



Trans Amazon Exploratory (ZRC)

Rio De Janeiro to Cusco 24 days, departing 14 May 2013

Comfort Zone: Basic Luxury

Physical Challenge: Easy Hard

Trip Style: Overlanding

Route: Rio De Janeiro to Cusco

Length: 24 days

Transport: Overland expedition vehicle, small boats

Accommodation: Campsites, wildcamps, hostels/hotels (55% camping, 45% hotels)



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

Brazil

Brazil has a totally different feel to it than the other Latin American countries. It positively vibrates, it is dynamic and the whole country has a unique energy. Its ethnic mix is very different from most South American countries with a predominance of Afro American people, especially in the Bahia coastal region. Brazil is a much underrated country in terms of tourism. Our trips explore much of the country, especially the little known regions and National Parks.

Most visitors start in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's most famous city and home to the Christ the Redeemer statue. The deeper you travel into the country, the more the culture of Brazil is exposed. This is a chance to hear the soulful music which is influenced from Africa and Europe and brings the distinctive sounds of Samba, Choro, Brega and more, echoing throughout the land.



With the Amazon Rainforest covering large parts of Brazil, the natural environment is home to much wildlife and biodiversity. Eco safari in the rainforest and Pantanal are becoming popular elements of Brazilian tour

One of the many wonders is the language. Although Portuguese is the main language in Brazil, over 200 languages are spoken in the country, and the diversity of each reflects the diversity of the regions.

Brazil is also the place to taste many unique foods. Inspired by others to cook, no matter what direction you head in the country, you are bound to find something new each time. To the south of Brazil is the taste of grilled meats that melt in your mouth, and to the north is the amazing Manicobo dish, that takes at least a week to prepare.

Peru

Peru is home to some of South America's most glorious landmarks, and the opportunity to partake in an activity seem endless.

The capital is [Lima](#) and it is known as the City of the Kings, it was founded by the Conquistador Pizarro in 1535. The elegant architecture runs through the capital and the cultural effects of the museums are all tucked away in this classic city.



Any introduction to Peru wouldn't be complete without the Inca civilisation. [Cusco](#) is the ancient capital of the Inca empire. Even today, many of its buildings have original Inca stonework as part of their structure. The Incas had a highly organised and labour intensive society. They managed to conquer vast tracts of land and, through strong central and regional government, retained control over an empire that spanned [South America](#), from mid Colombia in the north, to the middle of [Argentina](#) in the south and lasted for over four centuries.

The most famous Inca legacy is undoubtedly the [Inca Trail](#) the ancient set of pathways in the Andes that include the route up to the fantastic site of Machu Picchu. You can trek through the countryside making your way through the unspoiled land and view the breathtaking scenery that carries on to the horizon and beyond. When you reach [Machu Picchu](#) you will realise what a beautiful place it is, no photograph can really do the site justice. The long forgotten site was rediscovered by Hiram Bingham in 1911 and is simply awe inspiring and is a must visit place in [South America](#).

Peru is flowing with fabulous landscapes and this continues at Lake Titicaca. On the border of Peru and [Bolivia](#) it is the highest navigable lake in the world. In the culture of Lake Titicaca, comes the sound of panpipes. An Andean music form, this woodwind instrument plays tranquil sounds and is a nice form of relaxation. The Charango is the national instrument of Peru. This stringed instrument was from a Spanish influence and has a distinctive sound. The taste is as distinctive as the sound and the national dish of Ceviche. This is a fish based dish where the fish is 'cooked' in lemon or lime juice.

The history and sites of Peru are outstanding, but also the friendly welcome visitors receive make Peru one of the most enjoyable countries in the world to visit.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Rio De Janeiro

Tue 14 May 2013

Free time to explore Rio de Janeiro, with a group meeting at 18:00 hrs. We stay in a good quality hotel near the beach in Flamengo.

Departures on the 18th of June 2013 (ZRC130618A0, on the 9th of July 2013 (ZRC130730A) and 30th of July 2013 (ZRC130730A) will not be staying at Hotel Argentina but at Hotel Village Icarai (www.hotelvillageicarai.com.br) in Niteroi.

