

## MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA & THE ANDES, (CML)

Mexico City to Lima 93 days, departing 14 Sep 2020



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### TRIP OVERVIEW

**Trip Style:** Overlanding

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**Route:** Mexico City to Lima



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**Duration:** 93 days

Overland expedition vehicle, US style school bus, 4x4, Boat, Ferry, Flight

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**Transport:**

 25% 
  75%

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**Accom:** Hotels, Hostels, Campsites, Homestays, Chalets

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#### 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.

### ROUTE MAP



## COUNTRIES VISITED

### Belize



### A UNIQUE OVERLANDING DESTINATION

Belize is a small English-speaking enclave on the Caribbean coast, and has its own unique culture and atmosphere. Despite its small size, there are several amazing places in Belize to visit - near the town of San Ignacio there are some of the finest Mayan ruins in Central America including the ancient cities of Caracol and Cahal Pech, as well as several flooded caves and forest to explore.

### TURQUOISE SEAS & BREATHTAKING NATURAL WONDERS

Off the coast is the wonderful [Caye Caulker](#), a lively island surrounded by glittering turquoise ocean which provides some of the best snorkelling and diving in the world! From here you could take a scenic flights over one of the world's most breathtaking natural wonders - The Great Blue Hole, a 300-metre-wide underwater sink hole formed into a perfect circle. Belize is a fantastic addition to our trips in Central America and a very unique place to visit!

### Colombia



For most people Colombia is a bit of an unknown, the forgotten part of South America. This makes it a fantastic place to explore. Colombia's geography is one of the most diverse in [South America](#); it really is a kaleidoscope of colour, life and culture. It has an undeserved reputation due to some internal instability in parts, but the warmth of its people and sheer variety of landscapes, culture and activities means that it is worth looking past this to see such a fascinating country.

### COFFEE, NIGHTLIFE & RUGGED LANDSCAPES

Colombia is on the beautiful Caribbean coast and the home to some of the best coffee in the world. The culture of fiesta is central to Colombia's national psyche, and it plays host to some of the most fabulous carnivals in the world. Colombia has a very lively nightlife and strong traditions of music and dancing wherever you go in the country.

Colombia is also full of history, with the colourful colonial coastal city of Cartagena and its ruined fort being a big highlight. The country's landscapes are incredible, from the beautiful rugged beaches of Tayrona National Park to the cool coffee plantations of Manizales, the jungles and waterfalls of San Gil, and the mountains of Villa de Leyva.

Colombia's glorious landscapes, fabulous history and upbeat lifestyle is there to be

## Costa Rica



### AN ADVENTURE PARADISE

Costa Rica is every outdoor-adventurist's dream, and is packed full of spectacular scenery, incredible wildlife, and fascinating culture.

Costa Rica is one of the most bio-diverse countries on Earth, and is home to many iconic animals such as hummingbirds, quetzals, tree frogs, monkeys, sloths and sea turtles. This is evident on a trek through the atmospheric cloud forests of [Monteverde](#), or on an exploration of the spectacular beaches of Manuel Antonia National Park.

#### EXPLORE STUNNING NATURAL SCENERY OVERLAND

Complimenting this is some of the most wonderful natural scenery, including incredible coastlines, forests, lakes and volcanoes. One of the most breathtaking sights is the active volcano of Arenal, which looms over the town of La Fortuna! Costa Rica is also home to some of the best outdoor activities in the world, with a plethora of opportunities for rafting, trekking, canyoning and horse riding throughout the country.

Costa Rica has gained a wonderful reputation for tourism in recent decades, and this reputation is certainly deserved!

cherished, and there is no doubt it will leave a special mark on your travels.

## Ecuador



Ecuador is a small country with a diverse landscape including highlands, volcanoes, numerous National Parks, stunning Pacific beaches, and of course the enthralling Galapagos Islands.

