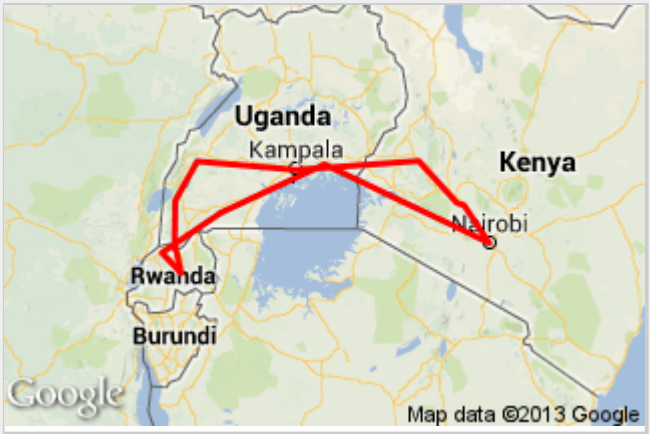
Chimps, Gorillas & Gameparks (ZNN)

Nairobi to Nairobi 16 days, departing 02 Mar 2013

Comfort Zone: Basic Luxury
Physical Challenge: Easy Hard
Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Nairobi to Nairobi
Length: 16 days
Transport: Overland truck, Safari Vehicle
Accommodation: Hotel (1 nt), camping (11 nts), dormitory (3 nts) Upgrades from camping to rooms usually available on the road. 15 Breakfasts, 15 Lunches, 14 Dinners



Ratings for this trip

Comfort Zone: Basic / Adventurous

Basic comfort levels. Expect to rough it every now and again. On OVERLAND TRIPS be prepared to have some nights wild camping, campsites with basic facilities as well as some basic hotels, often on a multi-share basis. Some of the roads we travel along may be poor. On our ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS you will stay in simple, budget (1-2 star) accommodation with some shared facilities. Some accommodation may be on a multi-share basis and transport will be mainly local.

Physical Challenge: Moderate Fitness

MODERATE FITNESS: You will travel through areas that may be physically challenging. For example you may be at altitude some of the time. Depending on the trip, activities may include treks of 3-4 hours across hilly terrain, horse-riding and other adventurous activities. A moderate level of fitness is required.

Countries Visited

Kenya

Kenya is a country full of life and colour; of tribes and tradition and of wildlife and game parks.

In the lively capital of Nairobi there are so many attractions to fill a few days. The Karen Blixen museum was donated by Denmark after popularity of 'Out of Africa'. The location of the museum now is also home to some beautiful wildlife including horses. Most visitors also take in the elephant orphanage and giraffe sanctuary, offering the chance to feed the giraffes from a raised platform.

Of course it's the wildlife that draws most people to Kenya due its excellent national parks and reserves such as The Maasai Mara (also known as the Masai Mara to the Mara to locals), Nakuru and Samburu . Of course most people want to get a snap of the big five but there are also good chances of seeing the lesser predators of the genet, jackal and hyena.

Mount Kenya is the country's highest mountain and is the 2nd largest mountain in Africa after Kilimanjaro. Standing at a height of over 5000 metres, it towers over the surrounding plains and is no mean feat to scale with most climbers regarding it as more of a challenge that it's taller cousin in Tanzania .

Kenya's music scene is one of the most eclectic in the whole of Africa. With over 40 regional languages across the country, the folk music of Kenya is incredibly varied. Many of the regions have their own type of music, and one of the most inspiring is the Polyphonic style of the Maasai region in which chanting makes up the song's rhythm.

Tribes all over Kenya are proud of their products, whether it is music or textiles or food. The staple diet is mainly maize based and although each region has its own specific taste, there are many that are common across the country. One of these is Sukuma wiki. It is a phrase that means "to push the week". This meal is full of seasonal vegetables which will last a family a week.

Kenya does pack a lot into a small space but don't underestimate the country, in terms of tourism it is Africa's biggest hit!

