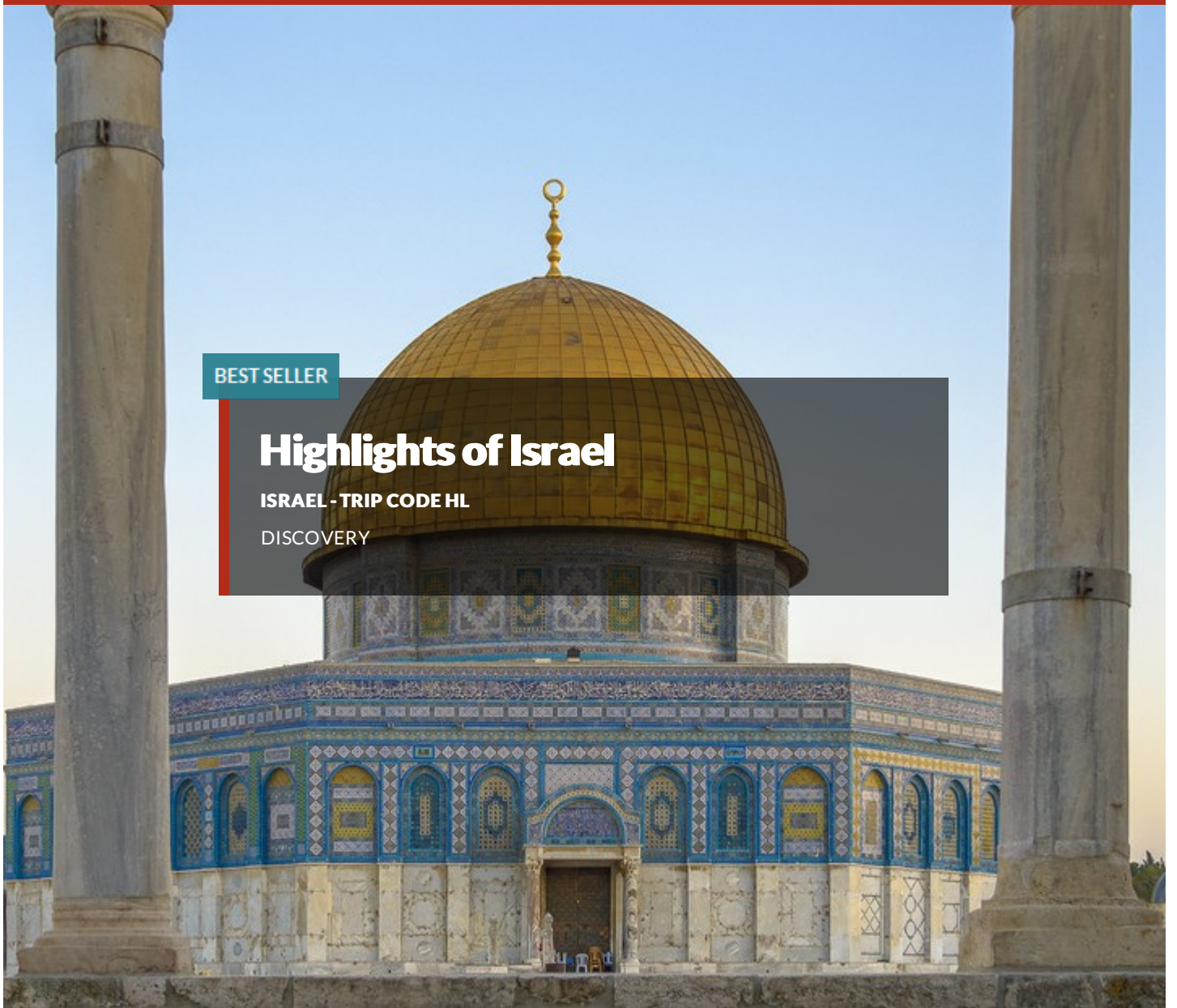


EXPLORE!

Book with confidence



BEST SELLER

Highlights of Israel

ISRAEL - TRIP CODE HL

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Explore the Holy Land's greatest religious sites and inspiring landscapes; roam through the historical streets of Jerusalem and dip in the saline waters of the Dead Sea at the lowest point on earth. Spend a night under the stars in a traditional Bedouin-style desert camp before ascending Masada's Sky Fortress at sunrise, and taste delicious Middle Eastern cuisine as you travel through the country.