The Amazon rainforest has the greatest biodiversity on the planet. And it's possible to take trips into the rainforest to explore the trails and waterfalls, and try to spot some of the jungle's fantastic array of wildlife. Off the coast are the Galapagos Islands, arguably one of the world's most prestigious and unique wildlife destinations.

If heart-racing outdoor activities are more your thing, then Ecuador has plenty to offer! You can head out for a day of exhilarating white-water rafting on the swirling River Pastaza, trek through the stunning canyons and rolling hills of Chugchilan, or head out horse riding in the mountains surrounding the capital of Quito.

Aside from the outdoors and wildlife, there are several great colonial towns to explore, such as the market town of Otavalo and the atmospheric cobbled streets of Cuenca. Quito has a marvellous colonial old town to explore, as well as a lively modern centre full of bars and restaurants.

With so much to offer and explore, Ecuador is the place to head to if you want to try something new every day!

## El Salvador



### OVERLANDING IN CENTRAL AMERICA'S STUNNING EL SALVADOR

El Salvador (meaning "The Saviour" in Spanish) is one of the smallest but most friendly and exciting countries in Central America - perfect for an overland adventure.

El Salvador has some stunning scenery, from the relaxed Pacific coastlines of Los Cobanos to the coffee-growing cool hills in the interior. The [Cerro Verde National Park](#) contains some of the most breathtaking volcanic scenery on the continent, and provides excellent opportunities for trekking.

With some of the most beautiful areas in the whole of Central America, El Salvador is one of the most captivating places to visit.

## Guatemala



### VOLCANOES, LAKES & MAYAN RUINS

With breathtaking mountains, volcanoes and the amazing Lake Atitlan setting the landscape, Guatemala is a perfect place to get out and explore some stunning natural scenery.

The country is bursting with vibrant culture, and nowhere is this more perfectly illustrated than in the old colonial capital of [Antigua](#), not far from the modern capital of Guatemala City. A small cobblestoned city that is overflowing with historical buildings and colonial heritage, it is a stunning place to explore, full of music, galleries and restaurants, and is an excellent base to trek up some of the surrounding volcanoes.

#### EXPLORE LAKE ATITLAN

Lake Atitlan is one of Central America's most picturesque spots - surrounded by towering volcanoes and dotted with tiny traditional village along its coast, it is a wonderful place to take a boat trip and explore. Not far is the village of Chichastenango, with its famous, colourful and evocative local markets.

Guatemala's most famous draw is the truly incredible [ruined city of Tikal](#). The site was a major settlement of the Mayan civilisation between the 5th-9th Centuries CE, and contains some of the finest ancient ruins in the world! There are several colossal and well-preserved pyramids and temples all majestically located within the dense rainforest - it's a magical place to explore and is full of fascinating history.

A favourite of many who travel through Central America, Guatemala is a beautiful and fascinating country with an incredible density of highlights!

## Honduras



## ONE OF CENTRAL AMERICA'S HIGHLIGHTS

Honduras is an often-overlooked country in Central America, but has some of the continent's most fantastic highlights. One of these highlights is the amazing coastline spanning hundreds of kilometres along the Pacific - with some of the whitest beaches and clearest ocean in Central America, the Bay Islands is the perfect place for snorkelling, scuba diving and relaxing on the idyllic shores. The Mesoamerican Barrier Reef is the second longest in the world, and submerged below the clear waters lie unspoilt coral and an array of colourful underwater life.

### ADVENTURE TO THE MAYAN CITY OF COPÁN

Another fantastic highlight is the ruined [Mayan city of Copán](#), which was a major centre of the Classic Era between the 5th-9th Centuries CE. The site features many remarkably-preserved buildings and temples, and is especially famous for its sculpted monuments and stelae. Away from the coastline are the fantastic mountains that soar above the country.

There is some amazing scenery in Honduras which we have the privilege to overland through, making it a marvellous inclusion in our Central American trips.