Rwanda

Rwanda is a landlocked republic situated on the eastern rim of the western arm of the Great Rift Valley. It is part of the watershed of Africa's two largest river systems, the Nile and the Congo. Much of the country is covered in mountains, especially in the volcanic Virunga chain protected by the Volcanoes National Park. The two main tribal groupings are the Hutu and the Tutsi. The 1994 genocide was just the most recent chapter of a long and bitter relationship between the two groups. In recognition of this, whilst in Rwanda we will organise a visit to the Genocide Memorial at Kigali. Rwanda has made enormous progress in rebuilding itself following the troubles, and is rapidly acquiring a reputation for the warmth of the welcome provided to travellers.

In the Parc National Des Volcans, the volcanoes reach above the clouds and it is home to the rare mountain gorilla. Treks to see the gorillas are the major attraction for tourist to Rwanda, providing vital income for the country as well as unforgettable experience for the traveller. There are also many animals in Rwanda. Elephants, rhinos and monkeys are a few of the 'big ticket iteams', but there are early 200 species of mammals and over 700 species of birds.

There is a welcoming feeling that brings the opportunity to join in with the amazing traditions and experience what Rwanda has to offer.

Uganda

In the heart of East and Southern Africa lies the wonderful country of Uganda, which Winston Churchill famously called the 'Pearl of Afrcia'

Uganda is brimming with national parks, Queen Elizabeth National Park is one the most visited and contains the most astonishing number of different fauna including 100 different types of mammal and over 600 species of birds.

The capital of Kampala is situated at the south of the country and has many museums, theatres and markets that line the streets. Explore and discover the wonderful history of a capital that is built on seven hills.

Jinja is one of the highlights of any visit to Uganda. This is a place for the adventurer, the adrenaline junkie and for the eco-traveller who wants to do something really worthwhile. The area is beautiful and is located at the source of the Nile as it leaves Lake Victoria. The most popular activity here is the white-water rafting trip down the Nile.

Many locals use the national produce of bananas to from a way of life. One product made is an alcoholic drink called Tonto. The juices are combined with grains and fermented for two days, creating a smooth taste. Many dishes in Uganda have an English, Arab and Indian influence, creating a unique taste. Most meals are served with a centre of soup or stew, and this tradition makes a beautiful icon of Uganda.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Nairobi

Sat 02 Mar 2013

Border Information: If Joining in Nairobi, enter Kenya at Nairobi Airport.

Group meeting at 18.00hrs.

For those of you who are starting your trip in Nairobi and arrive early, head out to explore the National Museum of Kenya or the Karen Blixen Museum (author of Out of Africa), or Bomas which displays the traditional homesteads of several Kenyan tribes in an outdoor village.

Tonight we stay in a simple hotel with swimming pool, restaurant and en suite bathrooms.

Hotel for the night: Kivi Milimani Hotel
Kivi Milimani Hotel.
Milimani Road
PO Box 20681
Nairobi
+254-20-2722358

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight in Kenya's capital, Nairobi	Included in tour
NNP Animal orphanage & Safari walk, Nairobi	USD 20
Karen Blixen Museum, Nairobi	USD 14
Giraffe Centre, Nairobi	USD 12
Carnivore Restaurant, Nairobi	USD 40
Bomas of Kenya, Nairobi	USD 40
National Museum, Nairobi	USD 14

Nairobi

Nairobi is a lively city with a cosmopolitan atmosphere. The Kenyan capital takes it's name from the Maasai meaning 'Place of Cool Waters'. Today it is a busy, bustling place that comes alive through it's many markets, shops, bars and restaurants, not to mention it's vibrant nightlife. If you have time to explore the city, the National Museum of Kenya and Karen Blixen Museum are both worth a visit, or you can get up close to the Giraffe's and help to feed them at the Langata Giraffe Centre.

Day 2: Gilgil, Nakuru National Park

Sun 03 Mar 2013

We leave Nairobi early this morning and head North to the small town of Gilgil (approx 185km). We will visit the the Saida Childrens Home project. After our visit to the project we make our way to our campsite.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the Saida Childrens Home	Included in tour
Safari in Lake Nakuru National Park	Included in tour

Gilgil

Gilgil is home to the Saida Childrens Home both of which are projects we support.