Carnival departures (6th of March 2014 and 19th of February 2015) the joining hotel will be Hotel Paysandu <http://www.paysanduhotel.com.br/>. Hotel Paysandu is located only 5 minutes walk from Hotel Argentina and is our Overlanders Carnival Hotel.

Hotel for the night: Hotel Argentina

Hotel Argentina
Rua Cruz Lima, 30
Flamengo
Rio
Tel: +55 21 2558 7233

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the world famous statue Christ the Redeemer	
Take a cable car up Sugarloaf mountain in Rio	USD

Rio De Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro has to be one of the most beautifully situated cities in the world. Sugar Loaf Mountain rises up out of Guanabara Bay, the sandy beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana cut



beautiful curves in the shoreline, all under the watchful gaze of Christ the Redeemer.

This is a city with something for everyone; beaches, history, shopping, culture, fantastic food and amazing nightlife. For amazing views of this spectacular city, take the cable car up to the top of Sugar Loaf, or "Pao de Azucar" as the Brazilians call it, ride the train to Corcovado or jump on the tram to the historic hillside neighbourhood of Santa Teresa. If you're interested in learning more about Rio and Brazil, the Historical, Indian and National Museums are all well worth a visit, and even just wandering around the older parts of the city you'll be able to see some fantastic architecture. Kick back and relax on the beach, enjoy a beer or caipirinha at one of the many pavement cafes and then when evening comes you can party the night away - Rio has some unbelievable bars and clubs, Lapa is always a fun night out and Ipanema is always buzzing too. If you need a bit of quiet time to recover, take a walk in the Botanical gardens, or escape town for the day on an excursion to the lush forests of nearby Tijuca National Park.

Of course Rio is particularly famous for its huge annual party - Carnival. The celebration of Mardi Gras 6 weeks before Easter is a great Brazilian tradition - the whole city goes wild for a full 7 days in a whirlwind of music and colour. Samba schools compete with ever more awe-inspiring dance displays and costumes putting on marathon performances in the Sambadrome, street parties are held all over the city and friends and families take to the beach.

Day 2: Ouro Preto

Wed 15 May 2013

Today is a full day 480kms drive to the beautiful old colonial mining town of Ouro Preto where we stay at a camp site with facilities

Ouro Preto

Ouro Preto is a beautiful colonial town with cobbled streets and many baroque churches. Famed for its school of mining, it was originally the capital of Minas Gerais, one of the world's great mining regions. Many different types of gemstone can be bought here. We can visit the gold mine of Minas de Passagem and you may wish to also visit the Museum of Mineralogy. Some of Ouro Preto's many churches feature the work of Aleijadinho - Brazil's most famous sculptor - who worked in wood and soapstone. Replicas of his carvings can be bought in the town.



Day 3: Ouro Preto

Thu 16 May 2013

Today is a non-driving day with free time to visit the mine, museum or many of the baroque churches here. We spend a second night at the same camp site.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Head underground into the gold mines of Ouro Preto	USD 6
Time to explore unique colonial Ouro Preto and its architectural heritage	USD

Day 4: Tres Marias

Fri 17 May 2013

Today will be a full driving day of around 600kms through Brazilian countryside and towns. We will find somewhere to bushcamp for the night, probably near to Tres Marias.

Day 5: Cavalcante

Sat 18 May 2013

We continue our journey through the Brazilian hinterland passing Brasilia en route to the town of Cavalcante where we will spend the night with the Kalunga people, a rarely visited tribe, and camp for the night on their lands.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the Kalunga community in Cavalcante	Included in tour

Day 6 to 8: Chapada Dos Veadeiros National Park

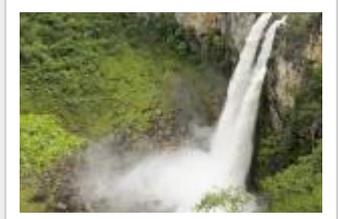
Sun 19 May to Tue 21 May 2013

We head 170kms to Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park with two full days to explore the landscape and wildlife. There is time to hike in the jungle, visit waterfalls and swim in the warm springs. We stay in an eco-tourism campsite.