## Mexico



## DISCOVER MEXICO OVERLAND

Mexico is a country full of culture, history, and spectacular landscapes. Home to the Mayan and Aztec Empires, the architecture and legacy left behind is nothing short of magical - amongst the incredible ruins are the massive pyramids of Teotihuacan, the overgrown cities of Monte Alban and Palenque, and of course the phenomenal [Chichen Itza](#), one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

However, although Mexico's ruins and history are a major draw, there is much more to the country. Mexico has a vibrant culture, from its famous mariachi bands, the stunning artwork of Diego Garcia and Frida Kahlo, and the unique customs and way of life of the Tzut'zil Mayan people in San Cristóbal de las Casas.

### MMMM MEXICAN FOOD...

The food of Mexico is iconic all over the world, and you'll be able to sample burritos and chili con carne alongside more unusual dishes such as mole sauce made from cocoa beans, and of course Oaxaca's favourite snack of fried grasshoppers! Mexico is also famous for tequila, made from the blue agave plants that are ubiquitous in the central regions.

If that wasn't enough, Mexico is one of the most stunning countries in the world, with the cactus-

filled deserts of the north, the colossal Sumidero Canyon, the jungles of Palenque and Yaxchilan, and the pristine idyllic beaches of Tulum. Mexico is high on the list of many travellers' favourites list, and has many wonderful and varied highlights to explore!

## Nicaragua



The rugged beauty of Nicaragua makes it one of the most interesting places in Central America to visit.

The landscape is lined with stunning volcanoes which you can climb and explore, such as the scenic crater of Masaya and the challenging trek up Volcán Concepción on Ometepe Island. The country is full of many other outdoor activities, such as mountain biking, sandboarding, horse riding and discovering the beautiful beaches of the Pacific coast.

### EXPLORE NICARAGUA'S COLONIAL HISTORY

You can also explore the incredible colonial towns of Granada and León, and their churches, cathedrals and many art galleries. Some of the continent's most ornate and beautiful colonial legacy can be found in these two atmospheric towns, and they are wonderful places to spend some time.

Nicaragua is the forgotten treasure of Central America and is a perfect place to explore.

## Panama



Panama is the southernmost country of Central America, where the continent narrows to its tiny join with [Colombia](#) and [South America](#). This piece of geography made Panama the perfect location for the world-famous and controversial Panama Canal, which was completed in 1914 and has a massive impact on world trade and history.

### EXPLORE PANAMA CITY & ITS SURROUNDINGS

The capital of Panama City is a bustling metropolis full of culture and with a buzzing nightlife. It contains several fantastic museums and an atmospheric old town as well as the modern business centre and marina. The county also has some amazing mountainous and coastline scenery, a myriad of exhilarating outdoor activities, incredible wildlife and wonderful coffee plantations.

Panama is an excellent place to start or end your Central American adventure with Dragoman!

## Peru



### DISCOVER OVERLANDING IN PERU

Peru is a wonderland of historical treasures, home to some of South America's most glorious landmarks, and has a seemingly endless selection of optional activities to partake in all over the country.

Peru is perhaps most famous as being the ancient homeland of the Inca civilisation. Cuzco was the ancient capital of the Inca empire, and 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 - their domination over this region of South America lasted for over four centuries, and their legacy is evident all over this area.

### SEE MACHU PICCHU IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT

The most famous Inca site is undoubtedly the spectacular ancient hilltop city of Machu Picchu, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, and the Inca Trail through the Andes near to it. You can [trek through the countryside](#) making your way through the unspoilt 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 city was rediscovered by Hiram Bingham in 1911, and is simply awe-inspiring and a real must-visit place in South America.

Other incredible historical sites in Peru include the mysterious [Nazca Lines](#) which were etched into the desert floor by the pre-Inca Nazca civilisation, the colossal Chimú-era adobe city of Chan Chan near Trujillo, and the phenomenal ancient city of Chavín de Huantar in the mountains of the Cordillera Blanca. Peru has some beautiful colonial towns to explore.

