

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Backroads of Kerala

13 days

India - Trip code CKB



Backroads of Kerala

On this cycling tour of southern India we travel into Kerala's rural backwaters. We ride inland through a landscape of spice, tea and rubber plantations. We also travel along the waterways in wooden canoes, walk through Periyar National Park in search of wildlife and relax on Indian Ocean beaches. Staying in family houses we also enjoy warm Kerala hospitality.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Backroad cycling** - Pedal along beautiful coastlines, through tea and spice plantations and tropical forests
- ★ **Backwaters Homestay** - Stay in traditional village houses with local families
- ★ **Cochin** - Explore this fascinating colonial coastal town
- ★ **Kovalam** - Relax on the stunning beaches of the Arabian Sea

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, 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.

CYCLING GRADE:**Easy**

Suitable for anyone who enjoys easy and relatively short rides on flat or gently undulating terrain. Ideal if you simply want to explore a region by bike at a relaxed pace.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Kovalam

Arriving in Kovalam today we check in to the hotel. We take this opportunity before our cycling adventure to relax and get a feel for the country. The beautiful beaches of Kovalam are a good place to enjoy a drink from the numerous cafes overlooking the sandy beach.



Accommodation: Jasmine Palace (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Morning cycle ride, afternoon free to relax on the Arabian coast

This morning we try out our bikes and make any necessary adjustments. We start with a short and relaxing introductory ride through some of the local fisherman's villages around Kovalam. In the afternoon you may like to explore the area at leisure; walk along the sandy beaches or take on the pounding surf of the Arabian Sea. In the evening you can sit in a beachside cafe, enjoying the vista of fishing boats sailing out for their evening catch with a backdrop of the setting sun. Kerala is particularly renowned for its herbal care, and you may choose to have an Ayurvedic massage. The science of rejuvenation and purification through natural remedies, the massage uses a range of oils and herbs to treat a number of ailments. There is the option to extend your ride today up to 35 kms passing through fishing villages and along a beautiful coastal road. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres (total ascent 205 metres and descent 175 metres).



Accommodation: Jasmine Palace (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Drive to Veli Lagoon; visit Anjengo Fort and cycle to Varkala

After breakfast we transfer by bus to Veli, from where we cycle 20 km to the estuary. The lagoon is a large lake separated from the ocean by the narrowest of sandbar spits, where fisherman can be seen working on their boats and nets, or poling across the lake with sand-filled barges. We visit the fishing village of Anjuthengu, where we stop to visit Anjengo Fort, built by the British East India Company in the 17th century and the first British trading post on the Malabar coast. After our visit we carry on towards Varkala, a temple town renowned throughout the region as a pilgrimage centre for the millions of Hindus who come here to worship at the ancient Janardhana Swamy Temple. Nowadays Varkala has grown into Kerala's most popular backpacker hangout with people attracted to the naturally beautiful cliff-top setting and relaxed vibe. On arrival there should be time to relax on the beaches of the Arabian coast, wander amongst the palms and perhaps enjoy a stunning sunset before sitting down to a well-earned dinner in one of the local restaurants. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres (total ascent 308 metres and descent 285 metres).



Accommodation: Deshadan Cliff and Beach Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle through traditional Keralan villages to Kollam

This morning's ride is alongside palm fringed shores and beautiful blue lagoons with the chance to spend a little time on Kollam beach. On the way we can see fisherman's village which was hit by the Tsunami a few years ago. Situated on the edge of the Ashtamundi Lake, Kollam is surrounded by coconut palms and cashew tree plantations, indeed the town is the centre of the cashew industry here. Its old wooden houses are typical of the Keralan style and its situation at the southern end of the backwaters makes it an ideal spot from which to explore the network of canals and lagoons. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres (total ascent 288 metres and descent 312 metres)



Accommodation: Hotel Regant Lake Palace (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Boat trip along Backwaters; cycle to Mancombu

After a short drive on highway we get back on the bikes and the back roads, cycle further south along coastal roads shaded by palm trees for about 15kms. We cross the river by ferry that acts as a water taxi for the locals with their motorbikes or bicycles. Our ride continues for about 22km which completes today's cycling at the Manarasala Snake Temple, located close to the settlement of Thottapally. On the way, travelling through villages we may have the chance to see some traditional coir-making skills (the fibres from the outer husk of the coconut, which is used to make rope and mats), as well as fishing. After visiting the temple we board in

bus again for a short drive to Thotappally where we leave our bus and have a traditional lunch cooked in a family run restaurant and served on a banana leaf. We then spend the afternoon on a relaxing exploration through the backwaters by motor launch that leads us to our homestay. The journey should take around 3 hours and is the ideal way to explore these waterways, which cover an area of some 1900 square kilometres. The boats are the lifeline for the villages, acting as taxis, mail delivery and even the harvest is carried in boats. You may see great pyramids of coconuts or even the odd buffalo being carried along in this time honoured fashion. Our boat trips ends and we proceed to our accommodation, in the district of the ancient trading town of Alleppey. We stay tonight at traditional rural village homes set in lush countryside. Staying with a local family allows us to experience the typical lifestyle and cuisine of Kerala. Most houses have guest rooms within the main home, each with a private guest bathroom. A few homes have a separate guest annexe. The rooms are simply furnished, with twin or double beds. We stay tonight at traditional rural village homes set in lush countryside. Staying with a local family allows us to experience the typical lifestyle and cuisine of Kerala. Most houses have guest rooms within the main home, each with a private guest bathroom. A few homes have a separate guest annexe. The rooms are simply furnished, with twin or double beds. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 39 kilometres (total ascent 295 metres and descent 295 metres).



Accommodation: Gaaby World Homestay (or similar)



Simple Homestay



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Morning cycling through Backwaters' villages; sunset canoe trip

Today we spend the morning exploring our immediate surroundings. Cycling through the villages of these myriad backwaters we get plenty of opportunity to interact with the locals, visit churches and temples, before returning to take a sunset or moonlit cruise by canoe. Crafted out of Anjili wood, we take to the waters whilst locals sing traditional songs as they row. The industrious villagers survive on narrow spits of land, keeping cows, pigs, chickens and cultivating vegetable gardens. Even the shells from the fresh water mussels are burnt to make building lime, and coir is used for just about everything. The gardens are generally well tended often with brightly coloured flowers, such as hibiscus, that contrast sharply with the tropical greenery. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (total ascent 227 metres and descent 227 metres).



Accommodation: Gaaby World Homestay (or similar)



Simple Homestay



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Drive and cycle to Erattupetta; Planters Homestay

Leaving the beautiful backwaters behind we use a combination of engine and pedal power to reach today's destination; Erattupetta. This area is famous for its rubber plantations which date back to the early 19th century. The slightly cooler climate is a welcome change from the lower levels as we cycle along rolling hills in the shade of the rubber trees. We stay with a local family, at their homestay. Watch our host to cook up a traditional curry, walk through the gardens or take a swim in natural rock pools. Planters Homestay is a spacious and comfortable two storey family mansion house, built over 50 years ago. It has bright and airy guest rooms, all en-suite. Some, but not all rooms have air conditioning. The house is surrounded by lush gardens with rubber and tropical fruit trees plus palms and tall teaks and lots of bird life. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres (total ascent 628 metres and descent 636 metres).



Accommodation: Planters Homestay (or similar)



Simple Homestay



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Optional cycle rides available

This morning we take a stroll through a local plantation and have the chance to learn about the numerous fruits and medicinal plants. Depending on the season, we may bathe in rock pools before an optional visit to see Poonjar Palace, a 900 year old residency of the Maharajah and his family which is now mostly abandoned and can only be viewed from the outside. We can also visit the local town. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 9 kilometres (total ascent 152 metres and descent 258 metres). There is also the option to cycle 32km if you would like more of a challenge.



Accommodation: Planters Homestay (or similar)



Simple Homestay



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - Drive and cycle to Thekkady; visit plantations and tea factory

Taking the meandering roads through the high ranges today we will drive some of the steeper sections of road, before transferring to two wheels to continue our journey to Thekkady. Our cycle route is through a region called Wagamon where the cooler climate helps you through the seemingly endless tea plantations and rolling hills. Our route takes us past many rubber plantations, and through varied spice gardens. Further on, we may have the opportunity to meet local tea pickers in the plantations to help get a feel for how people live in this beautiful region before arriving at our hotel. Please note the last 10km of today's ride is on a busy road. Thekkady is the spice hub of Kerala and the town has many spice shops. The beautiful aroma in the air lets you know why this region is called the cardamom hills. Today we will also make a visit to the Connemara Tea Factory. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 36 kilometres (total ascent 1176 metres and descent 1506 metres).



Accommodation: Grand Thekkady (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Forest walk, explore Thekkady - Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady is one of 16 Project Tiger Reserves in India, with about 40 tigers living in the 777 sq km park, but as they are solitary creatures, the chances of seeing them are very slim. This morning we take a forest walk in search of other wildlife such as the star tortoise, porcupine, elephants Indian Bison, flying squirrel and numerous birds. The park itself is made up of a variety of habitats; open grasslands, deciduous, semi-evergreen and tropical forest - all of which host different animal species. The ecosystem of the tropical evergreen jungle is very interesting - the trees grow up to 40m, and the dense canopy above allows in limited sunlight. At ground level, there are abundant ferns, orchids and airplants - plants that need little light to survive. No cycling today.



Accommodation: Grand Thekkady (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Great cycle descent to Kuttikanam, drive to Kochi

This morning we have a very beautiful route to cycle, down the winding roads of Kuttikanam where you can enjoy a freewheel ride of nearly 20 kms. We continue our journey by bus (3 hours) to the bustling port of Kochi, with its beautiful natural harbor which earned it the title 'Queen of the Arabian Sea'. As well as being the oldest European settlement in India, with its mix of English, Dutch and Portuguese influences, Kochi is also home to the famous Kathakali dancers. Its origins came from traditional temple rituals and from an art form known as Koodiyattam. The dancers can take up to three hours painting their faces - the features are heavily emphasised as it is the facial expressions and co-ordinated eye movements which are important in the dance. The dances usually portray events from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, great Indian epics. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (total ascent 540 metres and descent 1524 metres).



Accommodation: Hotel Fort Queen (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Tour of Kochi by cycle; evening boat cruise

Today we cycle through the old town of Fort Cochin. As you might expect Kochi was founded on trade, originally with the arrival of the Chinese, Arabs and Phoenicians in the second millennium BC. Its links to Europe strengthened in the 16th century, with the arrival of the Portuguese, closely followed by the Dutch and the English. This has produced an eclectic mix of styles and influences. You can find both the oldest European church and the oldest synagogue in India amongst its winding streets and elsewhere Chinese fishing nets vie for space alongside Portuguese houses and Dutch palaces. After spending the day touring the town we take a sunset cruise around the surrounding islands. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 8 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel Fort Queen (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Tour ends Kochi

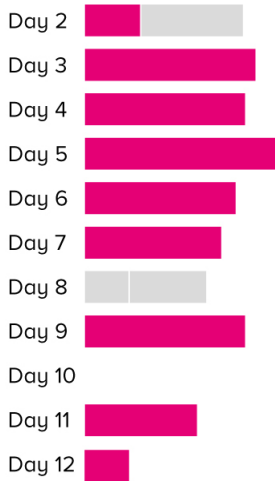
The tour ends in Kochi this morning. Breakfast may be available at the hotel depending on your time of departure



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



Optional Rides

General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 273 km over ten days (an average of 27 km per day) with further optional rides available. We avoid main roads where possible and cycle mainly on tarmac back roads (90%) and some gravel paths (10%). A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We have graded the route as easy.

Bike included

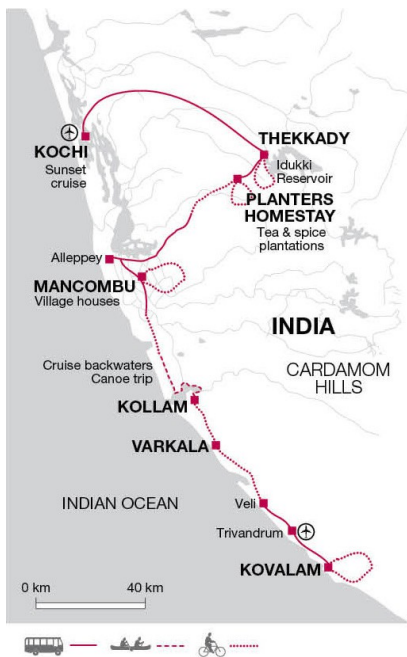
21 or 24 gear Trek or Merida mountain bikes with lockable front suspension

Bike information

Your included bike is either a 24 or 27 gear Trek 3700 mountain bike with front suspension or 3 Merida matts-20D and 40D and will be the correct frame size for your height. A 2.5 litre handlebar bag and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Easy



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 12
Lunch: 3
Dinner: 4



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Boat



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle
guide
Assistant Cycle Guide
Bike Mechanic
Boat Crew
Driver(s)



Accommodation

4 nights simple homestay
8 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

India Holidays & Tours

Climate

There is considerable variation between the different regions of India but, in general, the climate is tropical. Summer temperatures on the plains are very hot, but cooled by the South-West Monsoon, which lasts from June- September. During these months it can be very wet and therefore very humid. At altitude, temperatures can become quite cool at night even in the summer and may drop below freezing between December and February so warm clothing is necessary. In the winter, northern and mid India can be very cool, with cold evenings, so warm clothing, including plenty of layers, are essential. The south of India remains warm and sunny during the winter months.

Time difference to GMT

+5

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Catholicism, Hindu, Islam and Sikhism

Language

Hindi and English.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Kochi - Kathakali dancing GBP 6.50

Clothing

Bear in mind that the area is tropical with high humidity. Lightweights are needed all year round with some warmer clothes (ie fleece and long trousers) for the cooler winter evenings (November to March) in Wagamon. When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycling gloves are strongly recommended as they will protect you from sunburn and may also help protect your hands if you fall. Bring a swimming costume for the beaches. Whilst cycling in shorts is acceptable and expected, please note that for visits to temples and city sightseeing, tight fitting sleeveless t-shirts, brief or tight shorts and miniskirts should be avoided, since they attract unwelcome attention.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike, particularly for walking in the national park and around Wagamon.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Tipping

Explore leader

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

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. Accordingly you should allow approx. GBP 45 for gratuities for local staff.

Country Information

India Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

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.

Lunch price
£6

Dinner price
£8

Beer price
£1.4

Water price
£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Indian Rupee Recently new 500, 1000 and 2000 rupee notes have been bought in to circulation and as the old notes are no longer accepted there have been some cash flow issues. You don't need to worry about being given old notes as it's very easy to tell the difference, the new notes are pristine in comparison with most Indian money which is fairly tatty.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP/US\$ are the best currency to change into local currency.

Where To Exchange

The Indian rupee is a restricted currency and it is best not to obtain in the UK as rates are very poor. You can either change money at the airport on arrival or in major towns during the tour. Your Tour Leader will advise you on the best places in each town. Both GBP and USD cash are easy to exchange at the airport and at hotels however you will be restricted to changing £60 cash at a time and it's not possible to change money at these locations using a credit or debit card.

ATM Availability

ATMs are available in most large cities in India but they are very limited elsewhere so please do not rely on this.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very rarely, only in the larger outlets.

Travellers Cheques

Opportunities to exchange are limited.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Boat

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

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. Gabby World Homestay, Mancombu - stay at traditional community based and eco-friendly, rural village homes set in lush countryside. Staying with a local family allows us to experience the typical lifestyle and cuisine of Kerala. Most houses have guest rooms within the main home, each with a private guest bathroom (not always en-suite). A few houses have a separate guest annexe. The rooms are simply furnished, with twin or double beds. Towels and bedding are provided. Planters Homestay, Near Wagamon - This is a spacious and comfortable two storey family mansion house, built over 50 years ago and located in a small rural village. It has bright and airy guest rooms, all en-suite. Some, but not all rooms have air conditioning. The house is surrounded by lush gardens with rubber and tropical fruit trees plus palms and tall teaks and lots of bird life. Please be advised that accommodation in India is as varied as the country itself. On our tours we stay in a mix of hotels, heritage properties and homestays. Standards do not equate to standards in the UK and it's best to approach each type of accommodation with an open mind. Service can be slow in places especially when travelling with a group. For the most part hotels do not have heating so in the winter months it can be chilly and if you feel the cold you may wish to ask for extra blankets. Hot water is not always available 24 hours a day in some of the smaller properties, and with a group staying you might find if you are showering last you may miss out on the hottest water.

Essential information

FCO Advice

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 click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

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.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

India: Holders of passports endorsed 'British citizen' may be eligible for the e-Tourist Visa to enter India. The visa can be applied for through the official Indian government visa website only - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>. Please check all eligibility criteria that can be found on the website but important points are listed below - You must be arriving into one of 24 selected entry points which can be found via the official Indian Government website link above. However, you can exit from any of the authorised immigration check posts in India. Passports must have at least 6 months validity from the date of arrival in India and at least two blank pages for stamping. The visa application will take approximately 4 days to process. It is valid for 60 days from the date of arrival in to India, and double entry is permitted on the e-Tourist visa. You can only obtain 2 e-visas for India in a calendar year. The visa costs \$75. Biometric data will be collected on arrival in India. Whilst the online form offers a relatively quick way to apply for a visa, a number of applicants have reported difficulty in completing the form. Travcour will complete the on-line visa on your behalf for a fee of £25 + the visa cost. Please contact them directly if you wish to take up this service. If you are not eligible for the e-Tourist Visa, please refer to VFS Global to apply for your Indian visa - http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/how_to_apply.html. 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.

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.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

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 below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

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 [click here](#)

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.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

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 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.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider.