- **Tel Aviv** - Discover the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Israel's second city on the coast of the Mediterranean
- **Biblical Landscapes** - See world famous holy sites including the Sea of Galilee, Jericho and Qumran
- **Bethlehem** - Visit the biblical birthplace of Jesus Christ and the Church of the Nativity



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 3



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat



ACCOMMODATION
4 nights
comfortable hotel
2 nights
comfortable
kibbutz
1 nights simple
tented camp



TRIP PACE:
Full on



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Tel Aviv

Arrive in Tel Aviv.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Tel Aviv at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Ben Gurion Airport (TLV), which is around 30 minutes' drive. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If you arrive early today you can spend some time exploring the city that sits proudly on a 14km stretch of beach along the Mediterranean Sea, and the city is informally broken into two distinct areas; the modern city with skyscrapers, bars and a wide beach boulevard and then the historic port city of Jaffa featuring narrow walkways and many little places to try delicious hummus. A walk between the ancient and modern is really enjoyable along the beach paths.



ACCOMMODATION:
Lighthouse Hotel by Browns Hotels (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Tel Aviv city tour, then explore Old Jaffa, Caesarea and Haifa

Israel's second largest city, Tel Aviv was originally founded at the beginning of the 20th century on the outskirts of the old port city of Jaffa but as Tel Aviv has grown Jaffa has immersed into the city boundaries too, creating a city with wonderful contrast. After breakfast, we'll start our walking tour of Tel Aviv to see examples of the impressive European-influenced 1930s architecture, the fashionable neighbourhood of Neve Tzedek and the charming, ancient port area of Jaffa.

Around mid-morning we'll travel to the archaeological park of Caesarea that stands about one hour outside of the city and boasts Roman ruins including an amphitheatre, pillars and frescoes dating back some 2,000 years. We travel along Israel's northern coast and journey to the historic city of Haifa, where we take in the panoramic views from the slopes of Mount Carmel and see the Bahai Gardens.

Finally late this afternoon we will make our way to Kibbutz Degania Bet about 90 minutes north-east, near to the Sea of Galilee. In Israel today kibbutzim communities have evolved from when they originally began in the early 1900s, however, the values of fair pay, shared commodities and everyone being equal remain. There are strict rules on who can join a kibbutz community and many kibbutz have their own speciality when it comes to making money such as agriculture, innovation or technology. This evening, we'll eat in the communal dining hall with the residents.



ACCOMMODATION:
Kibbutz Degania Bet (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Kibbutz



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



DAY 3 - Visit Sea of Galilee and holy places of Capernaum; afternoon tour of Nazareth

Today we visit the Evangelical Triangle to the north of the Sea of Galilee, made up of three key religious sites - Tabgha, Capernaum and Mount Beatitudes. We'll spend around 30 minutes at Tabgha, where it is said one of the most significant events of the New Testament took place - the feeding of the 5,000. We will visit the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves, the Church of the Primacy of St Peter before visiting the Mount Beatitudes. We'll also spend a short while in Capernaum, the birthplace of St. Peter and the site where it is believed Jesus first started his ministry. Later this morning, we'll take a boat trip out onto the waters of the Sea of Galilee. The exact running order of this morning will be decided by our leader on the day depending on weather and visitor numbers to ensure the best possible experience.

This afternoon we will travel to Nazareth, Israel's largest Arab city. Sprawling down into the valley, the city is densely populated and feels a country away from Tel Aviv. The population is majority Arab, the city is humming with life on the Sabbath unlike many other cities in the country, and it's the best place to taste the Middle Eastern sweet treat of knafeh! The city is also home to the iconic Basilica of the Annunciation, where it is said that Angel Gabriel told Mary she would conceive and give birth to the Son of God. We'll also visit St. Joseph's Church before taking some free time to explore.

This evening we'll have dinner at the kibbutz.



ACCOMMODATION:
Kibbutz Degania Bet (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Kibbutz



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 4 - Visit Jericho, Qumran National Park and sleep in the desert

After an early breakfast this morning one of the kibbutz residents will take us on a guided tour of their community so we can begin to understand their way of life and see some of the landmarks including the school and museum. There may even be time to pop into the chocolate factory and meet the chocolatiers.

Around mid-morning we will travel south for about one hour into the Jordan Valley, crossing the border into the West Bank. Our first stop will be in Jericho, where our leader will swap with a local Palestinian

guide for a tour of the city. Lying amidst the hotly contested settlements of the West Bank, Jericho was the first city to fly the flag of the newly formed Palestinian state and its history stretches back some ten millennia. We will ascend via cable car to visit the Monastery of Temptation and it is here that Jesus was tempted by the devil during his 40 day fast. As well as the religious significance, the site also offers fantastic views over the valley below.

