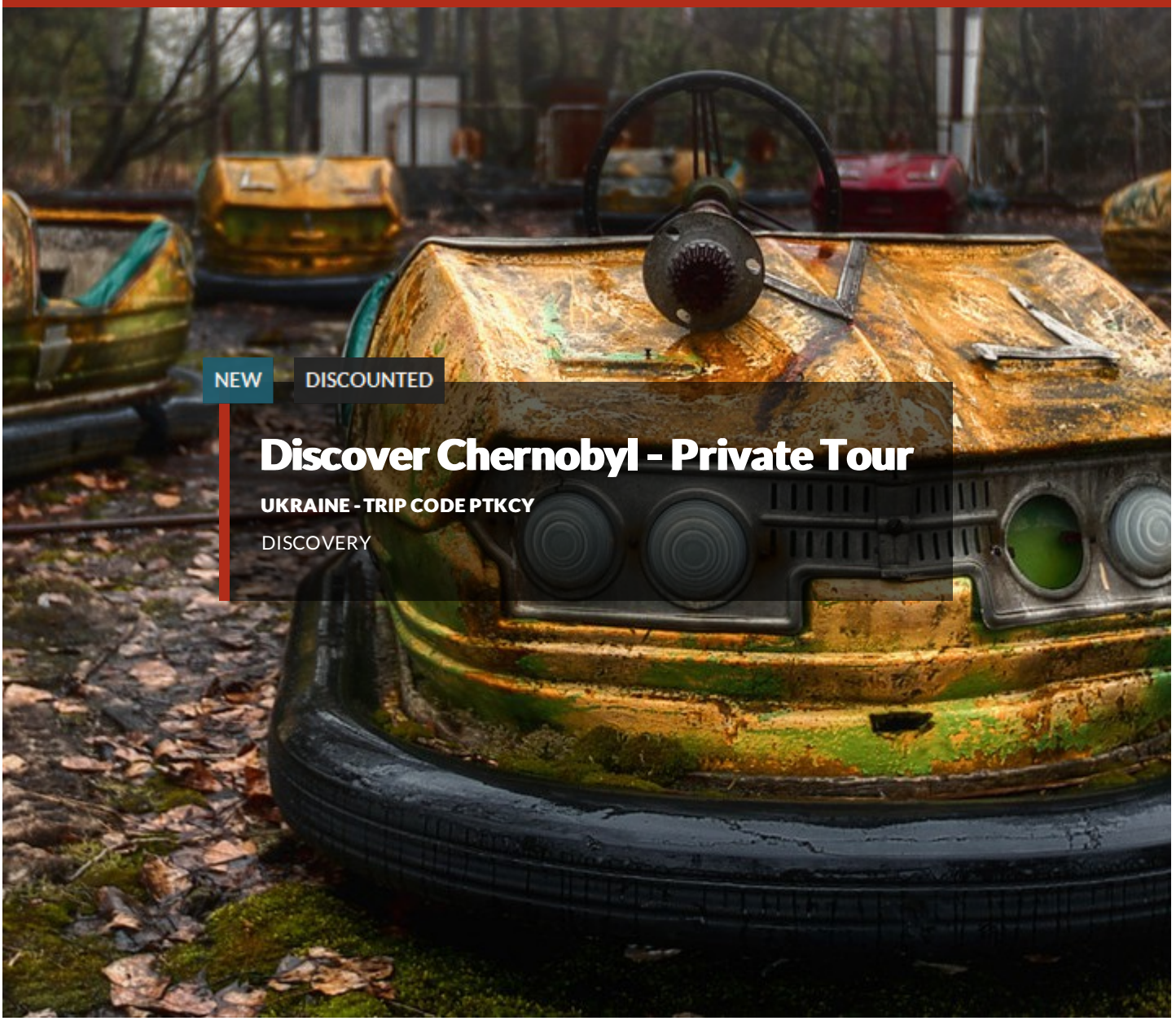
EXPLORE!

Book with confidence



Why book this trip?

Spend an exciting long weekend like no other, exploring the incredible abandoned sites reclaimed by nature on tour of Chernobyl's Exclusion Zone, which was created when the Number 4 reactor exploded back in 1986.