The capital is the chaotic city of Lima, founded by the Conquistador Pizarro in 1535 - and the beautiful cobbled streets and buzzing atmosphere of Cuzco and Arequipa make them towns that you'll never want to leave!

Peru is also flowing with fabulous landscapes, from the desolate northern deserts to the towering mountains of Huaraz, from the sweltering jungles of Puerto Maldonado to the serene beaches of Punta Sal, and from the breathtaking Colca Canyon to the colossal Lake Titicaca, the sheer variety of Peru's landscapes make it one of the world's most beautiful destinations.

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN PERU

Peru has a wide range of outdoor activities, from trekking in Cuzco to white-water rafting in Arequipa to sandboarding in the [Huacachina Deserts](#), there are so many fun things for everyone to do. Peru also has a distinctive cuisine, including lomo saltado, maize soup, and of course the delicious ceviche on the coast.

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

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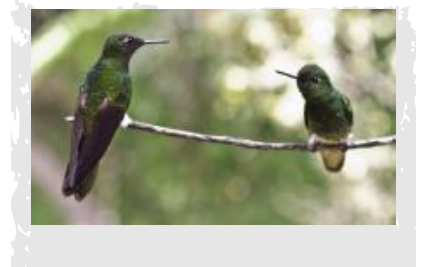
## DAILY ITINERARY

### Day 1: Mexico City ( Mon 14 Sep )

**Border information:** if joining in Mexico City, you will most likely enter Mexico at Mexico City Benito Juárez International Airport (IATA code MEX).

There will be an important group meeting at 18:00 at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

The rest of the day is free to explore Mexico's incredible capital and to take part in some optional activities. Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Mexico City 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 Mexico City.

In Mexico City we will stay in a good hotel in the central district of Bellas Artes.

Hotel for the night: Marlowe Hotel

**Marlowe Hotel**

Av. Independencia 17

Cuauhtémoc, Centro

06050 Mexico City

Tel - +52 555 521 9540

**Activity**

**Approximate Cost**

See Mexico City's famous traditional mariachi bands in the evening around Garibaldi Square

MXN 30

Freely explore the colossal Chapultepec Park, one of the world's largest urban green spaces and a cultural hotspot where you can often see the pole-swinging 'Volador' dancers

Free

Visit some of Mexico City's most important museums and galleries, such as the old house of the iconic artist Frida Kahlo, the former home of revolutionary Leon Trotsky, and the Museo Dolores Olmedo art gallery

MXN 250

Explore the vast system of waterways and flower gardens at Xochimilco, possibly including a visit to the creepy Isla de las Muñecas (Island of the Dolls)

Free

Freely explore the huge area of the Zocalo in Mexico City's centre, along with its famous Metropolitan Cathedral and the Temple Mayor (the last remains of the old Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan)

MXN 75

Explore the magnificent ancient Mesoamerican ruins of Teotihuacan near Mexico City

MXN 75

Visit the beautiful Palacio de Bellas Artes and see it's immense murals by world-famous Mexican artists such as Diego Riviera

MXN 70



### About Mexico City:

The colossal, bustling metropolis of Mexico City is the world's largest Spanish-speaking metropolitan area, home to staggering 21 million people! Despite its size the city centre still has a charming colonial feel with a massive Spanish-built cathedral dominating the Zocalo (the main square).

The city was originally founded with the name of Tenochtitlan in 1325 CE by the Aztec civilisation. The original location was on a small island in an inland lake, so chosen as it was said the Aztecs' principal god, Huizilopochtli, marked the site to the people with a vision of an eagle eating a snake on top of a cactus (an image which can still be seen on Mexico's flag!). By the the arrival of the Spanish in 1519, the Aztec Empire spanned between the Pacific and the Caribbean and stretched as far south as Guatemala. The conquistador Hernán Cortés arrived in 1519 and brutally invaded the city in 1521, whereupon the Spanish built over the Aztec temples, proclaimed the city as the capital of New Spain and renamed the city "Mexico" as they found it easier to pronounce.

