

# EXPLORE!



DISCOUNTED

## Abode of the God-Kings

CHINA, NEPAL - TRIP CODE TB

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

Scenic mountain passes and peaceful Buddhist monasteries feature in this two week exploration of spiritual Tibet. Travelling along the 'friendship highway' Mount Everest is always a feature, particularly when we visit the lesser known North Base Camp for this iconic mountain.

- **Lhasa** - Admire the mesmerising Potala Palace, once the residence of the Dalai Lama, soaring above the Tibetan capital
- **Mountain Passes** - Travel through stunning mountain scenery across remote mountain passes
- **Tibetan people** - Meet local monks, nuns and nomads to learn about their intriguing way of life



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 14  
Dinner: 2



**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour  
Leader  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Ferry  
Flight



**ACCOMMODATION**  
2 nights simple  
guesthouse  
12 nights standard  
hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Full on



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join tour Kathmandu

Today we arrive in Kathmandu and check in to our hotel. After a briefing your Tour Leader will collect the groups passports ready for the permits to enter Tibet to be finalised.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Hotel Ambassador (or similar)

**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: NONE**

### DAY 2 - In Kathmandu

After breakfast, we'll make a walking tour visiting the bazaars and temples of Old Kathmandu accompanied by a local Nepali guide. Much of the everyday life of Kathmandu takes place in the local bazaars. There is a fascinating mixture of people selling spices and vegetables; potters spin their wheels to produce small household bowls and containers for temple offerings; pilgrims visit their favourite gods at small shrines dotted along the sides of the alleyways; rickshaw wallahs honk their horns and the ever-

present sacred cow wanders among it all. On our second day here, a morning's sightseeing tour includes the Temple of Pashupatinath on the Bagmati river - the holiest Hindu shrine in Nepal - and Bodnath Stupa, the largest in the country and a destination for Buddhist pilgrims from all over Nepal. The afternoons are left free for individual sightseeing. There are a multitude of interesting places within easy reach of the Nepali capital. Perhaps you could take in Swayambunath, the monkey temple (a short taxi ride or about 40 minutes walk from the city centre). And there's also Patan, Nepal's one time capital situated just a short taxi ride from Kathmandu or Bhaktapur, one of the three ancient cities of the Kathmandu valley.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Ambassador (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 3 - Explore Kathmandu**

Today we continue exploring Kathmandu.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Ambassador (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 4 - Fly to Gongkar; drive to Tsetang**

Today we board a flight from Kathmandu to Gongkar in Tibet enjoying views of the Himalaya and

sometimes even Everest piercing the clouds. We should arrive early afternoon local time (Tibet time is 2 1/4hrs ahead of Nepal time). After formalities, we'll drive eastwards to Tsetang. If time and conditions still allow, we'll visit Yumbulagang. Reputedly the oldest dwelling place of the Tibetan kings (5th century), it is erected on the rocky spur of a hill with panoramic views over the entire valley.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Tsetang (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 5 - In Tsetang; visit Samye Monastery**

After breakfast we cross the Brahmaputra (Tsangpo) River to reach Samye Monastery and village, an oasis of willows in a sandy desert. The monastery, designed to mirror the structure of the Buddhist universe, is built as a Mandala around the main shrine. (A mandala is a concentric symbol which represents Buddhist cosmic and individual psychic forces, sometimes expressed as here in three dimensional architectural form). Then we will visit Yumbulagang if not visited the day before. After our visit we return to our hotel in Tsetang for a second night.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Tsetang (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 6 - Drive via Mindroling Monastery to Lhasa

Today we drive westwards along a rugged road to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet which lies at an altitude of 3658m, in a bowl-shaped valley - the name means 'Abode of the Gods'. On our way we stop to visit Mindroling Monastery, one of the most important in Central Tibet and the seat of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. We arrive in Lhasa in the afternoon and check in at our hotel. This evening, there will be time for a short introductory tour of the Tibetan capital.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Dekhang Hotel (or similar)



Grade: **Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: **BREAKFAST**

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## DAY 7 - In Lhasa

Our next two days are dedicated to extensive sightseeing of Lhasa. The city's location is spectacular. Set in a ring of bare mountains (snow covered in winter), the valley is cut through by the gushing Kyi Chu (the Happy River), one of the headwaters of the mighty Indian Brahmaputra. For most of the year the sky above Lhasa is a deep intense blue, and the air is crisp and dry. Weeping willows wave over little streams and lakes, and peach trees blossom.