Saida Childrens home http://www.saidia-gilgil.org.uk/ works to improve the lives of AIDS orphans and other disadvantaged children in Gilgil and the surrounding area.

Mji wa Neema is Swahili for 'house of hope'. an is a small UK based charity raising funds to support orphaned children in and around Naivasha and Gilgil in Kenya, and specifically to fund Saidia Children's Home and projects started by Jill Simpson MBE, Teresa Wahito and Jane Kinuthia. Jill sadly passed away in October 2009 after a lifetime of good work, but Jane and Teresa continue to work tirelessly on behalf of AIDS orphans and other deprived children in the area.

Their efforts are now centred on Saidia Children's Home in Gilgil, and other projects which improve the lives of AIDS orphans and other disadvantaged children in Gilgil and the surrounding area.

We will make direct dontaions to help fund the project.

Nakuru National Park

Lake Nakuru National Park was established in 1968 to protect the huge flocks of lesser and greater flamingos that live here. At times there are over one million of these spectacular birds roaming around the acrid waters of the soda lake that is the centrepiece of the park. Even if you are not a keen birdwatcher the sight is inspiring and it is not hard to understand why the lake has become such a favourite for African wildlife documentaries. Nakuru is also where much of the film "Out of Africa" was shot.

The park is located on the floor of the Rift Valley and is a mixture of bushland, forest and rocky escarpment. Each area is an important habitat for many different species of wildlife. Besides the prolific birdlife, the park is also well established as one of East Africa's premier parks for big game. Beside the lake, hippo, waterbuck, warthogs, Bohor's reedbuck and zebra can regularly be found. Further up in the forests there's a large population of black and white colobus monkeys; and the ultimate forest predator, the leopard. The bushland on the valley floor is home to a large variety

of antelope and gazelle including eland, impala, Chandler's reedbuck and the tiny dikdik; and the inevitable pride of lions.You can also see Rothschild giraffe here, but Nakuru's biggest draw is probably it's rhinos. In the late 1980s the Kenyan Wildlife Services used the park as a rhino sanctuary, and it now has a stable black and white rhino population.

Day 3: Nakuru National Park, Eldoret

Mon 04 Mar 2013

We are up very early this morning as we head out for an early morning game drive of Nakuru National Park. We head back to our camp for lunch and set off in the truck for Eldoret.

Tonight we camp on the outskirts of the cheese town of Eldoret (200 km, approx 5-6 hours). One of Kenya's fastest growing towns, Eldoret is the hometown of some of Kenya's most famous runners due to its high altitude.

Eldoret

Originally known as "64" because it was the 64th mile post on the wagon route from Londiani, Eldoret has developed into a vibrant town. There are nightclubs that line the streets and attractions such as the Keiro Valley, Kruger Farm and high altitude training camps.

Day 4: Kampala

Tue 05 Mar 2013

Border Information: Exit Kenya at Malaba. Enter Uganda at Malaba

Today we leave Kenya behind, crossing the border into Uganda as we travel towards its capital city, Kampala (390 km, approx. 8-9 hours) where we camp on the outskirts of the city.

Landlocked Uganda, with a population of over 30 million, is one of the 5 countries that make up the East African Community. It is a country of great cultural diversity and in recent years one of the most progressive countries in the region in terms of health education relating to HIV.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight stay on the outskirts of Ugandas bustling city of Kampala	Included in tour

Kampala

Kampala is the capital of Uganda. This city was practically destroyed in the civil wars and political disturbance in the 1980's, but it is now rebuilt and reorganised. It is a friendly city, with something of a buzz about it now as it's peoples confidence has been restored. Security has improved dramatically in the last few years, which has led to a real resurgence in the city's nightlife, and clubs and bars are beginning to become popular again.