Little of the Aztec city remains today, except the small site of the Temple Mayor and its museum next to the cathedral on the Zocalo. There are endless sights and highlights to discover in Mexico City, including the colonial palaces and churches of the historical centre and the artistic district of Bellas Artes, the incredible art galleries and countless museums, the wonderful music and food, and the stunning and peaceful Xochimilco floating gardens and Chapultepec Park (with the world-class Anthropological Museum in its leafy grounds). Nearby to the city is the site of Teotihuacan, one of the largest and most spectacular Pre-Colombian cities in Central America.

### Day 2 to 3: Oaxaca ( Tue 15 Sep to Wed 16 Sep )

Today we head to the wonderful laid-back colonial town of Oaxaca, famous for its cuisine and indigenous cultures.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 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!).

On the following day we will have an included guided visit of the ruined Zapotec city of Monte Alban, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the afternoon we will have free time to further explore the area's highlights.

In Oaxaca we will stay in a good hotel.

#### Activity

Visit the splendid Baroque Dominican

#### Approximate Cost

MXN 50



church of Santo Domingo in Oaxaca's colonial centre

Take a guided tour around the ruined Zapotec capital of Monte Alban near Oaxaca

Included in Kitty

See the incredible Tree of Tule, which with a circumference of 42 metres has the widest trunk in the world

Free

Visit the remarkably well-preserved Zapotec ruins of Mitla near to Oaxaca

MXN 64

Learn all about the history and cultures of Oaxaca at the incredible Museum of Cultures, one of the best regional museums in Mexico

MXN 64

### About Oaxaca:

Oaxaca is one of Mexico's most beautiful old colonial towns. The Spanish founded the town in 1521 in a valley largely populated by native Zapotec and Mixtec people, and its magnificent arcades and colourful markets are still populated by their descendants who come to sell their colourful woven blankets and shawls in the central square. The incredible old colonial churches, cobbled streets and superb array of museums earned the city UNESCO World Heritage status in 1987.

Also honoured by UNESCO are the nearby ruins of the ancient Zapotec city of Monte Albán - founded as early as 500 BCE, Monte Albán reached the height of its regional dominance between 100 BCE and 300 CE, becoming the most important city in the Oaxacan highlands and having high-level contacts with the city of Teotihuacan (near modern-day Mexico City). By the end of the 6th Century, the city became largely abandoned due to a loss of political influence. This unique site is full of some amazing buildings, ball courts and magnificent tombs, and a lot of finely-worked gold jewelry was found in the city.

### Day 4 to 6: San Cristóbal de las Casas ( Thu 17 Sep to Sat 19 Sep )

Today we have a full day drive to the stunning old colonial town of San Cristóbal de las Casas, one of Mexico's most beautiful towns. and well known as the heart of the indigenous Tzotzil Maya culture.

Estimated Drive Time - 12-14 hours.

On the following day we will have a free day for exploration and to take



part in some optional activities such as taking a tour to the fascinating Maya village of San Juan Chamula, or exploring the nearby Lagunas de Montebello National Park.

On the next day we will have an included boat trip down the phenomenal Sumidero Canyon, viewing its colossal cliffs from the base and searching for the resident wildlife.

In San Cristóbal de las Casas we will stay in a good hotel in the centre.



<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Head on a boat trip along the breathtaking Sumidero Canyon	Included in Kitty
Visit the atmospheric Tzotzil Mayan villages of San Juan Chamula and Zinacantan	MXN 250
Head out on a mountain biking tour through the cloud forests and highlands surrounding San Cristóbal de las Casas	MXN 450
Learn all about the traditional medicines of the Mayan people at the award-winning Mayan Medicine Museum	MXN 55
Take a day trip to explore the idyllic national park of Lagunas de Montebello, home to pine forests, Mayan ruins, and many beautiful lakes	MXN 480
See the incredible showcase of handwoven fabrics from throughout Central America at the Mayan World Textiles Centre	MXN 52
Explore the wonderful botanical gardens of Orchideas Moxviquil, and discover its collection of over 400 species of native plants and orchids	MXN 50