Activity	Approximate Cost
3 Full Days To Explore Chapada Dos Veadeiros National Park	Included in tour
Guided tour of the national park	Included in tour
Various adventure activities such as canyoning or a canopy tour	USD 60
Abseiling or Canyoning in Chapada dos Veadeiros national park	USD 30

Chapada Dos Veadeiros National Park

Located in the State of Goiás, about 250 km from Brasília, the Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park is, according to NASA, the most luminous point seen from the Earth's orbit. This is due to the quantity of quartz crystals present in the soil, besides several other metals and minerals.



The main river that flows in Veadeiros National Park is Rio Preto. Along its course, there are many spectacular waterfalls, including Rio Preto Falls (120 metres high, 80 metres at the base) and the Cariocas. The canyons are just as beautiful, with walls of up to 40 metres high and valleys of up to 300 metres. Forests are also present in the region, and are well worth exploring primarily because of the rich variety of flora, more than 25 species of orchids can be found for example. The rich fauna of the region includes species threatened with extinction such as the Pantanal deer, the Jaguar, the Maned Wolf. More common are the Rhea (Brazilian ostrich), Seriema, Tapeti, Armadillo (Tatu Canastra), Anteater, Capybara (Capybara), Tapir (Anta), Green-beek Toucan, Black Vulture, King Vulture. While the forests are home to this amazing wildlife it can be quite difficult to see, nonetheless this is a great place for us to explore for the amazing flora and landscape alone.

Day 9: Brasilia

Wed 22 May 2013

In the morning we will have an early start and drive 230 km to Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. We will have a tour of the city with a local guide exploring this extraordinary city with its wealth of architecture and sculpture. We stay in dorm accommodation in a relatively basic hostel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Full day guided tour of Brasilia	Included in tour

Brasilia

Brasilia is listed as a world heritage site and is one of the major examples of this century's modern movement in architecture and urban planning. Oscar Niemeyer was the chief



Architect for the incredible project, an amazing feat that turned unpopulated swamp land into a purpose built city. To really appreciate the plan of the city with its bow and arrow or plane shape, try a trip up the television tower for a panoramic view. From there take taxis or walk to sights of your choice. The Metropolitan Cathedral shaped in a crown of thorns with amazing angels suspended from the ceiling should not be missed, neither should the incredible blue glass of Dom Bosco. Whatever you have time for, there is an amazing wealth of fantastic architecture and sculpture to take in within this unique city.

Day 10 to 11: Central Brazil Wildcamp

Thu 23 May to Fri 24 May 2013

Overland 1300 km towards the Pantanal of central Brazil, we will take it slowly to enjoy the sights and overlanding experience. We will be camping along the way.

Day 12: Pocone

Sat 25 May 2013

We arrive into the small town of Pocone, our base for the Pantanal trip. We stay in a local, friendly hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Journey through the heart of Brazil to the Pantanal	Included in tour

Day 13 to 14: Pantanal

Sun 26 May to Mon 27 May 2013

Trip into the Pantanal, the vast wetlands of Central Brazil. From a ranch base we explore the surrounding area on horseback, from boats, from canoes and on foot. You will be leaving mid morning on the last day doing a 'game drive' on the way out of the Pantanal and driving as far as possible tonight for a bush camp.

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 day safari exploring the backwaters and ranches of the Brazilian Pantanal	Included in tour

Pantanal

The Pantanal is the vast wetlands of Central Brazil, which are teeming with birdlife, caiman (or jacare) and rare mammals. There is in fact over 230,000 sq km of these wetlands and we now embark on a