Our sightseeing will include the Potala Palace, the former seat of the Dalai Lamas, where the genius of Tibetan architecture finds expression in the glistening white walls that seem to soar directly from every stone and rock face. The present (fourteenth) Dalai Lama, whose title has been carried through the centuries by an unbroken lineage of reincarnations, now lives in exile in India. On one of the days we plan to visit the famous Jokhang Temple, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines in the country and an object of circumambulation by devoted pilgrims. We will also spend time at the Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama's former summer palace. You'll also have free time to stroll around the colourful stalls in the market (Barkhor), or just sit back quietly and observe the noisy and jostling crowds of pilgrims and haggling merchants. We will also visit Ani Tsangkung Nunnery (the only active nunnery in Lhasa) and see the monastic university of Sera where the monks practice philosophical debates which take place in the Monastery garden and Gregorian -style ritual chanting in the assembly halls.



### ACCOMMODATION:

Dekhang Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 8 - Explore Lhasa**

Today we continue exploring Lhasa.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Dekhang Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 9 - Drive over the Kamba La & Karo La to Gyantse**

Today we drive west across the high plains to Gyantse, one of the most beautiful places in Central Tibet. Our route climbs over the spectacular 4790m Kamba La and then follows the Yamdroq (Turquoise) Lake before climbing the 5045m Karo La, or pass. The whole journey to the old town of Gyantse, including stops takes about 5/6 hours. On arrival we will visit the famous Kumbum Stupa (1440), one of the most magnificent buildings in Tibet. Gold-capped with two bewitching eyes painted on its circular upper wall above the ascending symmetrical storeys, it is built in Newari (Nepalese) style. The monastery walls are covered with extraordinary paintings and sculptures.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Gyantse Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 10 - Visit Pala Manor; drive Shigatse (3890m)**

This morning we visit the old feudal manor house of Pala Manor before continuing to Shigatse. In the afternoon we visit the monastic city of Tashilumpo, the largest & most vibrant religious centre in Tibet. As one of the Great Six centres of the Gelugpa Buddhist sect, its adherents follow the moral & philosophical teachings of the Master Atisha (982-1054). The sacred red buildings topped by gleaming golden roofs form the spiritual home of the Panchen Rinpoche (Great Precious Teacher). We stay in nearby Shigatse for the night. Drive time of approximately 90km (2hrs).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Manasarovar Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 11 - Drive to Shegar (4350m)**

Today we have a long drive along the 'Friendship Highway' to Shegar, also known as New Tingri. We reach a height of 4350m above sea level for our stay tonight.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Shegar Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 12 - Visit Rongbuk Buddhist monastery; overnight in Old Tingri (4480m)

This morning we leave the main highway behind and drive via the Pang La (5120m) to Rongbuk where we will visit the ancient Buddhist monastery very close to Mt Everest. Here we will have lunch and explore the monastery. Please note: tonight's accommodation will be in a very basic guesthouse which is the only accommodation available here.



ACCOMMODATION:

Snow Leopard Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Simple Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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### DAY 13 - Drive to Kerung (2800m)

Today we have a long day's drive towards the Nepal border. Heading north up the Dzakar Chu valley on the very bumpy base camp road through villages and terraced mountain sides, we cross Gya-u La (5,090m) from which on a clear day we can see the panoramic views of all the main peaks of the Himalayan range. Rejoining the Friendship Highway for few kilometres, we head west toward to Mt. Shisapangma and Peiguo Tso Lake then to south towards the Kerung, our last nightstop in Tibet, after a drive of approximately 6/7 hours.



ACCOMMODATION:

Phuntsok Rabsal Guest House (or similar)



Grade: Simple Guesthouse





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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### DAY 14 - Drive to Kathmandu

We continue our journey today following a series of steep switchbacks to the sub-tropical landscapes of the Nepali border . (Depending upon road conditions and landslides, we may have to walk for several hours on the way down- porters will carry our luggage.). We cross the border before driving on to Kathmandu through the Langtang National Park. (The drive is approximately 7-8hrs but as this is a new border crossing there can be delays due to extra security checks).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Ambassador (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 15 - Tour ends Kathmandu

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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## Country information

### China

#### Climate

China has primarily a temperate climate, with a wide spectrum of extremes due to its huge area. Summer months are hot and rainy though in the south the climate is tropical and we can experience rain at any time of the year, often falling in sharp tropical rain-storms which are heavy but short lived. Winter is colder and drier, temperatures in Beijing can be as low as -12c.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+8	3 Pin Flat	Mainly Buddhist	Mandarin

### Nepal

#### Climate

Temperatures in the lower altitude regions are extremely pleasant. At Pokhara variations in temperature are very limited: from the coldest recorded of 8°C (46°F) to the highest of 31°C (88°F). The mountains are best admired, with greater air clarity, from October to January, while from February to May the skies may be hazy. Monsoon rains are strongest in June, July and August. The coldest months are December and January.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+5.45	2 Pin Round	Hinduism	Nepali

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## 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.