We'll later continue south for another 30 minutes to Qumran National Park, once the home of the Essenes, a strict and devout Jewish sect who lived in the area until early in the 1st century AD. It is believed that the Essenes were the authors of the 2,000 year old manuscripts found amongst the hillside caves in 1947, and after lunch here we will visit the local caves to learn about the ancient Dead Sea scrolls.

Continuing south, there may be the opportunity to float in the saline waters of the Dead Sea (depending on weather and daylight hours) before we leave the West Bank and travel to Kfar Hanokdim. Situated peacefully in the Kana'im valley desert area, Kfar Hanokdim is our Bedouin-style home for the night. This large desert camp was founded nearly 30 years ago by a Bedouin family to offer a true desert experience to visitors, reflected in the traditional foods served and natural materials used to build and decorate each area of the camp. Tonight we will eat a Bedouin feast and spend time around the campfire under the stars. We'll sleep in shared sukkahs (guest lodge); authentic sleeping huts made from woven goat's hair material, with wooden floors and up between four - eight beds. All bedding and towels are provided, and there is communal shower facilities.



ACCOMMODATION:

Kfar Hanokdim (or similar)

Grade: Simple Tented Camp



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 5 - Visit the sky fortress of Masada at sunrise, take a camel ride and walk in Ein Gedi Nature Reserve. A free evening in Jerusalem

We'll have a very early start this morning to make our way to Masada in time for sunrise. From the camp we will drive for 15 minutes to Masada's western observation point and walk up the Roman ramp to the Sky Fortress. The ramp is a 1km incline on a well-maintained path, and once at the top we'll explore the legendary fortress city of Masada, the last stronghold of the Zealots against the Romans during the First Revolt in AD 70. Steeped in history and shrouded in mystery our leader will tell the tales of this citadel, and there will be time to take in the stunning views of the surrounding desert in the early morning light, including the mountains of Moab and the Dead Sea.

We'll return to the camp for breakfast this morning and there will be the opportunity to ride camel in the desert for those who want to. Later this morning we will depart Kfar Hanokdim and transfer to Ein Gedi Nature Reserve. Here we will take an hour long hike to a spring to enjoy this natural oasis in the middle of the desert.

Later this afternoon we will travel to Jerusalem, via the West Bank, our base for the next few nights; this evening there is the option of a light and sound show at the Tower of David.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Caesar Premier (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Exploring Jerusalem

We'll have an early breakfast this morning before departing by bus for Bethlehem, about one hour's drive away. Along the way we will pass the Knesset - Israel's Parliament - and the Supreme Court. Shortly before arriving to Bethlehem we will cross the border back into Palestinian Territory and our leader will swap with a local Palestinian guide, who will lead us around the town that is an icon in religious history as the biblical birthplace of Jesus Christ. The bus will park in the central bus station and we will continue on foot up a cobbled street to the Church of the Nativity before continuing by bus to the Shepherd Fields and the Milk Grotto.

Please note, Bethlehem can become very busy with tourists and pilgrims therefore we are unable to guarantee the time access inside each of the sites. Queueing times are unpredictable and areas have little shade so please be prepared for long waits if you wish to see inside the Church of Nativity and the Milk Grotto.

Later this afternoon we will return to Jerusalem and head to the old city for a guided tour. The oldest signs of settlement in Jerusalem date back 6,000 years ago but it's believed that historic Jerusalem as we know it now was founded around 4,000 years ago. The old city is a maze of narrow alleyways and cobbled streets lined with stalls, hole-in-the-wall eateries and colourful front doors, hiding religious treasures deep within. Late this afternoon we will aim to be at the sacred Western Wall to observe Shabbat services if time allows.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Caesar Premier (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Walking the biblical trail in Jerusalem

Today will be packed as we endeavour to take in Jerusalem's highlights with our leader. Jerusalem's history is one of passion, religion, war and controversy; destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times and recaptured 44 times. This morning we'll start with a drive up to the Mount of Olives up on a ridge above the city it is from here that it's said Jesus ascended to heaven and this spot offers a superb view across the Old City. From the top of the mount we will descend to the foothills to visit the Roman Catholic Dominus Flevit Church, where we're told that Jesus envisioned the destruction of Jerusalem and wept. On our way back towards the city we'll also see the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations.