Day 5 to 6: Kibale

Wed 06 Mar to Thu 07 Mar 2013

Today we travel to the Kibale Forest National Park (350 km, approx, 6-7 hours).

When not trekking there is plenty for you to do and see in this beautiful area, including walks to villages, tea plantations, rivers, lakes, or just relaxing around the campsite.

We camp in a basic campground that has showers and flush toilets.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Forest walking in Kibale National Park in seacrh of Chimpanzees	Included in tour
Tea plantation visit or walks in the hills	USD 10

Kibale

The most accessible of Uganda's major rainforests, Kibale Forest National Park lies 35 km south of Fort Portal. This equatorial rainforest is home to the highest concentration of primates in the world, twelve different species have been recorded. The major attraction are the 500 chimpanzees. These delightful animals, more closely related to humans than to any other living creature, are tremendous fun to watch as they squabble and play in fruiting trees.

Our tours that visit Kibale take a 2-4 hour walking safari through the park, giving us the amazing opportunity to watch the way the chimps feed, climb trees, respond to humans and care for their young ones. It is a phenomenal experience and a real highlight to anyone's trip to Uganda. Aside from trekking, there is plenty more to do in this beautiful area, from village walks to exploring the many rivers and lakes, or just kick back and enjoy the lush forest views.

Day 7: Queen Elizabeth National Park

Fri 08 Mar 2013

We travel to the Queen Elizabeth National Park, beautifully set between the Great Rift Valley lakes of Edward and George, undertaking a game drive on our way to the camp (200 km, approx. 5.5 hours).

We take a boat cruise along the Kazinga Channel, well-known for pelicans, eagles and other wonderful birdlife as well as its healthy population of hippos. During our time in the park we also hope to see elephants, lions, leopards, buffaloes, Ugandan kobs and waterbucks.

Tonight we camp. The campground is basic and has toilets with basic showers.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Safari in QEII National Park including a boat trip on the Kazinga Channel	Included in tour

Queen Elizabeth National Park

This lies across the Equator in the southwest of Uganda and is bordered by two lakes. The animals that make their home here include hippos, tree-climbing lions, elephants, buffalo, Uganda kob, waterbuck, bushbuck and topi. Over the past 40 years or so, Uganda's wildlife took a terrible hammering from poaching and war. However, with the restoration of peace, the government and wildlife authorities have done a great deal to eradicate poaching and the wildlife is once again on the increase. Elephant numbers have increased substantially, with an influx from the Congo where they are still being persecuted. Queen Elizabeth National Park contains the most astonishing number of different fauna including 100 different types of mammal and over 600 species of birds. We take a boat cruise along the Kazinga Channel, well-known for pelicans, eagles and other wonderful birdlife as well as its healthy population of hippos. During our time in the park we hope to see elephants, lions, leopards, buffaloes, Uganda kobs and waterbucks.

Day 8: Lake Bunyoni

Sat 09 Mar 2013

Today we travel on to Lake Bunyonyi (250 km, approx. 6-7 hours).

Lake Bunyonyi, meaning 'place of many little birds', is in the south west of Uganda and home to some of the most picturesque scenery in the whole of Uganda.

Depending on when we arrive at the lake, if time allows then one of the best ways to admire the landscape is from on the lake itself by hiring a traditional dugout canoe (mokoro). They can be hard to master at first but great fun.

Tonight's campground has flush toilets with showers.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Camping on the shores of the stunning and remote Lake Bunyonyi	Included in tour
Dugout Canoe hire, Lake Bunyoni	USD 5

Lake Bunyoni

Lake Bunyoni in the Ugandan mountains. A serene lake surrounded by beautiful hills, you can take dugout canoes (pirogues) out onto the lake to visit the nearby Muko Forest and some of the local communities.
One community, the Batwa Tribe, is indigenous to the Great Lakes Region and found throughout Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the Eastern region of the Congo.

Day 9: Kigali, Ruhengeri & Volcanoes National Park

Sun 10 Mar 2013

Border Information: Exit Uganda at Kamuganguzi, enter Rwanda at Gatuna.