Bhaktapur - US\$ 35 (minimum 4 people)

### Clothing

In the Kathmandu Valley, you can wear shorts and a shirt during the day but it can get cool (or cold) in the evening. In Tibet, you'll need a set of warm clothes and a windproof jacket. You may wish to carry a Down Jacket as it will be cold throughout the year in Shegar, Rongbuk and Gyantse. (possible to hire in Kathmandu).

During the day it can be hot and dry in Tibet and humid in Nepal, hence it is recommended to bring light clothing for daytime and warm clothing for evening. Long trousers are preferable, Lycra fittings are not allowed in Nepal/ Tibet.

## Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes. You should be prepared to walk through wet and muddy terrain in the event of road blockages and landslides.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a small daysac. It is handy to carry a small daysac during sightseeing excursions.

## Equipment

A sheet sleeping bag is useful but not essential for the overnight guesthouse on Day 12 & 13. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/emergencies. You should also bring a sunhat, suncream and a water bottle.

## 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

In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £40 for tipping. Your tour leader will account to you for any organised tipping.

## China

### 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	£6.00 - 10.00	£2	£1.5

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Renminbi/Yuan	Either EUR, USD or GBP.

### Where To Exchange

We'd strongly recommend changing enough money for the duration of your trip at the airport on your arrival. When changing money ask for a receipt so you can change Yuan back into your own currency when leaving China.

**ATM Availability**

All major towns.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Most major restaurants and stores.

**Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques can be changed in Hong Kong and at the Bank of China in all major cities but only during bank opening hours. Please note this is very time consuming and is not recommended.

## Nepal

### 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
£7	£10	£3	£0.3

### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Nepali Rupee.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

US\$ or GBP.

**Where To Exchange**

In major cities and towns

**ATM Availability**

Although you may occasionally find cash machines these are very unreliable - do not rely on plastic!

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Credit cards are not generally accepted except in larger establishments in Kathmandu.

**Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques are not accepted as a valid mode of payment in Nepal.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Ferry, Flight

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## 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.

### **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**

Nepal: Visas can be obtained from the Nepalese embassy prior to travel or on arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu . A passport sized photograph is essential in order for you to arrange your visa. All Nepalese visas are multiple entry, they are available to cover 3 different durations. The approximate costs on arrival for; a 15 day visa; US\$25, a 30 day; US\$40 and a 90 day visa; US\$100. Please ensure you purchase the duration sufficient to cover your whole visit including days of entry and exit. Please note that these durations refer to each entry into Nepal e.g. 15 days for each entry.

Tibet: We will travel into Tibet on a group Tibetan Travel Permit (TTP). In order to process this permit we will require a copy of the photo page of your passport at least 2 months before departure. This must be a copy of the passport you intend to travel on and customers with multiple passports should note that your Nepalese Visa and the Tibetan Travel Permit must be on the same passport. You should ensure you arrive in Kathmandu on Day 1 of the tour to allow sufficient time for the Tibet Travel Permit to be processed.

On arrival in Kathmandu we will need to submit your passport and two passport quality photographs (35mm x 45mm) of your unobscured face against a white background and the visa fee. Allow \$130, payable in USD for your permit. Note: US Citizens are currently required to pay 216USD and Canadian citizens 210USD.

Anyone with a current Chinese visa for planned future travel should note this will be cancelled on entering Tibet. Any passengers with sensitive occupations, (e.g. media, defence etc.) must contact Explore before departure. Currently holders of any British, EU member state, US, Canadian, Australian or New Zealand passport are eligible for entry into Tibet, subject to approval by the Tibetan authorities. Certain other nationalities have been barred from entry and you should therefore inform Explore of your nationality at time of booking so we can confirm your eligibility.

Due to the restrictions in place it is not possible for anyone to leave the group whilst in Tibet, everybody must enter and leave Tibet as a group. It is not unusual for the Tibetan authorities to amend the entry requirements with little or no warning. Should this happen Explore will do all possible to run the tour but in extreme circumstances we may be forced to cancel a tour.

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](http://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 now 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.

## **Altitude information**

The altitude of several passes, e.g. Gyatso La (5220m), raises the possibility of altitude sickness. Extreme cases of Acute Mountain Sickness are rare, but if it becomes necessary for someone to abandon the tour in the interests of safety, the tour leaders decision on this is final.

Insurance: Please ensure that your insurance policy covers you to the altitude indicated below in the section entitled 'Medical examination' before you come on tour. If you have Explore insurance, you will be covered to this altitude.

Medical Examination: You should visit your GP and specifically mention the maximum altitude the tour reaches, i.e. 5220m.

## **China**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

Travellers may wish to take immunisation against Japanese Encephalitis. 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.

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## **Nepal**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, typhoid,

tetanus, polio and Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory, travellers may wish to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis. 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.



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**