Around late morning, we will return to the Old City where we'll continue exploring all afternoon on foot. Jerusalem is unique in that it is held sacred by the three great monotheistic religions of the world, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Passing through the winding, cobbled lanes overflowing with street vendors and shops, we walk along the Via Dolorosa, traditionally believed to be the route taken by Christ on the day of his execution. We will follow the Stations of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the holiest site in Christendom and the reputed place of the crucifixion, burial and eventual resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Finally we head up onto the slopes of Mount Zion, where we visit the tomb of King David, the beautiful Benedictine Abbey of the Dormition and the Cenacle, which since the 4th century has been identified as the site of the Last Supper.

After a packed day of exploring we'll return to our hotel for time to freshen up before our last evening of the trip.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Caesar Premier (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Jerusalem

The trip ends this morning after breakfast. All customers departing from Ben Gurion Airport today will receive a complimentary airport transfer.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Israel

Climate

Israel has a Mediterranean climate. Summer is hot with fairly high humidity in coastal regions. Rainfall is mostly from November to March: during this period temperatures can drop quite sharply, particularly in December, so pack accordingly.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Jewish, Islam, Christian.

Language

Hebrew, Arabic, English.

Budgeting and packing

Optional 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.

Jerusalem

Sound & Light Show - from \$22.00 pp (subject to weather conditions and availability)

Shabbat of a Lifetime - Friday night - \$60.00 pp (depending on numbers and availability). If you would like to book the Shabbat of a Lifetime experience please use this website: www.shabbatofalifetime.com.

Please note this is a very popular excursion so we do advise to pre-book early.

Clothing

Clothes should be casual and practical. Long trousers should be worn in some Jewish and Christian holy places, and women must cover their arms, legs and head.

In the warm, summer months Israel can get very hot during the height of the day, so lightweight and loose fitting clothing is recommended when visiting conservative areas. A hat and sunglasses are recommended.

During winter, medium weight clothing for layering and rainwear is advisable. A fleece will be useful during this time for early mornings (Masada visit) when it can be chilly. An umbrella can be useful!

Pack swimwear and a towel for your visit to the Dead Sea.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or boots needed for the walks as the terrain can be uneven or slippery from rain, trainers and sandals for the remainder of the trip.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One suitcase, and a daypack is useful.

Equipment

A towel for the Dead Sea visit and an umbrella during the winter months. We advise taking a water bottle for day to day use.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: In Israel, it is customary to tip the tour leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive. We would recommend allowing approximately \$6-\$8 per day as a guideline but this is at your discretion.

Local crew

In Israel tipping at 15%-20% is a recognised part of life across the service industry, including restaurants, activity suppliers, taxis and guides. Local staff will look to you for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Your leader will arrange a tips kitty for activities and services included in the itinerary, so we recommend you allow \$45 per person for this tips kitty. For anything outside of the included activities and services, your leader will be happy to offer advice on tipping.

Israel

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
£10.00 - 12.00	£10.00 - 14.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Shekel (NIS). Please note Shekels and US Dollars are readily accepted in the Palestine Territories

Recommended Currency For Exchange

It is easy to exchange major currencies - euros, pounds sterling and US dollars

Where To Exchange

Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

ATM's are widely available.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are also generally accepted.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are not easily exchanged and should be avoided.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Accommodation notes

Throughout this trip the accommodation varies in style, standard and size.

In Tel Aviv, we stay in a boutique style accommodation in the city centre. The beach is just 5 minutes' walk away, the hotel offers an excellent breakfast and a roof-top bar is open during the warmer months.

Our kibbutz stay, offers an insight into a traditional and alternative way of living found throughout Israel. All rooms are spacious, clean and the kibbutz offer nice communal areas and swimming pools throughout

the warmer months (subject to set opening times). At the kibbutz dinners will be served in a communal dining room where both guests and residents eat alongside one another on long tables, and you choose from a cafeteria-style buffet selection of hot and cold food.

In the desert we stay at Kfar Hanokdim, a large Bedouin-style camp offering visitors the chance to experience some of the traditional Bedouins ways. The sukkah lodges we stay in are shared with between four - eight beds per lodge. Shower blocks are communal and clean with separate blocks for women and men. Towels and bedding are provided to our groups.

In Jerusalem, we stay in a centrally located hotel, just a short tram ride from Jaffa Gate into the Old City. There is also a large communal area with comfortable seating, a bar and their roof top pool is open during the warmer months (separate hours for men and women).

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 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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.

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

Israel & Palestinian Territories: Visas are not required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Note: You will now be given a visa card at immigration with your details on it. This replaces a stamp in your passport and must be kept safe as it will be required when exiting the country.

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.

Israel

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, rabies, hepatitis A and B. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS