



Dragoman Family Holidays

A Few Facts

Family Adventures

Our family trips have been specially designed to appeal to children as well as adults. We have tried to combine excitement, relaxation, learning and fun. They are active trips and an essential element of the trips is meeting the local people. We build into the itineraries some sort of cultural exchange, whether it is a football match with Masai children, visiting a local school, or meeting the indigenous people of the Amazon jungle. We visit countries as a whole, rather than just the sanitised tourist sites. There will be a couple of long day drives, which are all part of the fun: (Editor: *"I get a chance to catch up on the books I've always been meaning to read, whilst the kids play games in the back"*). Every day will be different, with different challenges and adventures.

Crew & Leaders

On our family holidays, either a two or a three-person crew will be looking after you. Where we feel it is appropriate, these crew will be helped by local guides and trekking leaders. In Sub Saharan Africa, there will usually be two western crew (a leader and co-driver/trainee) and one African crew member (the camp master/cook). Between them, they will ensure that you have a safe and enjoyable journey. In Latin America and North Africa, where we stay mainly in hotels, there is no need for the camp master and we tend to use the services of local guides more often.

Vehicle and Equipment

Unlike most adventure operators who offer family holidays, we use unique and specialised vehicles that are ideal for taking families off the beaten track. We use expedition vehicles that can easily take 4 or 5 families comfortably across terrain where standard minibuses generally will not, or cannot, go. The vehicles create a sociable atmosphere in which to travel and are ideal for this style of holiday. Fridges, stereo systems, games and libraries are all available while travelling. We provide all the camping equipment ranging from large two person tents, which we have professionally made for us, to comprehensive kitchens with awnings – to keep the rain and sun off you and your food – and camping stools.

Accommodation

Unlike most other family adventure holidays, you are not just restricted to hotels. Dragoman specialise in mixing camping with hotels. Camping nights are generally in campsites with good facilities (warm showers, flushing toilets, fire pits for barbequing, etc). The majority of camping nights will be spent in campsites such as these. There are however, some nights when the facilities are more basic. This is generally at wilderness camps, where showers may not be available and the loos will be long drops or a quiet spot (of your choice!) behind a bush or tree. We will provide all the camping equipment except for your personal effects such as sleeping bags and mats. With all this equipment and our specialised expedition vehicles, we are completely self-sufficient and can therefore visit areas that most family holidays can never get to. We try to choose hotels that fit in with our responsible tourism policy and which have something more than just comfort to offer the traveller. In somewhere like Zanzibar we will stay in a quality beach hotel or in Cusco, a comfortable city centre hotel in the middle of the action. On the edge of Lake

Victoria we stay in a luxury tented camp overlooking the waters of the Lake. In the remote areas of Southern Morocco, we use a small family run hotel with no electricity but with its own Berber Tent restaurant in the unique setting of Todra Gorge. In the Atlas Mountains, we experience the delights of the Casbah de Toubkal, a unique historical building nestling under the massive Mt. Toubkal. This has been built by and run for, the local community in conjunction with one of our suppliers. Where possible, we try to include hotels with swimming pools.

Activities

These trips are designed for active kids and adults alike. We build into the itineraries plenty of opportunity for excitement. Typical activities include: game safaris, horse, camel or even elephant riding, mountain biking, jungle walks, quad biking, sand boarding, canoeing, rafting, mountain trekking, the list goes on. Some activities are culture based, such as visits to bushman communities in Namibia or exploring ancient ruins and historic sites, such as Machu Picchu in Peru. A number of activities are optional; we quite understand that not everyone wants their twelve-year-old son white water rafting down the mighty Zambez!

Relaxation

On the flip side, we have balanced these holidays with time for R & R, building in time to relax at hotels with pools, on beaches or in cities and towns. There will be time for “shopaholics” and souvenir hunting is very much part of these holidays. Relaxation time might be a beach on Zanzibar, a couple of days in the souks of Marrakech, a French auberge and pool in the Atlas Mountains, wandering around the back streets of Cusco or perhaps staying in the palace of Rajasthan.

Culture

We adhere strongly to the principles of Responsible Tourism and try to build community projects and visits to local communities into the itineraries. The local people, their history and their communities are an integral part of our trips. Shopping in local markets, in the souks and bazaars, or in the small rural villages is all part of the adventure.

FAQs

I'm a vegetarian / have special dietary needs, is this a problem on trips?

We can cater for most dietary restrictions, and within reason a separate meal will be prepared if required. The group share the camp duties and so everybody will be aware of individual's requirements. On East & Southern Africa trips, our local cooks are experienced at providing most sorts of food.

My child has a food allergy, is this a problem?

Food Allergies: Because of the nature of the trip, you must take full responsibility for ensuring that you are aware of what ingredients are in what food. Whilst camping, it is pretty straight forward as we prepare our own food. (Editor: *“As a father of a hyper-allergenic child (including peanut allergy), I am very aware of the problems involved. We have now taken my son on all of the African family trips, and it has been much easier than anticipated, but a strict checking regime is recommended and it is worth bringing along alternatives such as cereal bars for snacks. It is also worth finding out a phrase, in the native language, that you can use to find out if foods contain the food type you – or your child – are allergic to”.*) Please make sure that you carry any medication on you at all times Please ensure you discuss the holiday with your GP and inform Dragoman of any food allergy.

Will I only eat rice & cabbage?

Food is a major part of travel and we try to make it as much part of the trip as every other aspect. You will eat out at local restaurants and try the local delicacies. The kitty prices are worked out on a regular basis to take into account local inflation, so the money available for food is more than

sufficient. All trips will shop regularly in local markets and we also carry tinned/dried western goods, and have a full range of herbs and spices on board. This gives you access to a large range of ingredients. We provide cookbooks on board the trucks, and the leaders will be able to share their experience in catering for large groups. For the less adventurous among you, there is no need to fear. Western style meals will generally be available at restaurants and the food prepared at the campsites is of your choice. We know this can be particularly important when catering for kids. On East and Southern African trips there is a professional chef as part of the crew. These chefs have often worked in hotels and all have professional qualifications, and so the quality of food when camping in this area of the world is always high.

Will I be expected to cook on my holiday?

While camping, we all help with camp duties, which do include cooking. However, in East and Southern Africa the cook will do the majority of the cooking and the work. Generally, we are there to help him out, and it is definitely part of the fun. Any great camping menus you may have are always gratefully accepted (Editor: "*my marsh mallows in hot chocolate sauce went down a storm*"). In Morocco, India and Peru we stay in more hotels and therefore the cooking is far less frequent.

What time should I try and arrive / is it OK to arrive late on day one?

We advise people to arrive 1 or 2 days before their departure date to give them some time to adjust. We try to discourage people from arriving late, however it is possible to arrive on day one, after the meeting time, as the truck does not depart the start town until the second day. Arriving on the second day is slightly more difficult as the truck may leave the start town early on day 2. It is therefore necessary to talk to a member of the sales team if you are planning on arriving late.

Do we get a chance to see the starting city, or do we leave straight away?

Trips usually leave the starting cities the day after the start date. A pre-departure meeting, which lasts about 1 - 2 hrs, is held on the start date, at 1800hrs on most trips and normally a group meal is arranged for the evening. Passengers have a limited amount of time on this day to explore but we advise they should arrive earlier if they want more time. We are able to book pre and post tour accommodation at your request. Please contact a member of the sales team for if you require us to do so.

How long will we be travelling for?

These overland trips are based on travelling around a country on an overland expedition vehicle. Although you will be travelling, this is all part of the adventure and most groups actually use the down time for reading, snoozing or playing games with the families. With comfortable coach seats, card tables, a music system and an on board fridge, the journeys are not a big deal. On these holidays, we have three types of days: -

- Non-travelling or activity days. These are days with either no travelling, minimal travelling (1-2 hours) or days on which although we are travelling, it is because we are on a game drive or on a local tour. On average half the days on our family trips are this sort of day.
- Short travelling days, which range from a two to five hours. On average three quarters of the driving days are these shorter driving days
- Long travelling days, usually ranging from six to ten hours. There are usually only two or three of these days

How much extra money should I take?

Each trip has a different number of optional extras and each person will vary in how much they spend. Please refer to the 'personal spending' and 'optional extras' sections of the trip notes for a rough guide on how much you will need to budget for.

Health & Hygiene on these Holidays?

In terms of overall health problems on these sorts of trips, stomach upsets are usually your main concern. Without being over alarmist, you will be travelling through areas of the world, which clearly do not have the same high standards of health and hygiene that we do. We will maintain strict hygiene systems on board the vehicles, for example it is compulsory to disinfect your hands with hand spray or wash (provided by dragoman) before entering the truck. In return we ask you to be careful of where and what you eat while eating out, all it requires is a little common sense. For example avoid eating 'fresh' seafood when a couple of hundred miles away from the coast; ensure you and your children wash their hands before touching any food; and, when eating from street vendors, only eat food that is prepared where you can see it.

Is the Water safe to drink?

No, is the best answer and so you **MUST** drink purified drinking water. All the water carried on the truck is purified with 'Micropure'. This uses silver as an active ingredient. It is affective against bugs that cause typhoid, dysentery colibacillosis, and cholera. If you feel you require extra protection for your own water bottles, Nomad have a range of purification additives. In addition, in most places you can buy bottled water and fizzy drinks.

What Medicines does Dragoman take?

All our vehicles carry extensive emergency medical kits but you should ensure that you bring along your own personal kits. Check out the Nomad website (www.nomadtravel.co.uk), catalogue or go in store to purchase a comprehensive medical kit. We would recommend the 'Overlander'. Ensure that you do bring plenty of re-hydration mixture in case of hot weather and/or stomach upsets.

What vaccinations do we need?

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to country and recent bulletins issued by health authorities.

Please consult your Doctor or a specialised Immunisation clinic for vaccination and other medical requirements for your trip. Please note that you must state if you have any pre-existing conditions that may affect your ability to take part on a trip and in some cases we may require a medical certificate prior to booking your trip.

For more help with vaccinations we recommend the following organizations: -

- Nomad Travel who offer the latest up to date travel health news and have clinics throughout the UK. Visit: www.nomadtravel.co.uk/pages/nomad-travel-clinics
- MASTA who provide professional travel health advice. Many GP's now require clients to have completed a MASTA Health brief before they will administer the required vaccinations. Visit: www.masta-travel-health.com

Recommended for all countries:

On all of our trips we recommend you be immunised against:

Tetanus

Hepatitis A

TB – most people have been vaccinated against TB in childhood, but please remember that when you travel in the developing world you are at higher risk.

Poliomyelitis

Malaria

We will be travelling through malarial zones whilst in sub Saharan Africa, in the Peruvian Jungle and in India. The first line of defence for travellers in any malarial zone is to avoid getting bitten. It is impossible to completely avoid bites but if you use Nomads bite avoidance advice, you can go a long way to minimising the risk of malaria. The second line of defence is the use of prophylactics. You **MUST** consult a qualified source of information to decide what prophylactics

to use. Your local GP may, or may not, be the best place to enquire and you might want to think about discussing your travels with a qualified travel health specialist such as the Nomad Health Clinics.

Recently the world's first anti-malarial tablet specifically formulated for children was launched called Malarone Paediatric. The tablets are very expensive but have proved to 98% effective in preventing the most serious form of malaria in clinical trials. We would recommend that you discuss this new tablet with your local GP.

If I go to Peru, will altitude sickness be a problem?

Altitude sickness and the effects of altitude are a potential problem for all visitors to the mountains of Peru. We will be passing over high passes on our trip from Arequipa to Colca Canyon and from Colca Canyon to Cusco. You will feel the affects of altitude. These however should not be too extreme, as we spend a relative short time on or near the high passes. Be prepared for some discomfort on one or two days. The following can alleviate this, however you must consult your doctor before going and get their expert advice

- Water: Make sure you drink plenty of liquids, this is often more than you think you need. Re-hydration sachets can be useful.
- Diomox: Is safe for use with adults and children. This can be taken as a prophylactics or once illness has set in.
- Oxygen: We carry Oxygen on the vehicle.
- Coca Leaves: Throughout Peru coca leaf is sold in shops either as leaves or as tea bags. The locals have used coca in tea for thousands of years to relieve altitude sickness. It is often served as a breakfast drink, even in the smartest hotels.

We will have a few days in and around Cusco to acclimatise. For those thinking of biking, horse riding or taking the Mini Inca trail there will be opportunity to do so.

My child is under the age of six, can we come on your holiday?

The minimum age for children is 6 years (age at start date of trip) and teenagers of 16 or over will be charged at the adult rate. There must be at least 1 adult to accompany 2 children. If you do have young children we would advise that you carefully consider the suitability of your child to this sort of holiday. Overlanding is hugely rewarding but for young children who have not travelled long haul before or who are not used to camping it can be tiring. If you are at all worried please do talk to us as we will be able to give you valuable advice and also the age of the other children in the group can be an important factor.

Is there anywhere I can safely store my belongings?

The truck is locked with a combination lock on the door, providing easy access to passengers, as well as preventing keys from being misplaced. There is plenty of room on the truck for day to day items that you do not want to pack in your main bag. There is a large back locker that the majority of your luggage can be stored in, this is locked with a large key operated lock and is generally opened only a couple of times a day. Important documents such as passports and travel insurance, as well as money can be stored in the truck safe, which is concealed in the floor of the truck and only accessible from the inside of the vehicle. You will need to ask the leader for access to the safe. If necessary the leader may hire a guard to watch over the truck while it is parked up.

Can I obtain money with my bankcard?

We recommend that people do not rely on cash / credit cards for day-to-day use whilst on trips. Some of the larger cities we visit will have cash machines, but these are often unreliable and will charge large commissions. Cash and travellers cheques are much better options, and can be locked in the truck safe. Some travellers' cheques can be difficult to cash in Peru.

I've never camped before, what equipment should I take?

Passengers are required to supply their own sleeping equipment (a sleeping bag and ground mat), tents are supplied by dragoman and have built in mosquito nets. Most hotels have screens or nets, however some do not. If travelling in a malarial zone it is therefore important to bring a mosquito net, but ensure that you get one with multiple fixing points. Temperatures will vary on the majority of our trips, so the kind of sleeping bag may vary. Trips running through South America will experience colder weather, so a 3/4-season sleeping bag is required. For extra warmth blankets can be bought very cheaply in most countries, and used as well as sleeping bags and can be given away to locals or left behind at the end of the trip. (N.B Sleeping bags sometimes have the survival rating printed on them, instead of the comfort rating. A sleeping bag rated at 0°C can mean that you would survive if you slept in that temperature, but you would be very cold! Be careful when purchasing a sleeping bag you look for the comfort and not the survival temperature). In Namibia, it will get cold at night and a 3-season bag is required. In East and Southern Africa and India a more general sleeping bag would be sufficient. (Editor. *"Don't forget sleep sheets and a pillow – beats a stiff neck all day"*)

What extras do you carry for the children?

The truck is fully equipped with camping and cooking equipment and we have a local reference library, which usually contains quite a number of novels (kindly donated by passengers). For the family trips, we also try to have games, balls and books on board, but please ensure you bring any travel games that you enjoy.

Is there a bar on board?

We run an honesty bar on the vehicle, which is stocked up with beers, mixers, soft drinks and fruit juices. Alcohol is usually available in most places, but you will probably want to stock up on duty frees on your way out. South Africa and Namibia have excellent wines, but elsewhere the quality is not always as high.

Who will I share with while camping & in hotels?

We usually have two people sharing in a two-person tent, but can easily fit three kids. You can decide how you want to share tents between the families. Hotel rooms are generally twins or triple, but we do sometimes have quads. Let us know your preferences on booking. Please be aware that we cannot always guarantee exact rooming requirements.

Loos & Showers, who provides the paper?

Campsites are usually not as primitive as you may imagine, well, most nights. They generally have good facilities, especially in Namibia and Peru. However, there will be nights where we are bush camping or staying at tiny campsites with limited facilities. "The Long Drop" is not a term for a sensational drop goal in rugby. Be prepared for one or two of these.

Loo paper will be purchased from the group fund, however it is a good idea to bring a roll or two for the beginning of the trip, just in case no loo roll can be bought for the first few days. Where no shower is available, we carry large water storage tanks and so a wash is usually possible. 'Wet Ones' cleaning wipes are invaluable.

Can I recharge my video or digital camera while travelling?

Yes, usually in hotels or campsites that we are staying at. You will need an international plug adaptor. It is also useful to have a 12-volt cigarette plug. This can USUALLY (not always possible) be used as a backup system, but you will need to ask the leader if you can plug it into the cigarette lighter in the cab of the truck.

Are Flights included in the Price?

No, but Dragoman can organise flights for you with most good airlines. We have excellent deals through British Airways; please contact Dragoman for a quote.

