

## GOA & THE DEEP SOUTH, (SMC)

Mumbai to Chennai 24 days, departing 03 Mar 2020



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## TRIP OVERVIEW

<b>Trip Style:</b>	Overlanding
<b>Route:</b>	Mumbai to Chennai
<b>Duration:</b>	24 days
<b>Transport:</b>	Overland expedition vehicle, Boat, Train
	0%  100%
<b>Accom:</b>	Hotels, Guesthouses, Homestays

### Physical Challenge:

EASY HARD

Your itinerary may include easy-paced day walks, bike rides, and other activities that are not too strenuous.

### Lifestyle Challenge:

EASY HARD

This trip has a bit of everything.

[Itineraries](#)  
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## ROUTE MAP



## COUNTRIES VISITED

### India



### OVERLAND ADVENTURES IN INDIA

India has shared so much of its incredible culture with the rest of the world, so a visit to this diverse and eclectic country is a chance to experience where it all began. India has so much to offer, from the beautiful landscapes of the Himalayas, the amazing temples and coastlines, the rich

culture, the chaotic cities and of course the amazing food!

India's highlights include its stunning historical treasures such as the ancient cities of Fatehpur Sikri and Hampi, the Humayun's Tomb and Qutub Minar in Delhi, the phenomenal caves of Ellora and Ajanta, the stunning Shore Temples of Mahabalipuram, and of course the world-famous Taj Mahal.

### TEMPLES, PLANTATIONS & BEACHES

There are some incredible religious sites, such as the Hindu temples of Madurai and Karmi Mata, and the Buddhist sites of Sikkim. There are some wonderful natural areas such as the vast deserts of Jaisalmer, the cool tea plantations of Wayanad and Darjeeling, the mountains of Gangtok, and the incredible beaches of Varkala and Goa.

Foremost a visit to India is probably best remembered by the welcome you are likely to receive. This, combined with India's unique atmosphere and the seemingly endless variety of the culture and the sights, is what brings travellers returning time and time again.

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## DAILY ITINERARY

### Day 1: Mumbai ( Tue 03 Mar )

**Border Information:** If joining the trip in Mumbai, you will most likely enter India from Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (IATA code: BOM).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel in Mumbai - please look out at the reception for a note from your tour leader with further details about this meeting. Otherwise, today is free to explore the sights and sounds of Mumbai.

In Mumbai we will stay in a good quality hotel.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Mumbai before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Mumbai.

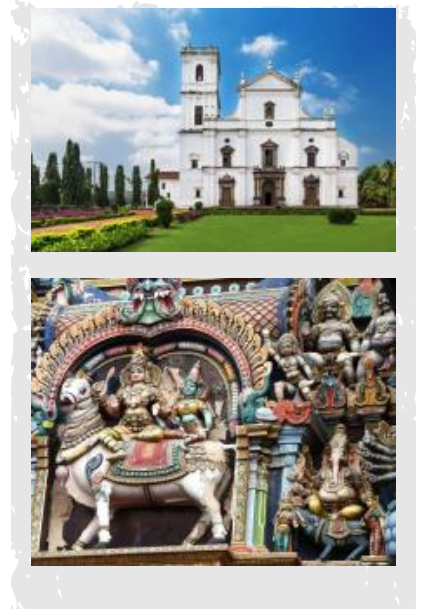
Hotel for the night: Hotel Fortune

#### Hotel Fortune

36/38 1st Marine Street  
Metro, Dhobi Talao  
Mumbai  
Tel 022-22052502

#### Activity

#### Approximate Cost





Take a guided tour of the backstreets, shops and schools of the Dhavari district, to experience a slice of the real Mumbai INR 1200

Take a Bollywood dance class in one of Mumbai's premier dance studios INR 500

Discover the marvellous collection of historical objects and art at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum, one of India's premier museums INR 500

Explore the labyrinth of cave-temples on Elephanta Island near Mumbai, some of the most impressive rock carvings in all of India INR 750

### About Mumbai:

Mumbai is India's most cosmopolitan city, and lies on the west coast. It's also home to the largest film industry in the world, Bollywood - so if you've never seen an Indian movie before, this is the place for it. Full of high-drama, romance, suspense, music and dancing, Bollywood films are all-singing, all-dancing extravaganzas!

Combine India's version of LA with a hefty dose of traffic, busy streets, lively bazaars, briefcase-clutching businessmen and some impressive colonial architecture, and there you have Mumbai. The city is a mad mixture of horrific poverty standing side-by-side with prolific consumerism; this is the financial capital of the sub-continent and it has the shopping centres, bars and restaurants to match - but more than half the inhabitants live in the slums. Mumbai can be a bit of a shock to the system and an assault on the senses. But once you get your head around it, you'll begin to appreciate all the city has to offer.

There's tons to do here, wander the streets and discover some of the beautiful old colonial architecture and Art Deco buildings, treat yourself to a meal in one of the country's best restaurants, and shop until you drop in the bazaars. In the evening, you can visit Chowpatty beach where colourful crowds of people mill about in the cooler evening air. Palmists, balloon sellers, magicians and acrobats all compete for your attention, vying to show you the magic of Mumbai.

### Day 2: Mumbai ( Wed 04 Mar )

Today will be a free day to explore the city. This is also an opportunity to take a tour of the Dharavi slum areas of the city.

Please note that the trains are often heavily booked in advance and it may not be possible to confirm tickets for all passengers. In the event that we cannot get a train ticket confirmed we will notify you to make alternative arrangements. This will generally mean you will travel by flight the next day and re meet the group in Goa.



## Activity

Experience a local overnight train from Mumbai to Goa

## Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

## Day 3 to 4: Goa ( Thu 05 Mar to Fri 06 Mar )

We will start our journey early by taking the train along the coast to Goa. We will stay for 2 nights at the relaxed beaches of Vagator in the northern part of Goa. Most travellers are drawn to Vagator for the stunning sunsets, the laid-back atmosphere and the proximity of some other quieter beaches in the area such as Arambol and Anjuna.

In northern Goa we will stay in a comfortable hotel with good facilities close to the beach.

Estimated Journey Time (on train) - 11-12 hours.

### About Goa:

To many people, Goa is all about the beaches - and it's fair to say that the soft white sand and sparkling blue water of the Arabian Sea are definitely some of the main attractions here.

But this is also an area rich in history and culture. The coastal state retains much of its old Portuguese colonial architecture, traditions, religion, and lifestyle, particularly in the old capital of Old Goa, where there are several churches, a cathedral and lots of great local markets, all well worth exploring.