- **Chernobyl tour** - Discover the ghost town of Pripyat, the Red Forest, and the 'New Safe Confinement' structure around Reactor 4
- **Kyiv** - Walking tour of the city's highlights including Mother Motherland and the Chernobyl Museum
- **Lavra Reserve** - Explore this ornately decorated monastic complex best known for its expansive catacombs

- **Reactor visit optional** - As part of your trip, you can choose to take a special tour inside the nuclear power station at Chernobyl

INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 4
Lunch: 2
Dinner: 1

TRIP STAFF
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)

TRANSPORT
Car
Train

ACCOMMODATION
3 nights comfortable hotel
1 nights simple hotel

TRIP PACE:
Full on

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip begins in Kyiv

Your exciting and unique long weekend begins in Ukraine's capital city, Kyiv. You will be met on arrival at Kyiv's International Airport (KBP) by a local guide, and driven to your centrally-located hotel. There are no activities planned today, so feel free to arrive in Kyiv at any time. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than three weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.

On this long weekend we have packed in as many highlights of Kyiv as we can, but there is very little free time in the city, so if you wish to spend some time discovering more on your own, we would recommend extending your stay for a night or two. If you choose to do this, we'd suggest visiting the Museum of the Great Patriotic War, which is one of the largest in Ukraine and tells the story of the German-Soviet War in iconic and Brutalist style. It has over 300,000 items on display and memorials spread over 25 acres. It's here that the Mother Motherland statue is located and although we will see this from a distance during our city tour tomorrow, you might like to get up close and go up to the observation platform.

Please note that many of Kyiv's museums close on a Monday or Tuesday, so if you wish to visit a particular attraction then please check that it is open on the day you want to visit.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Rus (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Kyiv walking tour, Chernobyl Museum and the Lavra Reserve

It's a busy day today, with the aim of exploring a selection of Kyiv's many historic sights and to get a feel for this great city. Start with a guided walking tour of Kyiv, situated on the banks of the River Dnipro. This ancient city has been inhabited for almost 2000 years and it was once the capital of the Kyivan Rus State, from which all later Russian states were descended. Although Ukrainian nationalism is stronger than ever, you will still hear Russian spoken here today. See the onion-domed exterior of Santa Sophia Cathedral, the Golden Gate which was once the main entrance to the city, Saint Andrews Baroque church and Mother Motherland, a 100 metre high statue to honour the heroes of the Soviet Union. A visit the Chernobyl Museum will also be the perfect introduction to the site before your journey there tomorrow. Exhibits are designed to teach us of the scope of the nuclear disaster and to ensure that the lessons learnt from this terrible accident aren't forgotten.

This afternoon, take the metro to Arsenalna, the deepest station in the world. Continuing on by metro to the Lavra Historical and Cultural Reserve, your guide will leave you and you'll be picked up by one of the Lavra Museum's experienced guides. Visit the remarkable 'Monastery of the Caves' founded in AD 1051, where the labyrinths provide all the natural conditions needed for mummification, and take some free time after the tour to explore either the Museum of Miniatures or the Museum Of Historical Treasures and the Holy Trinity Church.

After the visit, make your own way back into central Kyiv by metro or by taxi and spend the evening relaxing and having dinner.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Rus (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Guided tour in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

Set off this morning to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, about two hours' drive from the city and close to the Belarusian border. Back on the 26th April 1986 the Number 4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl exploded with catastrophic consequences. Since then an Exclusion Zone has been in place around the plant and nature has reclaimed the towns and vehicles left within this. The accident was the result of a flawed Soviet reactor, operated by inadequately trained staff that had been ordered to carry out a poorly planned test.

There were four reactors and a further two being constructed when Reactor 4 exploded twice, killing two workers and releasing at least 5% of its radioactive core into the atmosphere. A further 28 fire fighters died of radiation poisoning following the accident. At the time this was the largest uncontrolled radioactive release recorded.

The city of Pripyat was built three kilometres from the site to house the plant's workers and their families and, at the time, it had 49,000 inhabitants. Within a 30 kilometre radius of the power plant, there was a population of up to 135,000 people. All were evacuated after the accident and most of these towns and villages including Pripyat are now ghost towns.

Surprisingly after the accident the other reactors at Chernobyl were restarted. Their safety was improved but due to energy shortages the last reactor wasn't turned off until December 2000. In 2011 Chernobyl was declared safe enough to be recognised as a tourist attraction.