three day trip through this unique area. Here cattle ranchers live side by side to anacondas and jacare. The list of wildlife is staggering, and there is probably nowhere else in South America where the visitor has such access to the indigenous species of wildlife. There are over 250 species of birds, including parakeets, macaws, kingfishers, ibis, storks, kites and hawks, hummingbirds and more. The mammalian and reptilian population is no less impressive, with prolific numbers of jacare, anacondas, iguanas, 2 species of anteaters, ocelot, jaguars, cougars, giant river otters and thousands of pamba and march deer. One of the easier animals to spot is the capybara, a giant guinea pig type rodent. They grow up to 60 kg. and live in large herds in the swamps. You may see jacare sunning themselves with their mouths wide open on the edge of the water-ways. These animals are dangerous and care must be taken while visiting this region. A visit to the Pantanal is really the highlight of a trip, from a ranch base we explore the surrounding area on horseback, from boats and on foot. Night fall brings a whole new variety of animals out for us to discover and if that isn't enough there is always a chance to try your hand at piranha fishing! We stay at a ranch and explore the surrounding area. We will ride out on horseback while our guide points out the local flora and fauna and explains how the local ranchers live in this wilderness area. We can also take out boats down the waterways and go piranha fishing. Our guides will be on hand to point out the

amazing wildlife and explain how people live in the area.

Day 15 to 18: West Brazil Wildcamp, Porto Velho, Rio Branco

Tue 28 May to Fri 31 May 2013

The next few days will be an incredible exploratory journey across the rarely visited parts of central Brazil via Porto Velho and Rio Branco covering over 2000kms towards the Peruvian border bushcamping along the way.

Porto Velho

This town retains elements of the American Wild West. In fact, it is riding out the tail end of a gold rush and there are still a few gold shops that you can explore. However, this town is now more popularly used as an access point to the Amazon River.

Day 19: Puerto Maldonado, Peruvian Amazon

Sat 01 Jun 2013

We cross from Brazil over the Rio Acre and enter into Peru at Assis. Once through border formalities we drive on to Puerto Maldonado, the base in which we will launch ourselves into the jungle trip.

Tonight we will stay in a small local run hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 night Amazon jungle lodge stay near Puerto Maldonado	Included in tour

Peruvian Amazon

[Peru](#) has the second largest portion of the Amazon rain forest after the Brazilian Amazon. The Peruvian Amazon jungle area stretches from the east of the Andes to borders with [Ecuador](#), [Colombia](#), [Brazil](#) and [Bolivia](#). This region comprises 60% of the country and is marked by a huge degree of biodiversity. It is one of the most biologically diverse areas on Earth. Most species have probably still not been discovered, or adequately studied. As a nation, Peru has the largest number of bird species in the world and the third largest number of mammals.

The Peruvian Amazon is traditionally divided into two distinct ecoregions:

The first being the lowland jungle which is also known as Omagua region, Walla, Anti, Amazonian rainforest or Amazon basin. This ecoregion is the largest of [Peru](#), standing between 80 and 1000 meters above sea level. It contains long and powerful rivers such as the Apurimac, Mantaro, Amazon, Urubamba, Ucayali, Huallaga, Marañón, Putumayo, Yavarí, Napo, Pastaza, Madre de Dios, Manu, Purus, Yurua and rio Tigre. The Apurimac River is the Amazon River's greatest contributor.

The second is the highland jungle which is also called Rupa-Rupa region, andean jungle, ceja de selva. This

ecoregion extends into the eastern foothills of the Andes, between 1000 to 3800 m above the sea level. The eastern slopes of the Andes are home to a great variety of fauna and flora due to the different altitudes and climates within the region. Temperatures are warm in the lowlands and colder in higher altitudes. There are many endemic fauna because of the isolation caused by the rugged terrain of this area.

Day 20: Posada Amazonas

Sun 02 Jun 2013

We transfer by boat to the Posada Amazonas. This is a forty five minute boat ride from the Tambopata Port to Posada Amazonas and will take us into the Community's Primary Forest Private Reserve.

Upon arrival, you will be briefed with important navigation and security tips.

A twenty minute walk from Posada Amazonas leads to a 30 meter scaffolding canopy tower. A bannistered staircase running through the middle provides safe access to the platforms above. From atop you obtain spectacular views of the vast expanses of standing forest cut by the Tambopata River winding through the middle. Now and then toucans, parrots or macaws are seen flying against the horizon, or mixed species canopy flocks land in the treetop next to you.

After dinner we have an Ecotourism Lecture from one of the staff members about the Infierno ecotourism.

Overnight at Posada Amazonas.

Posada Amazonas

The Posada Amazonas is a rainforest lodge just a 45-minute boat ride from the town of Puerto Maldonado. The lodge offers outstanding opportunities to see Amazonian wildlife.

The Lodge is community Owned by the indigenous Ese-Eja community of Infierno and managed in partnership with Rainforest Expeditions, Posada Amazonas is located within the Ese-Eja's communal reserve, next to the Tambopata National Reserve.

The lodge has a 30 metre scaffolding canopy tower giving you spectacular views of the vast expanses of standing forest and the Tambopata River. You will have good chances of spotting toucans, parrots or macaws

Despite being relatively close to Puerto Maldonado, the Posada Amazonas offers ample opportunities to see wildlife and experience the Amazon's rich ecosystem at firsthand, including Monkeys such as Saddle Backed Tamarins, Squirrel Monkeys, Brown Capuchin Monkeys, Red Howler Monkeys, Dusky Titi Monkeys and you can also see wildlife such as: Parrots, Giant River Otters, Caymans and capybaras on the river banks.

Day 21: Posada Amazonas, Tres Chimbadas Lake

Mon 03 Jun 2013

After breakfast we head to Tres Chimbadas Lake which is thirty minutes by boat and forty five minutes hiking from Posada Amazonas. Once there you will paddle around the lake in a catamaran, searching for the resident family of nine giant river otters and other lakeside wildlife such as caiman, hoatzin and horned screamers. Otters are most active from dawn to eight or nine in the morning.

We also visit a Parrot Clay Lick which is only a twenty minute walk from Posada Amazonas. From a blind located about twenty meters away you will see dozens of parrots and parakeets descend on most clear mornings to ingest the clay on a river bank. Species such as Mealy and Yellow-headed Amazon, Blue-headed Parrot and Dusky headed Parakeet descend at this clay lick. The clay lick is active at dawn, during the late mornings and mid-afternoons.

After lunch we have a Ethnobotanical tour. A twenty minute boat drive downriver leads you to a trail designed by the staff of the Centro Ñape. The Centro Ñape is a communal organization that produces medicines out of forest plants and administers them to patients who choose their little clinic. They have produced a trail which explains the different medicinal (and other) uses of selected plants.

After dinner you will have the option of hiking out at night, when most of the mammals are active but rarely seen. Much easier to find are frogs with shapes and sounds as bizarre as their natural histories.

Overnight at Posada Amazonas

Tres Chimbadas Lake

There are several types of habitats in the Peruvian rainforest and each makes its own contribution to biodiversity. One of the most important types of wetland habitats in the Amazon rainforest is the oxbow lake. Formed by bends in rivers that get cut off from the main channel, these lakes have much calmer waters than the river itself and can be filled with fish and wildlife. Tannins from the vegetation give the water a clear, dark, tea-like color and marshes grow in shallow parts of the lake. In Tambopata, birds like Hoatzins and Horned Screamers are found nowhere else, troops of Squirrel Monkeys are frequently seen as they forage in secondary growth at the edge of the lake, and animals like Anacondas, Black Caimans, and even Giant Otters make their home in the dark waters.

“Tres Chimbadas” was named after a nearby place in the Tambopata River that can be supposedly forded with three jumps (“tres chimbadas”). The wild, protected forests of Tambopata are one of their strongholds and Tres Chimbadas Lake is managed to protect the family of Giant Otters that reside there. These sensitive and intelligent animals roam the lake in cohesive groups that sleep, play, travel, feed and take care of their pups together.

Day 22: Urcos
Tue 04 Jun 2013

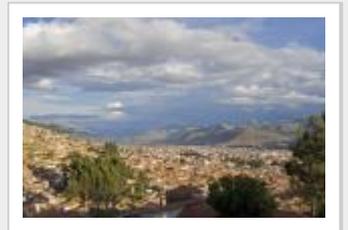
Today you will leave your jungle lodge early in the morning, get to the truck and drive as far as possible towards Cusco. You will go from the hot jungle to some of the highest passes in South America. Tonight will be spend bushcamping.

Day 23: Cusco
Wed 05 Jun 2013

A full days drive brings us to the amazing town of Cusco, gateway to the Inca Empire. We spend the night in a lovely hotel close to the Plaza de Armas.

Cusco

Cusco is the ancient capital of the Inca empire and any adventure tour to [Peru](#) is centred around this stunning city. Even today, many of its buildings still retain some of the original Inca



stonework as part of their structure. It is interesting to know that despite their advanced civilisation, the Incas did not know how to write and had not invented the wheel, yet they were skillful irrigation engineers, inventing the suspension bridge and hammock. They must have had theories on constructing buildings to avoid damage by earthquake, which may account for the way they fitted huge carved blocks of granite together in an incredibly precise jigsaw when creating new structures. Examples of their amazing building techniques can still be seen in and around Cusco, including the infamous “twelve sided stone”, now famous as part of the logo of Cusco's native “Cusquena” beer.

The town is a fantastic place to spend a few days. A good place to start your explorations is the majestic main plaza, heading out into the cobbled streets lined with attractive colonial buildings. Head up the hill into the neighbourhood of San Blas and you will discover another hidden square with a quiet laid back feel. All the streets are lined with shops, bars and restaurants, from small local cafes to five star dining experiences. If you're interested in learning more about the history and culture of [Peru](#), there are also some fantastic museums here and the many churches are well worth a look as well. So take to the streets and wander around, haggle with the street vendors, kick-back and enjoy a coffee in one of the many cafes with balconies overlooking the square and just enjoy Cusco and it's beautiful surroundings.

Cusco is also the gateway to [Machu Picchu](#) with most people trekking one of the many [Inca Trails](#) to reach this ancient Inca city. Most of our overland expeditions include trekking to Machu Picchu - for longer overland expeditions please see below. For shorter alternatives take a look at:

[Lima to La Paz](#)

[Lima to Cusco](#)

[Cusco to La Paz](#)

Day 24: Cusco
Thu 06 Jun 2013

Free time to relax in Cusco. Border information If you are leaving in Cusco, exit Peru at Cusco Airport.

Activity	Approximate Cost
White-water rafting and mountain biking in the Cusco region	USD 40

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.

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation for South America Itineraries

South America is diverse continent from high altitude, to the steamy Amazon, to baking deserts. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and other activities such as horse riding and you will need to be reasonably fit. Overland travel can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. 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. By and large the South America trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

Note on camping kit for South America

There is a miss conception about being cheaper to buy camping equipment in South America. Every where in South America is easy to find good quality camping kit if you want to fly light, but prices are very similar to UL if not more. Please keep this in mind when you are planning your trip.

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.

Brazil

Nationals of the EU, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey, Switzerland and the UK do not need a visa for tourist visits of limited duration.

Nationals of Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea and the USA need a visa to enter Brazil. This visa must be obtained before entering Brazil.

If your nationality was not included in the above mentioned group, please contact your nearest embassy to find out your visa requirements.

Peru

Nationals of most countries including Australia, the EU, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK do not need a visa for tourist visits of limited duration to Peru

Flying to Central or South America via the USA

If your flight to central or South America is via the USA then you MUST obtain an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel.

An ESTA can be obtained online via the following link and paying the appropriate fee - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on trips in South America, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US\$15 and a maximum of US\$30 per day. This amount is usually lower in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere.

This will cover expenses such as your 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. 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 and ATM cards is best. 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.

More and more people are choosing to travel with cash passports such as TravelEx cards (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 within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change in South America 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.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. However due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of \$100 notes bearing a series 2001 production date and a serial number starting with the letters CB or CF and ending in B2. The serial number is printed in green on the emblem. 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 areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard 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. If you are taking traveller's cheques, we recommend that you should only take those issued by American Express. Please note that Thomas Cook traveller's cheques may be used in some places, but are becoming more difficult to change. Brazil can be difficult for changing forex, it's handy to have a cash card as backup. Please bring a mixture of small and

large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over \$50. Kitty contributions should be at least half in cash and be in the same denominations and currencies as suggested above. Any proportion of kitty contributions paid in travellers cheques should be increased to cover the commission charge incurred in exchanging them.

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 Permethrin 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 these 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 your 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