Relax under a palm tree on the beach, watch the dhows sailing out into the sunset and see the fishing boats landing their catch, or wander around the local spice plantations revelling in their heady scent - there's something here for all kinds of different travellers. The locals say that time moves more slowly in Goa, so if nothing else it's a brilliant stop for a few days, a great chance to enjoy a bit of tranquility in an often frenetic country.

Goa is also home to some fantastic cuisine, including many fish-based curries, classic Goan pork vindaloo and Feni, a local spirit made from coconut and cashew nuts.

## Day 5 to 6: Goa, Old Goa ( Sat 07 Mar to Sun 08 Mar )

After our 2 nights on the northern beaches of Goa, we head off in the truck to the southern end of Goa. En route we will stop off at the site of Old Goa to spend some time independently exploring the area's colonial buildings.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours (please note that all drive times given here are the approximate number of hours that the truck will be in motion only, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors -



flexibility is essential on any overland trip!).

We will stay for 2 nights on either the stunning beach of Agonda or Palolem, these beaches are the perfect places to sit back and watch the fishing boats landing their catch or sample the delicious local cuisine.

### About Old Goa:

Old Goa is a historical city in North Goa. The city was constructed by the Bijapur Sultanate in the 15th Century CE, and served as capital of Portuguese India from the 16th Century until its abandonment in the 18th Century due to plague. The remains of the city are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The population was roughly 200,000 by 1543. Malaria and cholera epidemics ravaged the city in the 17th Century and it was largely abandoned, only having a remaining population of 1,500 by 1775. It was then that the viceroy moved to Panjim. It continued to be the de jure capital of Goa until 1843, when the capital was then shifted to Panjim. The abandoned city came to be known as "Velha Goa" (in Portuguese, 'Old Goa'), to distinguish it from the new capital Nova Goa (Panjim). Velha Goa was incorporated into the Republic of India in 1961, together with the rest of Goa.

Old Goa contains various churches, including the Se Cathedral (the seat of the Archbishop of Goa), the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, the Church of St. Caetano, and notably, the Basilica of Bom Jesus which supposedly contains the relics of St. Francis Xavier.

### Day 7 to 8: Hampi ( Mon 09 Mar to Tue 10 Mar )

Leaving the beaches of Goa behind us, we set off on a full day drive into the state of Karnataka and to the village of Hampi. The village is located within the ruins of Vijayanagara, the former capital of the ancient Vijayanagara Empire.

Estimated Drive Time - 9-11 hours.

On the following day we will have a guided tour of the historical sites around Hampi by rickshaw and on foot.

In Hampi we will stay in a comfortable local guesthouse.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Discover the lost kingdom of Vijayanagar in the magnificent ruined city of Hampi

Included in Kitty

### About Hampi:

The city of Hampi bears exceptional testimony to the vanished civilization of the kingdom of Vijayanagar, which reached its apogee under the reign of Krishna Deva Raya between 1509 and 1530 CE. The type of structure illustrates a significant historical situation, that of the kingdoms of South India which, menaced by the Muslims, were occasionally allied with the Portuguese of Goa.

The grand site of Hampi was the last capital of the last great Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar. Its fabulously rich princes built Dravidian





temples and palaces which won the admiration of travellers between the 14th and 16th Centuries. Conquered by the Deccan Muslim confederacy in 1565, the city was pillaged over a period of six months before being abandoned.

### **Day 9 to 10: Mysore ( Wed 11 Mar to Thu 12 Mar )**

From Hampi we will have another full day drive to the city of Mysore, one of India's most attractive towns.

Estimated Drive Time - 10-12 hours.

On the following day we will have free time in Mysore to independently explore the city's beautiful gardens, palaces, and the Shri Chamarajendra art gallery.

In Mysore we will stay in a comfortable hotel.

#### **About Mysore:**

Mysore is one of India's most attractive towns. Unlike some of India's biggest cities, it feels quite manageable in size, and its beautiful buildings are packed full of history - the Maharaja's Palace, the Lalitha Mahal (Summer Palace) and Shri Chamarajendra art gallery are all definitely worth a visit.

Historically the town was the capital of the mighty Maharaja kingdom of Mysore, ruled by the same family from 1399 until 1947. There was a brief period where the throne was usurped by one of the most colourful of Indian rulers, Hyder Ali and then by his famous son Tipu Sultan.

Today the city is the state capital and one of the centres of the silk trade. It's well laid out with wide streets and many gardens, making it a pleasant place to wander around. It is also one of the major incense manufacturers in India - some call it the "Sandalwood City" and you will find yourself enveloped by the aromas of sandalwood, jasmine, rose and musk.

### **Day 11 to 12: Wayanad ( Fri 13 Mar to Sat 14 Mar )**

Today we travel up into the cool highlands and head to the hill-station of Wayanad, a small settlement surrounded by tea and coffee plantations. Enroute we will have the opportunity to visit the Eddakkal caves. A steep hike up allows breathtaking views over the local area and an insight into the carvings thought to date back over 3,000 years.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

We will have a free day in Wayanad where we have many options available. From hiking up Chembra Peak, visiting local waterfalls and tea plantations, or the chance to visit the nearby Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary.

Whilst in Wayanad we stay as guests of local families at a guesthouse where they have set up rooms for visitors in their homes.

#### **Activity**

#### **Approximate Cost**



Relax at the Community Guesthouse in the hills of Wayanad Included in Kitty

See the 7000-year-old Neolithic petroglyphs at the Edakkal caves en route Included in Kitty

Take a strenuous day-hike up the 2100m Chembra Peak, the highest peak in the Wayanad area INR 1500

Take a walk through the scenic Wayanad countryside to visit the Meenmuttery or Kanthanpara waterfalls INR 600

### About Wayanad:

The lush hill station district of Wayanad is nestled at the foot of the Western Ghats. Rolling green hillsides, surrounded by misty-clad peaks and dotted with luxurious tea, coffee and spice plantations, the small communities here are the perfect place for a spot of rest and relaxation - the area is famous with locals for its spectacular natural beauty. Part of the region is designated as a wildlife sanctuary in order to protect the many animals that live here, and it's possible to trek through the forest reserves. This is one of the few places in India where you may see wild elephants, and if you're lucky you may also be able to spot deer, bison and langur monkeys.