Reactor 4 was enclosed in a large concrete shelter which was erected quickly after the incident and contained around 200 tonnes of highly radioactive material. The old shelter only had a shelf life of 30 years and at the end of 2016 a huge 'New Safe Confinement' structure was built on the site and moved into place over the old shelter. It is the world's largest movable structure and inside a team of robotic cranes is taking the old shelter and radioactive core apart in an effort to make the area safe again.

Today, explore Pripyat with a local guide, visiting the key sites of the town including an elementary school, fire station, hospital and even an overground fairground. Your guide will also take you to see the Red Forest and the structure around Reactor 4. The sites seen in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone may vary depending on local conditions and restrictions, but you'll see the most possible during your two days spent here.

This evening stay within the Exclusion Zone in a small hotel within the town of Chernobyl. The bedrooms are simply decorated and there are two bathrooms shared between every five bedrooms. There is a restaurant and bar where you will enjoy a traditional Ukrainian meal this evening.

Please note that it is essential that you provide us with the correct passport information at the time of booking and that you check this is accurate on your booking confirmation/the online customer information gateway, as this will be required in order to request the permissions needed to enter the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Corrections and amendments may incur additional charges at your own expense or result in you being denied entrance to the Exclusion Zone. If you intend to renew your passport please let us know at the point of booking and ensure that you have your new passport no later than 10 weeks prior to travel. In order to be permitted to enter the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone and to travel on this holiday you must be at least 18 years old.

ACCOMMODATION:
Desyatka Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Simple Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 4 - Further explorations of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

Discover the rest of Pripyat, including the swimming pool, music school and the secret Soviet Duga Radar Facility. The radar military base was named Chernobyl 2 and didn't appear on any civilian maps and the trees were strategically planted to block the view from the neighbouring towns. There are two radars here that were constructed as part of a Soviet early missile detection system. The bigger of the two is almost 500 metres long and around 150 metres high. Also on the site are an abandoned fire station, small power plant, hospital and apartment buildings where the military personnel stationed here and their families would have lived.

You might get the chance to speak with people still living within the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, who are known as self-settlers. A year after the accident over one thousand people returned to their homes and despite efforts from the authorities they kept returning until eventually being allowed to stay and they have been living off grid ever since. Many of the people who choose to return were retired at the time and since it has been over 30 years since the disaster many of these people have sadly now passed away, so many of the towns and villages in the Exclusion Zone now only have one or two people living there.

Late this afternoon, drive back to Kyiv for your final free evening in the city.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Rus (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 5 - Trip ends in Kyiv

Your trip ends today, and you will be taken to the airport to meet your international flight. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Kyiv at any time. If your flight is departing later in

the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel.

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Ukraine

Climate

Ukraine has a temperate continental climate. Summers in are generally hot, sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures normally between 18 to 25°C. In fact, the early autumn period is often compared with an Indian summer, dry and sunny. Winters are cold and snowy with temperatures averaging between -8 to -12°C. The wettest area in Ukraine is the Carpathian Mountains where it can rain at any time of year.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Orthodox Christian	Ukrainian

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

July and August are the hottest months and lightweight cotton clothing is best. During spring and autumn temperatures can be lower or drop during the evenings and there is also a stronger possibility of rain, so pack layers. Rainwear may be needed at any time of year. A warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings. During winter you should be prepared for snow and very cold temperatures, so it's advisable to dress in warm layers of breathable fabrics. You'll need waterproofs and plenty of warm clothing including a warm waterproof jacket (such as a ski jacket), jumper, fleece, gaiters or ski trousers, thick socks (including spare pairs in case your feet get wet) and thermal underwear.

All visitors to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone must wear full length trousers (not shorts or skirts) and long-sleeve shirts/jackets and please avoid clothing with lots of zips or metal poppers. It's advisable to wash your clothes and to shower after your visit. We also recommend that you take old clothes that can be easily washed or even thrown away if necessary and a plastic bag to keep them separate from the rest of your clothing following the visit. Upon leaving the Exclusion Zone you will go through a monitor to check the radiation level on you, occasionally this reading may come back too high, and in which case, you may have to leave an item of clothing behind, as you won't be able to take anything that gives too high a reading outside of the zone.