Leaving Uganda behind, we cross the border entering Rwanda and travel toward the Ruhengeri (200 km, approx 6-7 hours). Gateway to the Volcanoes National Park, Ruhengeri is our base for the next three days. We will travel via the capital city of Kigali where we will organise a visit to the very moving genocide memorial. We may visit the memorial on day 9 or 11 depending on time.

Whilst in Ruhengeri we stay in dormitories at a local church mission.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the genocide memorial in Kigali	Included in tour
3 nights to explore Ruhengeri and the surrounding area	Included in tour

Ruhengeri & Volcanoes National Park

The town of Ruhengeri is the jumping-off point for the famed Volcanoes National Park. The region is incredibly beautiful with stunning verdant mountains cascading down the shores of Lake Kivu.

The park itself protects an area which is part of a chain of eight volcanoes running along the western branch of the Great Rift Valley. These spectacular mountains and the nearby Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda are the last refuge of the mountain gorilla, the world's most endangered primate.

A trek out into the park in search of the gorillas is the experience of a lifetime. The pungent aromas of wet mountain vegetation will fill your senses as you trek through the forest following the local trackers, the sides of the mountains often shrouded in mist. The muddy and wet terrain is by no means easy, so it can be pretty strenuous and it's often very humid too - but the sheer thrill of coming face to face with a group of gorillas, dominated by a great male silverback, more than makes up for the difficulties of the trek. The animals are surprisingly placid and gentle and having the privilege of being able to watch their movements

at close range is the ultimate wildlife experience. Currently there are four habituated groups. The largest is the Susa Group (35 members including 3 silverbacks) which lives on Karasimba Volcano, and was the original group studied by Dian Fossey. This is usually a pretty strenuous trek of between 1 to 4 hours. The Trebize Group (13 members) and the Sabinyo Group are smaller and the trek is much easier. Lastly the Amahoro Group (also 13 members) live on the slopes of Mount Visoke. This trek is the intermediate one in terms of endurance.

Day 10 to 11: Ruhengeri & Volcanoes National Park

Mon 11 Mar to Tue 12 Mar 2013

We allow two days for gorilla visits as you are assigned a trekking group/time on your permit. The group may be split up into different trekking groups during the day or even over two days depending on time of permit issue and group size. There is a maximum group size of 8 on each gorilla visit.

This region is one of the last remaining sanctuaries for the mountain gorilla. No more than eight per day can visit any one habituated family and visits are strictly controlled to minimise the possibility of disturbance or transmission of disease to the animals.

Tracking gorillas in the dense forest can sometimes be wet, muddy and uncomfortable. The terrain is by no means easy either, so it can be pretty strenuous and often humid, but the sheer thrill in coming across a habituated group of gorillas, dominated by a great male silverback, more than outweighs any difficulty. You need to be prepared and fit enough to walk up to 4 hours - up and down hill. We can usually get very close to the mountain gorillas, who are placid and gentle, and watching their movements is like seeing a mirror image of yourself. Your visit with the gorillas will last one unforgettable hour.

When you are waiting for, or have completed your gorilla visit, your leader will provide you with options and ideas on how you may wish to spend your time in the area around Ruhengeri.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Golden monkeys, Ruhengeri (Cost does not ic. Park fees & entrance to NP)	USD 100
Mountain gorilla tracking Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park	Included in tour
Diane Fossey's Memorial, Ruhengeri (Cost does not ic. Park fees & entrance to NP)	USD 100
Mountain hiking Visoke (full day), Ruhengeri (Cost does not ic. Park fees & entrance to NP)	USD 100
Nature walk, Ruhengeri	USD 55

Day 12: Lake Mburo National Park

Wed 13 Mar 2013

Border Information: Exit Rwanda at Cyanika. Enter Uganda at Cyanika.

Today we travel to the border with Uganda where we will complete the border formalities. We will then head to Lake Mburo (420 km, approx 9-10 hours).

Tonight we will camp on the shores of the lake at a stunning location surrounded by wildlife. While tonight's campground is beautifully located, it is very basic, having drop toilets and basic showers.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Early morning walking safari in Lake Mburo National Park	

Lake Mburo National Park

Lake Mburo National Park is located in an area covered by extensive acacia woodland. It is a unique habitat not found elsewhere in Uganda, making the reserve home to a quite different variety of fauna to that which is found in many of the other parks. It is the best place in the country to see the gigantic eland antelope and home to about 68 different species of mammals in total. The most commonly seen are zebra, impala, buffalo and topi - and there are also rare sightings of the roan antelope. Leopard, hyenas and jackals are all predators in the region.

The five lakes within the park attract hippos, crocodiles and a variety of waterbirds, while the swamp fringes hide the sitatunga antelope and red, black and yellow papyrus gonalek. Lake Mburo is a small park, not swarming with tourists, which gives it a much more natural feel to some of the other more famous East African parks.

On Dragoman tours we camp on the shores of the lake at a stunning wild location surrounded by the wildlife, taking an early morning guided walking safari through the park allowing us to see the animals and spectacular birdlife.

Day 13 to 14: Jinja

Thu 14 Mar to Fri 15 Mar 2013

Before breakfast today we have a two hour guided walking safari through the Lake Mburo National Park allowing us to see some of the animals and spectacular birdlife. Afterwards we travel from Lake Mburo to Jinja via Kampala, stopping at the equator (340 km, approx. 7-8 hours).

We camp at scenic riverside retreat with showers and flush toilets.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Full Day rafting, Jinja	USD 125
Bungee Jumping, Jinja	USD 80
2 nights in Jinja camping next to the swirling currents of the mighty White Nile	Included in tour

Jinja

Jinja is one of the highlights of any visit to Uganda. This is a place for the adventurer, the adrenaline junkie and the eco-concious traveller. The area is beautiful and is located at the source of the Nile as it leaves Lake Victoria. The most popular activity here is the white-water rafting trip down the Nile. Our base in Jiinja is perched spectacularly on a cliff-top thirty metres above the swirling currents of the young Nile. The camp is home to international rafting guides and several troops of monkeys.

Day 15: Eldoret

Sat 16 Mar 2013

Border Information: Exit Uganda at Malaba. Enter Kenya at Malaba.

We begin our journey back to Nairobi with our first stop being the cheese town of Eldoret, where we camp for the evening (300 km, approx. 7-8 hours) and have our final night dinner together.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overland through western Kenya and the Rift Valley	Included in tour

Day 16: Nairobi

Sun 17 Mar 2013

Departing early the next morning we expect to arrive back in Nairobi (370 km, approx. 7-8 hours) around 4pm in the afternoon.

Border Information: If leaving in Nairobi exit Kenya at Nairobi Airport.

Visa Information:

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

We intend following the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often in areas without western infrastructure. You should expect that some these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

Codeshare note

Local Partner:

Dragoman runs this trip in conjunction with our trusted local partner Intrepid Guerba Kenya who share our ethos for adventure travel and have had many years' expertise in over landing.

Our departures are code shared, with certain departures run by Dragoman in one of our vehicles, others by Intrepid (Intrepid Guerba Kenya) in one of theirs. This allows us to run many more departures so you have more choice when you want to travel.

You'll get the same itineraries, activities and accommodation on both departures and the vehicles of both fleets have been standardised to a common specification, so you won't be compromising on quality. All departures have three-crew incl. an African camp master. The only difference is that the intrepid Guerba crew will all be African.

If you would like to know who is running your departure, Dragoman or Intrepid Guerba Kenya, please ask at the time of booking.

Gorilla Tracking

To track the gorillas you will need a permit. In order for us to to confirm this permit for you we require the following:-

1. Passport details at the time of booking
2. A non refundable deposit payment of GBP400 at the time of booking.

Please be aware that we cannot confirm your place on a gorilla trip without your passport details.

The likelihood of seeing gorillas is virtually guaranteed, however, they are wild animals and the chances of seeing them are not 100%.

EBOLA OUTBREAKS

There have been confirmed cases of Ebola in the Kibale district of Western Uganda since July 2012.

We recommend all travellers exercise caution by avoiding physical contact with people whilst travelling in neighbouring regions. Please see the WHO website or NaTHNaC websites or speak to your doctor for more information.

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation for the North, East & South Africa and Middle East Itineraries

Travelling in North, East & South Africa or Middle East can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions and basic campsites all provide a challenge. The conditions in the North can be more challenging than in the East or South, where public camp sites and bathroom facilities can be very basic and may be non existent in the case of bush camps. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. There are some long days driving on rough roads on all itineraries.

Altitude

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please click here to download our AMS information sheet or check out the following website www.high-altitude-medicine.com

Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival.

Visa Information

Most countries we visit on our travels will require visas. Some are best obtained before you leave home and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy /consulate. However our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

Kenya

Kenyan visas are required by most nationalities.

Single entry visas are available at the point of entry to most nationalities and cost $50USD or $20USD (post 2003 US dollar bills) for transit visas. (Some nationalities require visas to be purchased in advance - you MUST check before departure).

Multiple entry visas are required for people travelling to Rwanda to visit the Gorillas. We recommend that you obtain this in advance as you cannot obtain a Multiple entry visa at the border. However if you are unable to obtain a multiple entry visa before travel you will have to purchase Single visas upon each entry into Kenya at the border.

For more information, including application forms and visa fee rates, is available at http://www.kenyahighcommission.net. Kenya there is an airport departure tax of $20. Payment is also accepted in Kenyan Shillings. This tax is normally included in the price of airline tickets but if you are unsure, you should check with the airline or travel company.

Uganda

Visas are required by most nationalities, including the EU, US and Australia. Visas are available at point of entry to most nationalities. Some nationalities are required to obtain visas in advance - you MUST check before departure. If you plan to purchase your visas on arrival, you will need new (post 2003), clean American dollars cash and the cost is around US$50. When on one of our gorilla itineraries visiting Rwanda, you may require a double entry visa to Uganda. This is dependent on the border guard of the day and can be easily purchased on re entry from Rwanda for nationalities which qualify for visa on arrival. Please allow USD50.

Rwanda

Visas are required by all nationalities and need to be obtained in advance. You can apply for this visa online at www.migration.gov.rw

You'll need to apply for an Entry Visa on their website (Services tab, Visa) which should take approx 2-5 days to come through. You must print this Entry Facility out to present at the border.

If you are asked to provide an address in Rwanda on your visa form, please use the address below -

Centre Pastoral Notre Dame De Fatima
Avenue de la Nutrition
Ruhengeri, Rwanda

Supporting Documents may also be required - the embassy will contact you if they require these.

The visa costs approx US$60 payable on the border with the exception of USA, Germany, South Africa, Kenya, Great Britain, Sweden, Singapore, nationals where the visa is free of charge.

Note: Rwanda is constantly updating its visa information; therefore we recommended that you check the website carefully for the latest up to date information www.migration.gov.rw

Please note: The borders in which we cross into Rwanda are insisting that all nationalities complete the on line entry facility before arrival regardless of whether you are a nationality that requires a visa or not.

If you are asked to provide an address in Rwanda on your visa form, please use the address below -

Centre Pastoral Notre Dame De Fatima

Avenue de la Nutrition

Ruhengeri, Rwanda

Yellow Fever

A vaccination certificate is required for travellers arriving from all countries.

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on this trip, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US$10 and a maximum of US$20 per day.

This will cover individual expenses such as drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

What else you need to know

Currencies & Cash

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Do also bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash, travellers cheques, cash passports such as TravelEx cards and ATM cards is best. However, most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from **2003** or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on.

Cash machines are readily available in most of East and Southern Africa but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Please note that there are no cash machines in Sudan.

Credit cards such as Visa and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over $50.

Pre and post trip accommodation and connecting flights

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of your joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay. Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival, however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer as not all hotels offer this service.

Accommodation on tour

Dragoman overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. The type and variety of accommodation is determined by conditions on each of our routes. The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp. This allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. We will also arrange as many village or local homestays as possible, allowing us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

Group size?

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location, however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi for example will visit Zanzibar at the same time as groups starting their trips in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Who travels with Dragoman?

Our passengers come from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

Our Community

At any time before or after you book you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories You can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in, it's free and easy.

We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other - you can join here

Our crew and guides

Our crew are passionate about travel and always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips two western crew who are responsible for the group and the overall organisation will accompany you. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and to offer suggestions of things to do and see. In East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes. In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or all of the journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

(If travelling in East & Southern Africa, also please see the note about our code-share crew)

Your tour leader has a duty of care to all of their passengers and therefore they have the authority to ask passengers to leave the trip if they require medical assistance, are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Medical conditions

We ask all of our passengers to declare any pre-existing medical conditions and in some cases you will be asked to complete one of our medical questionnaires. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude we also require all passengers to complete an altitude questionnaire. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases passengers should be prepared for some long driving days and possible limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to region and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in. It is essential that you check with either your doctor or a travel clinic in good time before you travel.

In the UK we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up to date vaccination and health information. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

A good source of up to date information is the World Health Organisation - http://www.who.int/en/

Malaria

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your vaccination centre for the most up-to-date requirements

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wear long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping out, use a mosquito net. Wear repellent applied directly to the skin or soaked into clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights, in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

Meals and group participation

On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger, you're part of the crew, pitching in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. We operate a rota system, dividing the group into smaller units of 5 or 6 people, so that these duties are shared equally amongst the group. These jobs will include things like collecting water and firewood, loading the back locker, supervising the kitty and food stores etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals will be included in the kitty and this means that you will be working as a group to prepare meals and cook for your group. (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck, however you will still be required to help prepare meals). If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

Responsible tourism & code of conduct

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit.

You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page. All passengers are required to obey all laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs, firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any passenger found contravening such laws or customs may be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Overland travel and security

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise passengers to leave any valuable jewellery, watches etc at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice.

Please note: Any personal effects that are left on the truck, even if they are stored in the safe, are left at your own risk and Dragoman cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft that may occur.

The safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a major priority of Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers

Leaders reports from off the road

Local contacts we have built up over 29 years of experience

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. You should always make yourself aware of the travel advice before you book and again before you travel. Below are links to some of the websites

Britain. http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country

Australia. http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/

New Zealand. http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £3,000,000 and £10,000,000 respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

Emergency contact

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in theses trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries – for example they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas. We recommend that any policy has the following minimum levels of cover: Medical (incl. repatriation) £5,000,000 Personal Liability £5,000,000 Cancellation and Curtailment £5,000 Loss of Baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer_relations@dragoman.co.uk. You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we

ask you to complete at the end of your trip but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for you trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Luggage & Kit List

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is maximum 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to, there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**Ground mats are provided on our non "in-depth" overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town.*

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months
- Mattress or compressed foam
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)

- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife
- Cotton sheet sleeping bag (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper – this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp

For a comprehensive kit lists take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel have created. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list

Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 liters of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilized water stored in the purpose built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your Overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your hip pocket!

Personal medical kit

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit

Electrical equipment

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

The kitty

The Kitty is a group fund paid separately from the trip price at the start of your trip which covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

It is an amount that each passenger puts into a central fund and is monitored by the Dragoman crew. It's payable in full at the start of your trip, and in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips

The kitty system is very unique to over landing as it allows us to have flexibility on the road. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally.

The kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Local inflation and costs vary throughout the year and so we review kitties on a monthly basis. Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

Your kitty can be paid in a mixture of US Dollar cash and local currency and most of our travellers choose to bring a cash passport with them for withdrawing local currency (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM to give to your leader within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

Continuing your trip

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

Contingency emergency fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you should be prepared to contribute towards the costs and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it. On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD10 to USD15 per person.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 19/06/2013