry your passport with you at all times when in Czech Republic for identification purposes as police officers may fine or arrest you if you fail to do so.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Poland

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

Slovakia

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

Hungary

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

Czech Republic

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

Austria

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Tickborne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Poland

Poland has a temperate, changeable climate. September and October are cooler and gradually become damper until late November when temperatures fall below freezing with snowfall, particularly in mountainous areas. Cold temperatures last through to March, but are tolerable. Snow can lie for up to three months in the mountains.

Slovakia

Summers are short in the mountains. July to August is the hottest period, when daytime temperatures average 20-22°C, though it may be much cooler in the early morning or late evening. During the winter, snow and ice is not uncommon, with snow generally starting in December and continuing to early February. Mountain weather is notoriously changeable and it can be cold at any time of year, so be prepared.. Early July is the best time for flowers.

Hungary

Summer days are generally quite hot and sunny with usually between 9-10 hours of sunshine daily. Winter days are usually quite windy and temperatures are regularly around or just below freezing. Night time temperatures can drop quite low in the hills whilst most rain falls in spring and early summer. Sudden rain showers can, however, occur at any time of the year.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has a temperate continental climate, with relatively hot summers and cold, cloudy and snowy winters. Most rain falls during the summer. The temperature difference between summer and winter is relatively high, due to the landlocked geographical position.

Austria

Austria has a variable climate with frequent changes of weather from day to day. Expect a contrast of warm summer days with the possibility of showers at any time.

Clothing

Mountain weather is changeable. Summers can be hot so pack cottons and light weight clothing with warmer layers for the evenings and a rain jacket, just in case. Medium weights in spring and autumn are recommended along with a windproof and waterproof jacket. If you are travelling in winter then wrap up warmly - layers work best. Warmer clothing is required for in the Tatras Mountains - a warm fleece, gloves and hat are essential throughout most of the season. You should also bring a swimming costume and towel.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, insect repellent, a sunhat, sunscreen and sunglasses and a torch just in case of emergencies. You may also find walking poles useful for the hike in the Tatras Mountains. Don't forget your camera.

Footwear

Walking boots for the Tatras Mountain trails are required. Comfortable trainers or sandals for city sightseeing and relaxing. If you're travelling in winter then bring good non-slip footwear as the cobbled streets can be slippery underfoot when they're wet or icy.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a day pack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

This trip is at a full on pace, including several train journeys with shorts walks and/or stairs between platforms, stations and accommodation, so for this reason please take care to make sure you can comfortably carry your own luggage throughout the tour.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Poland

Population: 38,186,860

Size of Country: 312,685 sq km

Major Language: Polish

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Slovakia

Population: 5,440,078

Size of Country: 49,035 sq km

Major Language: Slovak

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Hungary

Population: 9,979,000

Size of Country: 93,030 sq km

Major Language: Hungarian

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Czech Republic

Population: 10,535,811

Size of Country: 78,866 sq km

Major Language: Czech

Religion: Mainly Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Austria

Population: 8,414,638

Size of Country: 83,855 sq km

Major Language: German

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Poland

2 Pin Round

Slovakia

2 Pin Round

Hungary

2 Pin Round

Czech Republic

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.

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

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) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

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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