On our reactor visit departure dates that go inside the nuclear power station buildings, as an additional precaution, you will be given protective clothing including a robe, shoe covers, gloves and a hat to be worn over your own clothes.

Footwear

We recommend taking comfortable walking shoes for exploring and trainers or sandals for relaxing.

In the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone you must wear closed toed shoes (not sandals or flip flops). We recommend using older shoes that can be easily washed or thrown away if necessary. In the Exclusion Zone there is often broken glass on the floor, so it is important to have shoes with sturdy tread. In winter in both Chernobyl and Kiev, snow and ice are both likely, so you should factor this in to your packing.

You may also want to bring a pair of slippers for your stay at the Chernobyl Hotel for going to and from the bathroom at night.

Luggage

20Kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend that you take one main piece of baggage and a day pack, which can also double as an overnight bag to take to the Exclusion Zone.

Equipment

We advise taking a water bottle with you, and sun glasses, sunscreen and a sun hat are all essential particularly during summer. An umbrella may also be useful at anytime of year and gloves, a woolly hat and scarf if you are travelling in autumn or winter.

Whilst in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone we recommend carrying hand sanitiser, toilet roll and mosquito spray. We would also recommend buying any bottled water required before entering the Exclusion Zone or carrying a Water to Go filter bottle with you. Please remember that you must keep your passport with you at all times, so you may find keeping it in a sealed dry bag useful. For the overnight stay in Chernobyl it is best to take a small overnight bag with you and to leave your main bag padlocked in the luggage storage facility at our hotel in Kyiv.

At Chernobyl there are great photographic opportunities - so it's highly recommended to bring your camera and good zoom lense if you have one. You can also get some wonderful video footage, so something like a Go Pro can be very useful. Tripods are fine to use within the Exclusion Zone. If you're travelling in winter then you may find glove liners helpful for when you take gloves off to take photos as yours hands can get very cold very quickly. Also in winter spare camera batteries are advisable, as they tend to run out of life quicker in the cold.

At the Chernobyl hotel the doors will be locked at around 10.30pm and you are not permitted to venture out into the Exclusion Zone without a guide. The television service here includes no English speaking channels, so you might like to bring a tablet computer, electronic reading device, MP3 player or pack of playing cards with you for evening entertainment. It's also advisable to bring any drinks or snacks you

want with you from Kyiv. There is a bar at the hotel in Chernobyl but it shuts at about 10pm.

During autumn and winter especially, the evenings can be cold and the heating at the hotel in Chernobyl is limited, so we'd recommend bringing warm nightwear and perhaps a blanket and hot water bottle.

In case of emergency we also recommend that you carry a torch with spare batteries and sufficient medical supplies including a first aid kit and several days extra supply of any specific prescription medications that you require.

Tipping

Local crew
Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. We recommend an amount of approximately 8-10% for restaurant staff and taxi drivers, 5 - 15 Euros for local guides (depending on whether they give a half-day or a full-day tour), and in Chernobyl guides usually receive approximately 20-50 Euros for their two-day service, depending on the number of people they are guiding.

Ukraine

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£5.5	£10-15	£1.3	£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Hryvnia

Recommended Currency For Exchange
Pound Sterling, US Dollars (USD) and Euro cash can all be exchanged for the local currency. You can only leave Ukraine with a maximum of USD 10,000. Anything over this amount will be confiscated. If you are taking Pound Sterling, please note that currency exchange offices in Ukraine will only accept the new plastic notes. Banks will still accept the paper notes but typically provide a lower exchange rate.

Where To Exchange
Most major towns and cities - your Explore Leader will advise you on arrival. Only exchange money at reputable places like banks, ATM's and official Forex Offices.

ATM Availability
Major towns and cities have ATM's for cash withdrawal.

Credit Card Acceptance
In the main towns and cities credit cards are accepted in most restaurants, hotels and larger shops.

Travellers Cheques
Travellers cheques are very difficult to change in the Ukraine.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Car, Train

Accommodation notes

In Kyiv, our comfortable 3* hotel is centrally located in the city's tourist and business district.

In the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, you will spend one night at a simple hotel with two bathrooms shared between every five bedrooms. Bathrooms are equipped with a sink, shower and toilet. Bedrooms are simply decorated. The food served here will be traditional Ukrainian cuisine and there is a bar within the restaurant. In the evening the doors of the hotel will be locked at around 22.30 and you are not permitted to venture out into the Exclusion Zone without the guide. The television service here includes no English speaking channels, so you might like to bring a tablet computer, electronic reading device, MP3 player or pack of playing cards with you for evening entertainment.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

UK, Canadian and US citizens do not require a visa for the Ukraine. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. In addition you will be required to carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times in Ukraine for ID purposes.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

It is also essential that you provide Explore with the correct passport information at the time of booking, as this will be required in order to request the permissions needed to enter the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Corrections and amendments may incur additional charges or result in your permissions not being granted, so please double check that the information we have for you is up-to-date and correct. This includes your passport number, full name as per passport (including middle names) and date of birth. If you intend to renew your passport please let Explore know at the point of booking and ensure that you have your new passport no later than 10 weeks prior to travel.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Included activities

Whilst in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone there are a number of rules in place to ensure your safety and it's very important that you follow all instructions given to you by your local guide. Every visitor must have a valid passport with them at all times and in order to be permitted entry to the Exclusion Zone you must be at least 18 years old. This restriction is due to the fact that the human body is still growing below this age and it's therefore more vulnerable to the effects of radiation.

During the two days spent in the Exclusion Zone you'll receive a dose of radiation comparable to a small

dose from an X-ray scan or to several hours spent in an airplane at altitude. In numbers, you will receive 5-7 micro Sieverts of gamma radiation, which is a non-harmful dose of radiation. To put this into context most nuclear power plants around the world set a safety limit for their employees of 50-100 micro Sieverts per day.

Whilst in the Exclusion Zone all meals will be included to ensure they're from a safe source. You are not allowed to smoke, eat or drink in open spaces whilst here. You are not allowed to eat any berries or drink water from open sources such as wells (tap water or bottled water is fine).

In the Exclusion Zone you are allowed to take photographs and videos of everything and can take tripods with you. The only exceptions are restrictions at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and the guarded checkpoints. You are allowed to take pictures and video in front of Reactor Number 4 from a safe distance. Your guide will advise us of any places where photos aren't permitted.

We've been notified that the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone is occasionally being closed to tourists in order to be used as a training area by the Ukrainian military. Whilst this has only occurred three times in the past three months and hasn't yet affected any of our departures, we felt it was important to notify you of the small possibility that this could happen on your trip.

In the majority of cases we will be notified two months in advance by the military of their intent to close off the Exclusion Zone. If we know this far in advance then we will inform you, in order to change the date of your trip or to alter the itinerary, so that we are still able to visit the site. Should you decide that you're no longer be able to travel on an alternative date, then you'll be entitled to cancel your trip and receive a full refund of the monies paid to Explore, though we hope that you will not find this necessary.

Should the military not notify us of their intent to close the area within a reasonable time frame for us to amend your itinerary as per above - then we'll stay in Kyiv for an additional night rather than overnighting in the hotel in Chernobyl. During the two days that you'd normally be in the Exclusion Zone, as an alternative we'll go to visit the Strategic Missile Force Museum at Pervomaysk. Here you'll take a guided tour of this decommissioned nuclear weapon launch site where you can see the R-36M2 'Governor' bomb and have the opportunity to descend down to the original control room - the Unified Command Post. You'll also visit the Mezhyhirya Residence Museum - the lavish property where Ukraine's controversial former president, Yanukovych resided before the 2014 uprising. It now houses the Museum of Corruption.

Ukraine

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against hepatitis A and diphtheria. Check that your polio and tetanus vaccinations are up-to-date before travel. The UK Foreign Office currently recommends that you should consider whether to immunise against tickborne encephalitis and rabies. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. 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.

Additional Information

Tour Staff

Unlike our group tours our private journeys do not have a Tour Leader. However, you are still in safe hands as we work closely with our expert local suppliers on the planning and organisation of your holiday to ensure that you have a fantastic time. You'll be met on arrival in Kyiv by one of our english-speaking local guides, who will go through your holiday details and answer any questions you may have. The guides in Kyiv and Chernobyl are excellent, and will help to bring the destination to life. At times you may travel unaccompanied, for example on the metro in Kyiv, but you will have all the information that you need to explore and there is always the reassurance that you have someone on hand with our 24/7 emergency contact number.

Reviews

PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE	AIRPORT TRANSFERS