## Day 13 to 14: Kochi ( Sun 15 Mar to Mon 16 Mar )

Today we will continue our journey with a full day drive to the coastal city of Kochi.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-10 hours.

On the following day we will take a local boat to Fort Cochin and have free time to explore and visit various sites including the Jewish Quarter, St Francis Church and the iconic Chinese fishing nets. In the evening we will be able to see a performance from the famous Kathakali dancers, India's most spectacular dance drama.

In Kochi we will stay in a comfortable hotel.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Evening visit to watch the classical Indian dance drama of Kathakali	Included in Kitty
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### About Kochi:

Kochi, in Kerala state, is a town split between the mainland and a group of islands just off the coast. The main sites, which include the oldest church in India and Vasco de Gama's final resting place, lie a short ferry ride from our hotel.



Opposite Fort Cochin you can watch fishermen working their cantilevered Chinese fishing nets, a typical feature of this region. Interestingly, the town is also home to a dwindling Jewish community that has roots going back as far as 1000 CE, and there is a synagogue here that was built in the 16th Century.

This is also the home of Kathakali dancing, India's most spectacular style of dance drama. The hundreds of different arrangements are based on stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata - the two epic stories of Indian mythology.

## Day 15: Alleppey ( Tue 17 Mar )

Leaving the bustle of Kochi behind, today we embark on our included overnight houseboat cruise on the tranquil Keralan backwaters of Alleppey. We will often split into smaller groups to board our traditional 'Kettuvallom' boats which will take us around the scenic rivers and spend the night aboard.

### About Alleppey:

Alleppey is the gateway to the Keralan backwaters. The network of waterways here extends over hundreds of kilometres, so it's no surprise that Alleppey is sometimes described as "The Venice of the East". Life revolves around the water here - children often learn to swim before they can walk, and they row boats before they ride a bike!

Of course, the best way to explore the region is by boat - jump on board a typical Keralan houseboat and meander down the waterways, try your hand at fishing, and just lay back and enjoy this unique landscape.

## Day 16 to 18: Varkala ( Wed 18 Mar to Fri 20 Mar )

After our fantastic overnight cruise along the Keralan backwaters, we continue our journey with a short drive to the beach resort of Varkala.

Estimated Drive Time - 5 - 7 hours.

We will have 3 nights here with free time to explore the surrounding areas and relax on the beautiful beaches. Varkala is well known for its beaches, and there are also lots of great local restaurants where you can sample the justifiably-famous Keralan cuisine.

In Varkala we will stay at a beach resort.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Head out for an evening performance of traditional Keralan Kathakali dancing	INR 300
Get a traditional Ayurvedic massage in the Keralan town of Varkala	INR 1200

### About Varkala:

Varkala sits on India's Keralan coast, and is home to some of the

whitest and most pristine beaches in the whole country. The sandy bay here is protected by soaring cliffs, the beach sits below the rock face, whilst the town itself sits prettily along the cliff edge above - a string of laid-back bars, restaurants, guesthouses and hotels.

It's a great place to just kick back and relax, but there are plenty of activities to involve yourself in, including yoga, boat rides, massages and cooking classes. Sitting on the sand and watching the sun dip below the horizon is the perfect way to end a day here.

## Day 19: Kanyakumari ( Sat 21 Mar )

Today we will have a morning drive to Kanyakumari (also known as Cape Comorin), the very southern point of India. Here we will have free time to independently explore the Vivekananda Rock and the surrounding sites.

In Kanyakumari we will stay in a local hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Take the ferry over to Vivekananda Rock and explore the memorial to the Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda	INR 150

### About Kanyakumari:

Kanyakumari (sometimes referred to as Cape Comorin) is a town in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. Located at the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula, it is the geographical end of the Indian mainland and the confluence of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean. Kanyakumari takes its name from the Kumari Amman Temple, situated in the town. Just off-shore, on Vivekananda Rock, is a huge statue of the Hindu holy man Swami Vivekananda - this is a wonderful place to join the locals to watch the sun rise in the early morning.

## Day 20: Madurai ( Sun 22 Mar )

This morning we have the option to get up early to watch the sunrise from the southern tip of India with thousands of locals, which can be an incredible experience! From Kanyakumari we then start heading back north again, and drive to the holy city of Madurai. In the afternoon we will have an included visit to the Sri Meenakshi Temple in Madurai.

In Madurai we will stay in a comfortable local hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the historical Hindu Meenakshi Amman Temple, dedicated to lord Shiva	Included in Kitty

### About Madurai:

Madurai is Tamil Nadu's third largest town and has been populated since the 3rd Century BCE - there is mention of the city in the works of ancient Greek and Roman historians such as Pliny the Elder and Ptolomy.

Madurai is recognised as the centre of Dravidian culture with its main attraction the famous Sri Meenakshi Temple in the heart of the old town. Its many gopurams are covered with profusions of multicoloured images of gods, goddesses, animals and mythical figures. The city is also synonymous with the Tamil language, and is one of the centres of Tamil culture in India. It is one of southern India's liveliest cities, yet small enough not to be overwhelming.

## **Day 21 to 22: Pondicherry ( Mon 23 Mar to Tue 24 Mar )**

Today we head to the French-influenced town of Pondicherry, and will have free time on arrival in the afternoon.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

We will have 2 nights here with plenty of time to relax and soak up the atmosphere and spend time exploring the town and its beautiful colonial architecture.

In Pondicherry we will stay in a local guesthouse.

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**

Sit down and relax with a coffee and a croissant at one of the many French Bakeries in town.

INR 400

Visit the spiritual community of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, founded in the early 20th century by the famous Bengali freedom fighter and spiritual leader

Free

### **About Pondicherry:**

The united territories of Pondicherry are unmistakably and charmingly French, complete with an hotel de ville, French consulate and police who wear red 'kepis' hats and belts. Pondicherry is also the home of the famous Sri Aurobind ashram and its offshoot Auroville. The ashram, founded by Sri Aurobindo in 1926, is one of the most popular in India amongst westerners, and also one of the most affluent. The town enjoys duty-free status and is known for its leather goods and hand-made paper products - with its French influence, many of the shops have a distinctly European feel.

## **Day 23: Chennai, Mahabalipuram ( Wed 25 Mar )**

Today we have a short drive to the ancient city of Mahabalipuram, once



the capital of the Pallava Dynasty in the 7th Century CE. On arrival we will have an included visit to the incredible Shore Temples and other monuments around the town ( time permitted ).

In the afternoon we will finish the short drive to the bustling coastal city of Chennai.

In Chennai we will stay in a comfortable hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 5 - 6 hours.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Visit the Fort St. George, the site of the East India Company's first trading station in 1640, and the first British fort in India	INR 100
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Visit the Chennai Government Museum, and its incredible selection of antiquities including Roman artefacts and coins from all eras of India's past	Included in Kitty
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Visit to the Shore Temples & Pagodas of Mahabalipuram	Included in Kitty
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### About Chennai:

Chennai (previously known as Madras) was the site of the first major settlement of the East India Company in 1639, and is now the fourth largest city in India. The town grew up around the Fort St. George and along Mount Road, and some interesting historic buildings can be seen here. It's true that it is busy, noisy and often extremely hot, but in many ways it is a surprisingly efficient and orderly place.

The Government Museum is worth a visit if you're interested in the history of the city, and its 13km-long Marina Beach is the country's longest urban beach. You might prefer to just wander the streets and soak up the atmosphere, exploring the many temples and bustling local markets.

### About Mahabalipuram:

Mahabalipuram was the second capital and seaport of the Pallava Dynasty of Kanchipuram, a medieval kingdom that ruled the area between the 6th and 9th Centuries CE. It is famous for its granite Shore Temples that overlook the Bay of Bengal, and the 'Descent of Ganges', a very detailed relief carved on a vast rock surface.

Mahabalipuram is a small but very pleasant and easy-going village, consisting mainly of two main streets. It stands at the foot of a low lying, boulder-strewn hill where most of the temples and rock carvings are located.

## Day 24: Chennai ( Thu 26 Mar )

**Border Information:** If you are leaving the trip in Chennai, you will most likely exit India from Chennai International Airport (IATA code: MAA).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Chennai. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact the Sales Team if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Visit the Chennai Government Museum, and its incredible selection of antiquities including Roman artefacts and coins from all eras of India's past	INR 250

## **IMPORTANT NOTES**

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

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

We update these notes regularly, so please ensure you have an up-to-date version of these trip notes.

We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our 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, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards.

## **PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

### **PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR ASIA ITINERARIES**

In Asia you will need to be healthy enough to cope with extremes of climates from the hot deserts through to the colds of the high mountains. There are some high altitudes in places and many places where walking around for several hours is the only way to explore (e.g. The Great Wall of China, walking tours in Uzbekistan, exploring the historical sites of India, etc.).

Overland travelling 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, our Asia trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available. If you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

## **VISA INFORMATION**

Many countries that we visit on our travels will require visas to enter. 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 read the information very carefully to make sure everything is clear and you aware of what you need to do. Please also be aware that rules surrounding visas do change, often suddenly, and without prior warning. This is why it is important that you also double-check the information we provide for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance, you may wish to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy or consulate. If you require any supporting documentation for your visa applications, Dragoman will obtain this on your behalf as part of your trip price - we will contact you to request additional information in order to make this application for you.

However, for trips that involve multiple visas, you may find it beneficial to use a specialist visa agency to assist you with your applications. While this does sometimes increase the cost, it usually makes the process much easier for you.

As you will often 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.

Most countries require that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after travel.

For trips that are not yet guaranteed, you may find yourself in the position whereby you will need to start the visa application process prior to your trip being guaranteed - in this situation we still advise you **not** to purchase flights until your trip is guaranteed. However, you **can** start your visa application process, ensuring that when applying for your visas or letters of invitation that you allow several days before and after your entry into the country to allow for delays, availability of flights, etc.

## INDIA

Citizens of all countries **will** need a visa to enter India as a tourist for up to 180 days.

Most Dragoman passengers will need to obtain their visa **in advance**. It is now possible for most nationalities to apply for an E visa. Please visit the following website to see if you are eligible for this <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>. Please note this is only an option if you arriving into India via a major airport and you are staying in India for less than 60 days. If you are entering into India overland or if you are staying for longer than 60 days then you won't be able to apply for the e visa and you will need to apply for a visa at your nearest Indian Embassey before you travel.

It is highly recommended if you need a visa before you travel to do this in **your country of residence**; You can apply directly at your closest Indian Consulate or Embassy. For UK residents, please go to the website - <http://www.vfsglobal.com/India/UK/> - to fill in the online visa form and book an appointment to complete the application.

Alternatively you can apply via a specialist visa agency who can put the application in for you.

Please be aware that the photos that you bring to the appointment must be 50mm x 50mm, or your application will be rejected (this is a unique square-shaped photo). The photos must be in colour and have a plain white background, and computer generated photos will be rejected. Please paste one photo to the front of your application and leave the other one loose. You must sign under the photo on page one and the declaration on page two.

Visas issued in the UK are valid for 6 months from the date of issue (by which time you have to have exited the country). Please note that you cannot extend any tourist visas once within India.

If you are asked to provide an address in India on your visa form, please use the joining hotel for your trip or the address below:

*Hotel Fortune*



36/38 1st Marine Street,  
Metro Dhobi Talao,  
Mumbai,  
India  
Tel +91 02222052502

If you are asked to provide a referee in India on your visa form, please use the details below:

JP Sharma,  
Bridging Journey's,  
F213/B Old Road,  
Lado Sarai,  
Mehrauli, New Delhi,  
110030,  
India  
Tel: +91 1146604167

Please bring 10 photocopies of your passport and Indian visa (on the same page). These may need to be used for hotel check-ins as well as permits in some areas. Please also bring 2 passport photos in case these are needed.

If travelling to Sikkim, your Sikkim permits will be arranged in Kolkata with your tour leader - please bring several passport photos for this permit.

**IMPORTANT NOTE - If you are travelling on the Chennai-Kolkata leg - please note that all permits for the Odisha region must be arranged before you arrive in Chennai. Dragoman will arrange the permits on your behalf but it is very important that you send us a high quality scan or photo of your passport photo page when you book . We will need these scans 10 days before the trip starts in Chennai, at the very latest. If we do not receive these scans in time we will be unable to take you on the trip through the Odisha region. Please also bring an additional 2 passport photos on the trip.**

**If you are travelling to Bhutan - please send Dragoman a scan of your passport photo page when you book as this is important for arranging the Bhutan group visa.**

**If you are travelling on the Mumbai-Chennai leg or the Kolkata-Kathmandu leg - please send Dragoman a scan of your passport photo page when you book, as this is important for arranging train tickets on these legs. In some cases (late bookings) we may also require a copy of your Indian visa (or receipt of an e-visa if you plan to take this option).**

A valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers coming from [areas with risk of yellow fever transmission](#) (including transiting through an airport in an area of risk).

## PERSONAL SPENDING

### PERSONAL SPENDING - ASIA

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on this trip, we recommend you allow between USD15-30 per day for Central Asia, China and Burma and between USD10-USD20 per day for India, Nepal and South East Asia.

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

For trips in Southern India that occur over Christmas and New Year please allow approximately **USD160** extra on the kitty for seasonal increases in accommodation costs.

## ASIA CURRENCIES AND 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!

Bringing a sensible mix of cash and ATM cards is the best way to bring money out, but it's always a good idea to bring plenty of cash that you can change (USD and EUR are commonly changed throughout Asia) rather than relying on cards. 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. ATMs are available in most areas but are not always reliable. You may also find your card doesn't work in all ATM's. Credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are accepted in some major cities, but be prepared for very high commission charges.

Banks and moneychangers in most countries in Asia will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are **no more than 8 years old**. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Please also bring a mixture of small and large denominations - you may get a better rate for changing larger denomination bills, but in more remote areas it can be difficult to change amounts over USD50.

Please note that due to restrictions on currency conversion for foreigners in many Asian countries, it may not be possible to change leftover local currency back into USD after your trip, so please plan your budget well by withdrawing/exchanging what you need as you go.

## WHAT ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Overland Lifestyle and Trip Suitability

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off the beaten track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity. On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc.

Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out!

We are looking forward to welcoming you on one of our overland journeys, but before we do there are a few things we would like to draw to your attention.

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### Who Travels with Dragoman?

Our groups are made up of people from around the world, and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split between 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 (or 7 on our Family Trips), as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the wonderful aspects of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and the variety of people that you will meet.

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### 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 Cuzco and during the Inca Treks. This means a group starting a trip in Cuzco will embark on the Inca Trail at the same time as a group finishing in or travelling through Cuzco. In practical terms this means there could be more than 22 group members in Cuzco and on the Inca Trail at the same time.

Please note that there is also 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 a group starting their trip there. In practical terms this means there could be more than 22 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Please also note that on some departures there may be more than one truck doing the same route. This means that you will be in the same hotel or campsite as another Dragoman group on some days. To ensure that you are not always at the same place at the same time as another group, your itinerary will most likely be slightly altered from the itinerary advertised in these trip notes.

## **Our Crew and Guides**

Our crew are passionate about travel and are always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all the overland companies, spending 8 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK, and then up to 6 months on the road as a trainee. Our crew are trained to manage and operate the trip safely and efficiently and their duties include: planning the trip according to the itinerary, driving and maintaining the truck, securing services of local guides, general logistics, health and safety, liaising with bureaucracy, dealing with issues where needed and offering advice and support to our customers. In addition they have a basic knowledge of the places visited and will be able to offer suggestions of things to do and see. Dragoman endeavours to provide the services of experienced crew, however, due to the seasonality of travel, situations may arise where your tour leader is new to a particular region or training other crew, new to the area.

On all Dragoman overlanding trips, we usually have 2 western crew but please be aware that there may be times when one crew member has to leave the trip due to unforeseen circumstances such as visa issues, illness of a group member, etc. On some of our trips we have 1 western crew and 1 local driver instead of 2 western crew. On trips south of Nairobi 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.

On the majority of our trips in Ethiopia, Sudan, Central Asia, China and South East Asia, in addition to our crew we will have a local guide on board who will travel with us for the entire duration of our time within one country. In these cases, the local guide becomes a third crew member and is able to offer their local knowledge as well as an insight into their country and the lives of the local people.

In most other areas of Africa, the Americas, India and Turkey, in addition to our crew we will employ local guides in specific locations of interest (for just a few hours up to a few days).

Your crew have a duty of care to all members of the group and therefore they have the authority to ask you to leave the trip if you require serious medical assistance, you 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.

## **Accommodation on Tour**

Dragoman's overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels or hostels, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Whilst our crew will do their best to accommodate couples travelling together in twin rooms, all our travellers should expect to stay in multi-share accommodation when staying in hostels, gers or yurts.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary greatly depending on what options are available at the time; hotels can vary from very basic rooms without electricity or running water to high standard hotels with good facilities! Generally in hotels most rooms will be single sex, twin-share, but in South America many rooms are triple/quad-share. Hostels, gers and yurts are nearly always multi-share



and may be mixed sex.

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 wild camp away from the tourist crowds. Occasionally on some of our trips we are able to stay in villages or local homestays allowing us to get close to the indigenous population and ensuring that our money stays within the local community.

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## The Kitty

In addition to the trip price on our overlanding trips, you will also be required to pay a kitty specified for your trip (please note that there is no kitty on our Family Trips). The kitty is payable in installments at the start of each section of the trip for combination trips, and in full at the start of the trip for individual trips. Each customer joining a trip pays their kitty into a central fund. The fund is managed by the Dragoman crew and the kitty accounts can be viewed by all throughout the trip.

The kitty covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not whilst staying in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park or historical site entrances, excursions, etc.)

The kitty system is unique to overlanding and allows us to have flexibility and transparency on our trips. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally. It also helps to keep the costs competitive and save on administration costs so that we can pass the saving on to you. Dragoman makes NO PROFIT on kitties, as they are the group's fund. If there is money left in the kitty at the end of your trip, then this is divided between the group and you receive a refund.

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. We constantly update the kitty prices on our website and the kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Prices can go up or down with no notice, and exchange rate fluctuations will affect costs.

The kitty is payable in full at the start of your trip (in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips). Alternatively you can pay in advance via a bank transfer 3-4 weeks before the start of your trip - please see [https://www.dragoman.com/files/Dragoman\\_Kitty\\_Document.pdf](https://www.dragoman.com/files/Dragoman_Kitty_Document.pdf) for more details - this information sheet will also be sent in your booking confirmation upon booking a trip and can be found on [www.dragoman.com/overlanding/planning-your-trip/money](http://www.dragoman.com/overlanding/planning-your-trip/money). Please also note that prepayment is not available for our trips to West Africa, Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Alaska and any trip in Africa north of Nairobi.

If you are bringing the kitty out in cash, please ensure your USD notes (EUR notes if your trip goes through West Africa) are clean and undamaged and **no more than 8 years old**. If needed, your tour leader will be able to accept some of the kitty in local currency, and they will let you know the exchange rate locally. In most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines, using either a cash passport or a credit/debit card. However, please bear in mind that most cards have a maximum withdrawal amount per day, local ATMs may run out of cash, and your bank could block the card despite you warning them of your travel plans, so it could be impractical to try to get the entire kitty out from an ATM.

We cannot accept traveller's cheques on our trips.

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## Meals and Group Participation

On an overland journey you are more than just an individual passenger - you're part of the team. You are expected to pitch in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. As part of your trip you

will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting water and firewood, sweeping out the truck, loading the back locker, etc. While camping on overland journeys, the meals are included in the kitty. This means that you will have to work together to cook for everyone in your group. You will be divided into smaller units of 3-4 people and take it in turns to cook for the whole group according to a rota system. When it is your group's turn to cook you will have to plan the meal, shop for the ingredients in local markets or supermarkets and then prepare the meal for the whole group. The secret to cooking for 20+ people using a basic camping kitchen is to keep it simple! (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck; however you will still be required to help them to prepare meals).

An example of a typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, fruit and cereal as well as tea and coffee. When time allows it will also be possible to serve something hot such as eggs or pancakes. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto or 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.

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## Dietary Requirements

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and tell your crew at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible. However, it must be remembered that it may not always be possible and the variety of dishes may be severely limited in comparison to those available to others. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet, that you would miss from home, or because of an allergy would miss out on, it would be best to bring this with you. Depending on your particular requirements, you may need to allow yourself some extra spending money to allow you to purchase extra food items.

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## Itineraries

Our itineraries are developed and published with the best of intentions, however travel in more remote areas of the world is unpredictable - borders can close, there can be extreme adverse weather, strikes or maybe mechanical issues that affect the running of your trip, but equally due to the nature of our trips we can often spontaneously include a local festival or event into the itinerary. This being said, the safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a priority for us. 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. We make operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources, including the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice, reports from other travel companies and local suppliers, leaders' reports from off the road and local contacts we have built up over many years of experience.

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## British Foreign Office Travel Advice and Warnings

Dragoman follows the British Foreign Office Travel advice when deciding where and where we are unable to travel. We will base our decisions on itineraries and alterations to published routes based on their advice rather than the advice of other governments. We will advise you of any significant changes in advice before travel or whilst you are overseas.

However, we recommend you check the latest travel advisories from your own government for the country you are travelling to before you book and prior to departure. If there are any travel warnings present for the region you will travel to, as well as considering whether you are happy to travel despite the warning you must also check to ensure that it is not invalidating your travel insurance. Here are a few useful addresses:

UK - [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

Australia - <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand - <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

United States - <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>

Canada - [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp)

We also recommend that you check out the UK Travel Aware website before you travel at <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/>. This website offers straightforward travel advice, top tips, and up-to-date country information to help you plan a safe trip.

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## Health

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with our style of travel. To help you assess if this trip is suitable, please refer to the physical rating. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases you should be prepared for some long driving days and possibly limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, Dragoman reserves the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip without a refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. You must also declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase and provide evidence to us prior to departure that your pre-existing medical condition has been declared to your insurers. Failure to do so will mean that you are unable to join the trip.

## Extreme Environments

There may be periods of time within your trip when you meet extreme conditions, such as extreme heat, extreme wind, extreme cold, extreme humidity, extreme altitude, extreme crowds etc. Whilst our crew will let you know at the time when you are likely to meet these conditions, please ensure that you have read through the trip notes carefully and researched the local weather conditions at the time and that you feel that you are fit enough to cope with these conditions. If you have any doubts at all, please contact us to discuss your concerns prior to booking, and when on trip, if you find that the local conditions are causing you concern at any time, please be sure to let your trip leader know so that appropriate precautions can be discussed.

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## Altitude

Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude, the tour leader will issue you with a self-assessment altitude questionnaire which allows you to monitor how you are coping with the altitude and informs you of danger signals so that you can report these as soon as possible, either to the tour leader or a medical professional.

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## Yellow Fever

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

## Malaria & other mosquito-borne diseases

There is a risk of contracting malaria in some areas which we travel through. If your trip goes to a areas with malaria it is always best to get expert advice before travelling about the types of malaria pills



available, whether they are recommended, and take any that are prescribed as instructed. Consult your GP or travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika are continuing to spread and are becoming a bigger problem around the world. Mosquito bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases, as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available. Health professionals have issued warnings for pregnant women travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus. For more information about Zika please visit:

- WHO: [www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zika-virus](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zika-virus)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika)

The Anopheles mosquitoes that transmit malaria usually bite between the hours of dusk and dawn, whereas the Aedes mosquitoes that transmit yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika bite both during the day and the night. To prevent being bitten, it is recommended to cover up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light-coloured and buttoned at the wrists. Do not sleep without closing your windows, tent door, etc. and use a mosquito net in hotels or if sleeping outside where there are mosquitoes present. Use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing. Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permethrin solution also provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights and in hotel rooms, but cannot be used inside the tents. For more advice on how to avoid bites please see: [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance)

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## Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protections vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest specific health advice on the regions and countries you are planning to travel in, so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel. The following websites are also a helpful resource: [www.nathnac.net](http://www.nathnac.net) and [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

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. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

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## Safety & Security

At Dragoman your safety is of paramount importance and we will do our best to ensure that your travel with us is safe and trouble-free, but we do ask that you take that little bit of extra care whilst you are away and to understand about the nature of this style of travel.

Of course we want you to have an enjoyable time, but you must also remember that part of the enjoyment of travel is experiencing a different way of life and cultures. This may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those you are normally used to.

Therefore, please take note of the following safety tips and follow any local safety advice or briefings delivered by our crew or any third-party suppliers we use during your trip.

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## Transport Safety

- Our own vehicles have fully-fitted seat belts; make sure you always belt up.
- If you find a safety belt inoperable or missing on one of our vehicles, please inform the crew immediately.
- Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that other vehicles we may use or recommend in some countries will be fitted with seat belts on every seat as it is not a legal requirement in much of the world.
- Please remain seated on board vehicles at all times when the vehicle is in motion.
- Never place luggage in the aisles or foot wells.

- Ensure you know where your nearest Emergency exit is; this may be a designated emergency exit, a window, a door, or a roof hatch.
- Check the location of the fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Follow any safety instructions provided by the crew/driver.
- Our vehicles are fitted with roof seats which can be used in certain conditions, such as when driving at low speeds, off main tarmac roads, etc. The roof hatches can only be opened and the roof seats used with the express permission of the crew and you must never sit in the roof seats without seat belts.

## Road Safety

- Traffic in some countries travels on the opposite side of the road to what you may be used to, so ensure you look both ways before crossing the road.
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings and driving styles may be very unpredictable, so please remain very vigilant when near roads and vehicles.
- Crash helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes overseas – we do not recommend you hire these vehicles.

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## Fire & Other Safety - Hostels/Hotels/Homestays

- Ensure you know where your nearest fire exit is and check to ensure that it is operative.
- Check the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Study the fire instructions in your room if available.
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs.
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately; do not stop to collect your effects.
- Proceed to an assembly point well away from the building.
- Electrics in hotels in many of the places that we visit will not be up to the same standards as at home. Please ensure that you check rooms, especially bathrooms and are aware of any issues that look unsafe. If in doubt inform the crew who will endeavour to sort the situation out if possible.
- Staircases and stairwells are often built to a very different design than under western building standards. There may be no guard rails, be excessively steep, have dangerous gaps between the stairs and the wall, etc. At all times be aware and take appropriate and prudent care.
- We often stay in homestays and farmstays. These may range from a traditional yurt through to a tree house or a town house. As these are traditional homes, they may well not adhere to our western standards of safety and so it is important that you make yourself aware of potential risks.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with the hotels/hostels or homestays.

## Fire Safety - Campsites

- Ensure you know where the nearest source of water or fire extinguisher is.
- Know how to raise the alarm.
- Extinguish all camping fires fully before retiring to bed.
- Observe any regulations regarding fires and bushfires in dry conditions.
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs.
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately; do not stop to collect your effects.
- Proceed to an assembly point away from the tented accommodation/affected campsite.

## Other Campsite Safety & Security

- Familiarise yourself with the campsite and any known hazards.
- Group the tents around our vehicle wherever possible.
- No open flames, smoking or flammable liquids in or near the tents.
- Ensure the cooking area is well away from the tents.
- Ensure all water for cooking and drinking is purified first.
- Ensure any soil toilets are a minimum of 50m away from the tents and the cooking area.
- All food waste should be burned or buried a minimum of 100m away from the site.

- Ensure local advice is followed concerning any wildlife in the area.
- Keep valuables locked in the vehicle.
- Be aware of any local security issues that might be important.
- Do not set out tents close to perimeter fences which may be a security risk.
- Be aware of the security arrangements and local guards for campsite and if in doubt ask them where and where not to pitch tents.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with campsite.
- When wild camping, ensure that you do not wander away from the camp alone. If you do leave camp, ensure that you have notified the leader or other members of the group.

## Food Safety

- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked.
- Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold.
- Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables (notably those you can peel or shell yourself).
- In many countries you should only drink bottled water or purified water and ensure any seal is intact when purchasing bottles.
- On the Dragoman vehicles we have a tank of drinking water that is kept purified by the crew.
- Avoid ice in drinks as this can cause upset stomachs in hot climates.
- Make sure you wash your hands in antibacterial product when preparing and/or eating food.
- Many of the restaurants that you will eat in, either as a group or as individuals, will NOT have the same standards of food hygiene as we have in the western world. Unfortunately this is a reality of life in these regions. Therefore please think carefully about where you eat, what food you order and be aware of the risks.

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## Personal Safety

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. 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. We have come up with a few pointers that we recommend you follow:

- Follow the crew's specific safety advice in each destination.
- Always remain aware and vigilant, and stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable.
- Avoid carrying too much money.
- Always avoid carrying your passport, driving licence, air tickets, and other valuable items around with you unless this is essential. Instead, keep valuables such as this locked away in the truck's safe, or the safety deposit box in the room or reception of the hotel/hostel.
- If you are carrying cash, cards or valuables, use a money belt or neck wallet which are more easily concealed and more difficult to pickpocket.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery, watches, etc. away with you in the first place.
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas.
- If possible avoid walking around on your own; it is always safer to explore with others.
- Always try to walk with confidence and purpose, which will help you avoid looking like a lost tourist!
- Take special care when walking to avoid spraining or twisting your ankle on potholes, cobbles and uneven ground.

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## Activity Safety & Optional Activities

You will have the opportunity to take part in many exciting activities and excursions, some of which are included (e.g. hiking the Inca Trail, trekking to see Mountain Gorillas, visiting the Taj Mahal, etc.), whilst

others are optional (e.g. white water rafting in Uganda, zip-lining in Costa Rica, etc.). Some of these activities require a certain level of fitness, so it's important that you read through the trip notes thoroughly and make your own conclusions as to whether you feel that you are fit and healthy enough to enjoy this trip and its activities to their fullest.

Some activities may have higher risks than you are used to and you must judge whether or not you wish, or have the physical ability, to take part.

Please note that riding helmets are mandatory for all optional and included horse riding activities. This is an insurance requirement.

Optional activities mentioned by Dragoman are not included in the trip price or kitty, and do not form part of your contract with Dragoman. As such you accept that any assistance given by Dragoman crew members or local representatives in arranging optional activities does not render us liable for them in any way. The Dragoman crew are assisting you in arranging these activities for your added enjoyment whilst on your trip. The operators of these services and optional extras are local suppliers who contract directly with the client 'on the road', subject to and in accordance with their own terms and conditions. Dragoman accepts no liability for any action or activity undertaken by the client which is arranged independently of Dragoman while on tour. Crew may take part in an optional activity but do so as private individuals and not as company representatives.

Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time.

Ensure that you use the appropriate equipment on optional activities, including life jackets, helmets, etc. This is especially important on activities such as horse riding, white-water rafting, etc.

Always ensure that your travel medical insurance covers you for all included and optional activities that you wish to participate in.

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## Included Activities

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

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## Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Please note that certain activities may not be available on your particular visit if they are overbooked, underbooked, out of season, or for any other reason - the list of activities is made according to our latest information and in the best faith, but please be aware that things may change between our last visit and your arrival. Please also note that it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, and it is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there.

Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated - again, these prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator - any prices listed are a guide only and certainly cannot be guaranteed.

Optional activities are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Dragoman nor included in the price of this trip. If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

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## 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.

We recommend that any policy has a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £5,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £2,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000 (or the full cost of your trip). Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, tablets, phones, ipods, etc. Please note that Dragoman is not responsible for your personal effects and is not insured for their loss. Please note that you should be insured for trip postponement or cancellation purposes immediately upon paying a deposit.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel and make sure it covers any activity that you intend to undertake (whether included or optional). As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding, etc., and that the 24-hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries - for example, that they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. On activities or side trips that are not recommended by us, please ensure you are happy with the safety of the activity before participating.

Please note that in the case of credit card travel insurance we will require details of the participating insurer, the insurance policy number and emergency contact number prior to travel rather than just the bank's name and credit card details. It is up to you to ensure that these policies have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas and many are not valid for travelling outside your country of residence or outside the EU.

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## **Our Liability Insurance**

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger vehicle liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £5,000,000 and £10,000,000 per incident respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

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## **Out of Office Hours Contact**

We have an out of office hours number you can call which should only be used once you have left your home country to start the trip 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 you can not get through please leave a message with you name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you.

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.

**Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564**

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## **Luggage & Kit List**

Although you will not have to carry your main bag for 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 truck's back locker which will be inaccessible during a drive day, 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. Please be aware that due to the constant dust and vibrations your luggage bag will be subject to extreme wear and tear.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. We recommend that your bag be no larger than a large rucksack with a capacity of about 80 litres



(approximately 70cm high, 40cm wide, and 40cm deep). The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is a maximum of 20kg.

Your 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 if your trip includes camping nights.

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 that even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

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

### **General**

- Sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, sleeping mat and small pillow – if your trip includes camping nights
- Sandals or flip flops
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm sweater or fleece
- Swimwear
- Comfortable travelling clothes and a set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out
- If visiting places of worship on the trip, men should bring a pair of full length trousers and women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf
- Towel – quick dry, lightweight travel towels are best
- Toiletries including bio degradable wet wipes, sanitary products, hand gel, sun cream and insect repellent
- Day pack – essential for keeping things handy when on the truck, on short hikes, walking around cities, etc
- Assorted dry bags – to protect your kit from dust and damp
- Pouch or money belt
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre) – we carry drinking water on all of our trucks and actively encourage our customers to use the water supplied. Whilst away from the truck we encourage the use of a filter water bottle and we are able to offer Dragoman customers a 25% discount on Water to Go bottles and filters using the code DRAGOMAN25 on the link <https://www.watertogo.eu/dragoman>
- Head torch with spare batteries and bulbs
- Camera with spare battery and extra memory cards
- Electrical accessories such as charger, power bank, adapter, etc
- Carbon monoxide detector
- A good book, a diary or notebook and pen, a fun game for travel days
- Personal medical kit – see notes below

### **Cold weather**

For trips going through mountainous areas, deserts, high altitude regions and Patagonia, you should be prepared for cold weather, especially at night. Ensure you bring:

- 3/4 or 4/5 season sleeping bag with liner – see note on sleeping bag ratings below
- Thermal base layers
- Winter jacket
- Hat, gloves and scarf
- Warm socks

### **Hot weather**

For trips going through tropical areas you should be prepared for hot and humid weather. Ensure you

bring:

- Loose fitting clothes with long sleeves and legs
- Mosquito repellent
- Mosquito net – not essential as our tents have mosquito netting but can be handy for hotels and hostels or sleeping under the stars

### **Trips with trekking**

For trips including treks, ensure you bring:

- Lightweight walking clothes suitable for the general climate
- Waterproof trousers
- Sturdy walking boots
- Walking stick(s) – not essential but can help in steep terrain; sticks can generally be hired or purchased en route

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### **Sleeping Bags**

A sleeping bag's rating typically indicates the lowest temperature at which it will keep the average sleeper warm enough to sustain them but not necessarily make them warm enough to feel comfortable. For example, with a 0°C bag, you should be able to stay in 0°C temperature but you will not necessarily be able to sleep comfortably.

For European sleeping bags there are the following standards:

- The upper limit is the highest temperature at which a 'standard' adult man is able to have a comfortable night's sleep without excess sweating.
- The comfort rating is based on a 'standard' adult woman having a comfortable night's sleep.
- The lower limit is based on the lowest temperature at which a 'standard' adult man is deemed to be able to have a comfortable night's sleep.
- The extreme rating is a survival-only rating for a 'standard' adult man. This is an extreme survival rating only and it is not advisable to rely on this rating for general use.

The transition zone, in between the comfort and lower temperature, is usually considered as the best purchase guideline.

### **Personal Medical Kit**

All of our trucks have a standard motorist's first aid kit on board for use in emergency situations only. The first aid kit is in compliance with UK standards for first aid provision within motor vehicles, and contain supplies to treat road side injuries. We do not carry prescription medications, 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 travel medical kits. They have been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contain everything you would need for any minor incidents and health issues. For more details please visit their website:

**Global Survival Kit** - <http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/p/2712/Global-Survival-Kit>

**Ultimate Medical Kit (POM)** - [http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/p/2909/Ultimate-Medical-Kit-\(POM\)](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/p/2909/Ultimate-Medical-Kit-(POM))

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### **Passports**

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of your 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 as soon as possible -

however, please be aware that changing your passport can cause big problems if you need to apply for visas or permits (such as the Inca Trail or Gorilla Trekking) in advance.

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## Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Airport Transfers

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the 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 that 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.

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## Continuing Your Trip

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

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## 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 will be required to contribute the additional costs involved 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.

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## Responsible Tourism

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 from the link below:

<https://www.dragoman.com/about-us/responsible-travel/policy-and-guidelines>

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## Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in the bottle, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres 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 sterilised water stored in the purpose-built storage tank on 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 pocket!

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## Electrical Equipment

Your vehicle will be usually equipped with a 12-Volt socket, so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12V 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 adapter for your specific charger.

For mobile phones, please note that most countries in the Americas operate at 850 MHz and 1900 MHz which is not the same frequencies used in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Most modern tri-band and quad-band mobile phones will be able to operate on these frequencies but please check your mobile phone specifications before travelling to ensure that you'll be able to use your phone in the Americas.

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## A Few Rules

It is one of our core values to treat all people we encounter with respect, including the local people who make our destinations so special. We have therefore set down a number of rules to which our customers must adhere.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, carrying weapons, or engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

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## 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](mailto: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.

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## 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 USD 1 to USD 4 per person per day, but check with your crew for an appropriate amount.

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## Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better, and it allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

## COUNTRY SPECIFIC NOTES

### SOUTHERN INDIA NOTE

For trips in Southern India that occur over Christmas and New Year please allow approximately **USD160** extra on the kitty for seasonal increases in accommodation costs.

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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 21/01/2020