### **About San Cristóbal de las Casas:**

San Cristóbal de las Casas is the cultural centre of the Chiapas region of Mexico, and lies in a valley in the beautiful Central Highlands of the state. The town itself contains some wonderful old colonial buildings and is famous for its amber jewelery. The surrounding area has many Tzotzil Indian villages, where many inhabitants still follow ancient traditions and beliefs juxtaposed with more modern culture and Christianity.

There are some excellent activities available here, with one big

highlight being a scenic boat trip through the awe-inspiring Sumidero Canyon - formed over the last 35 million years, this incredible narrow canyon has a deep river running all the way through it and towering cliffs up to 1000m high on either side!

## **Day 7: Frontera Corozal ( Sun 20 Sep )**

Today we will have a full day drive to the remote town of Frontera Corozal, on the Guatemalan border. En route, we may have time for an optional stop at the stunning waterfalls of Agua Azul.

In Frontera Corozal we will camp in the grounds of a hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 9-10 hours.

## **Day 8: Yaxchilan, Palenque ( Mon 21 Sep )**

Today we will have an included guided visit to the remote ancient Mayan city of Yaxchilán, which is only accessible via a boat trip down the river. After our visit we will drive to the village of Palenque.

In Palenque we will camp in the grounds of a hotel located within the national park.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**

Take a boat trip out for a guided tour of the stunning and remote Mayan ruins at Yaxchilán

Included in Kitty

### **About Yaxchilan:**

Yaxchilan, meaning 'green stones' in the Mayan language, is an ancient Mayan city located on the bank of the Usumacinta river in the Lacanja region. Yaxchilan was an important city-state from the 1st Century CE until the 9th Century CE and dominated over smaller nearby sites such as Bonampak. The city had a major rivalry with the nearby Mayan city now known as Piedras Negras, and there is evidence of warring with Tikal and Palenque during its past.

The site is particularly known for its well-preserved sculptured stone lintels set above the doorways of the main structures. These lintels, together with the stelae erected before the major buildings, contain hieroglyphic texts describing the dynastic history of the city. The site contains impressive ruins, with palaces and temples bordering a large plaza upon a terrace above the Usumacinta River. There are no roads to the site, and we will need to take an hour-long boat ride from Frontera Corozal to explore the incredible area.

### **About Palenque:**

Palenque is a small town in the far west of the Yucatán peninsula, deep in the hot and humid forests. It is the site of some of the most impressive Mayan ruins in all of Mexico, in one of the

most atmospheric settings!

Although some of the oldest ruins date as far back as the 2nd Century BCE, the city-state of Palenque reached its height in around the 7th Century CE before declining a few generations later and being abandoned and enveloped by the forest. The city was a mid-sized settlement and much smaller than the huge sites of Tikal, Chichen Itza and Copán, but it contains some of the finest architecture, sculptures and bas-relief carvings ever found across the Mayan world. The hieroglyphic inscriptions found here have allowed archaeologists to construct a detailed history of the city, its rulers, and its complicated rivalries with neighbouring states - the famous tomb of Pachal the Great was found in the Temple of Inscriptions and replicated in the small museum nearby.

Palenque is a marvellous site to explore - whilst walking amongst the ruins it is quite often possible to hear a variety of bird song and the eerie calls of the Howler monkeys echoing from the jungle around us, which gives an added dimension to this magnificent archaeological site.

## **Day 9: Palenque ( Tue 22 Sep )**

Today we will have an included guided visit to the incredible Mayan ruins of Palenque, which rise out of the thick jungle surrounding them. In the afternoon we will have free time to go on a jungle tour, visit the on site museum, or travel to the nearby waterfall of Misol Ha.

### **Activity**

### **Approximate Cost**

Take a fascinating guided tour around the magnificent ruined city of Palenque deep in the Mexican jungle, including time to freely explore the excellent on-site museum

Included in Kitty

## **Day 10: Mérida ( Wed 23 Sep )**

Today we will drive to the beautiful and artistic colonial town of Mérida, the capital of the Yucatan state.

In Mérida we will stay in a colonial hotel in the heart of the city.

Estimated Drive Time - 10-11 hours.

## **Day 11: Chichen Itza, Tulum ( Thu 24 Sep )**

Today we will have an early start to drive to the world-famous Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World - we have an included guided tour around this spectacular site before continuing our drive to the stunning coastal village of Tulum.

In Tulum we will camp in a basic campsite near to the Mayan ruins.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

## Activity

## Approximate Cost

Visit the spectacular Chichen Itza Mayan ruins on a guided tour, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World centred around the world-famous pyramid of El Castillo

Included in Kitty

Take a swim in the stunning natural cenote of Ik Kil near the ruins of Chichen Itza

USD 6

### About Chichen Itza:

The world-famous ancient Mayan site of Chichen Itza is one of the major highlights of Central America. The ancient Mayan city, dominated by the iconic El Castillo pyramid, was built between the 8th and 11th Centuries CE and became a major regional capital during this time, dominating political and cultural life in the lowlands of northern Yucatán. It exhibits numerous architectural styles inspired by many different areas of Central America, and is thought to have been the home to one of the most diverse populations in the Mayan world.

Chichen Itza was one of the largest Maya cities, with a relatively dense cluster of well-preserved buildings in the core linked by paved causeways called 'sacbeob'. The colossal pyramid of El Castillo dominates the area known as The Great North Platform - it houses a huge staircase to an upper crypt housing a throne in the shape of a jaguar, painted red and inlaid with eyes and spots of pure jade. The steps up the exterior of the pyramid famously project a serpent-shaped shadow every spring and autumn equinoxes, thought to be a representation of the Mayan feathered serpent-god Kukulcan.

Nearby there is a Great Ball Court, once used to play a unique ancient game similar to basketball but using knees and elbows to strike the ball. Nearby to this is the Sacred Cenote, otherwise known as the 'well of sacrifice', which offered up treasures of jade, copper and gold as well as many human and animal bones when it was excavated. There are many other fantastic areas of the site to be explored, including the Temple of the Warriors and the Group of a Thousand Columns.

In 2007 the phenomenal Mayan site was declared one of the New 7 Wonders of the World after a worldwide vote.

### About Tulum:

Spectacularly located atop a cliff over the dazzling Caribbean Sea, the ruined Mayan port of Tulum is a fantastically atmospheric and photogenic spot. One of the most well-preserved archaeological sites in Central America, Tulum was one of the most recently built Mayan settlements - it reached its height between the 13th and 15th Centuries CE and was still active 70 years after the start of the Spanish occupation of Mexico, eventually succumbing to diseases carried by the new settlers.

The compact site is centred around El Castillo (a 7.5m-tall pyramid), with the beautiful Temple of the Frescoes and the Temple of the Descending God being some of the more famous highlights. The stunning site sits on the clifftop overlooking the white beach, the palm

trees and the turquoise sea. Nearby there are some wonderful beaches and some famous 'cenotes' (natural sinkholes) that visitors can explore.

## Day 12: Tulum ( Fri 25 Sep )

This morning we visit the Tulum ruins, one of the last cities built by the Maya and one of the best preserved coastal Maya sites. We will have a free afternoon to explore the beaches or take part in some optional activities.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the phenomenal cliff-top Maya-Toltec ruins at Tulum, wonderfully located right on the Caribbean coast	Included in Kitty
Go on a scuba diving trip through the ocean reefs near Tulum, or to some of the area's natural cenotes	USD 100
Hire snorkel gear on the beautiful beaches of Tulum	USD 10
Head out to explore some of the incredible cenotes (natural water-filled sinkholes) near Tulum	MXN 100

## Day 13 to 15: Caye Caulker ( Sat 26 Sep to Mon 28 Sep )

**Border information:** Exit Mexico at Subteniente López, enter Belize at Santa Elena.

Today we will travel south across the border to Belize City, where we board a speed boat to the island paradise of Caye Caulker.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

We will have two full days of free time to explore and enjoy the many optional activities available here, such as snorkelling, diving or taking a scenic flight over the phenomenal Great Blue Hole.

In Caye Caulker we will stay in a local hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Take a scenic flight over the phenomenal natural Great Blue Hole off Caye Caulker	USD 260



Head out to the stunning coral reefs off Caye Caulker on a snorkelling trip	USD 60
Head out on a fantastic scuba diving trip through the colossal coral reefs off the Caribbean island of Caye Caulker (there are many different options and sites available)	USD 65 - 260
Hire sea kayaks to explore the deserted mangroves of Caye Caulker's North Island	USD 20
Go on a half-day fishing trip in the idyllic blue ocean near Caye Caulker	USD 250

### About Caye Caulker:

The Cayes of Belize are a group of idyllic islands off the coast in the Caribbean Sea - many of these are a short boat ride away from the mainland, and all are stunning places to visit. One of the most popular cayes to visit is Caye Caulker, a laid-back limestone coral island that measures 8kms from north to south. All the action happens on the south side, where there is a superb mix of bars and restaurants all with that unmistakable Caribbean charm.

There are many activities available on Caye Caulker, most notably boat, snorkel and scuba diving trips through the startlingly blue waters and incredible coral reefs of the surrounding oceans. You may also choose to explore the islands mangroves by kayak, visit some of the other cayes, or head out on an unforgettable scenic flight over the famous Great Blue Hole.

### Day 16 to 18: San Ignacio ( Tue 29 Sep to Thu 01 Oct )

Today we will head back to the mainland and rejoin the bus in Belize City. We then have a short drive to the village of San Ignacio, home to Belize's best archaeological sites and adventure activities!

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

We will have two full days to take part in the many optional activities available in San Ignacio, including trekking, caving, biking, and exploring the excellent Mayan ruins in the area.

In San Ignacio we will stay in a forest eco-lodge.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Head on a horse riding trip around San Ignacio	USD 85
Visit the Actun Tunichil Mukwal Cave,	USD 95

a Mayan archaeological site that includes ceramics, stoneware, and skeletal remains such as the famous 'Crystal Maiden'

Take a full day tour to the remote ruins of the ancient Mayan capital of Caracol, once twice the size of the modern Belize City USD 110

Visit the stunning ruins of Cahal Pech, atop a hill overlooking the southern outskirts of San Ignacio BZD 30

Explore the ancient ruins of Xunantunich, Belize's most-visited Mayan site and home to the mighty El Castillo pyramid BZD 10

Learn about local herbs and plants on a medicinal jungle trail en route to a release program for Green Iguanas near San Ignacio BZD 12

### About San Ignacio:

San Ignacio is a beautiful town in Belize, close to the Guatemalan border. There are many optional activities in the area such as horse riding, mountain biking and canoeing - however, one of the best and most unique activities here is to head out on a caving trip through some of the incredible caves in the forests surrounding the town.

Close to San Ignacio are some incredible and rarely-visited Mayan sites, including Cahal Pech, Caracol and Xunantunich.

## Day 19: Tikal ( Fri 02 Oct )

**Border information:** Exit Belize at Benque Viejo del Carmen, enter Guatemala at Melchor de Mencos.

Today we will have a short drive across the Guatemalan border to the phenomenal Mayan ruins of Tikal, where we have an included guided tour.

In Tikal we will camp at a basic campsite close to the ruins.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Enjoy a guided tour of the phenomenal Mayan ruins of Tikal, one of the greatest ancient sites in the world

Included in Kitty

### About Tikal:

Tikal is the site of a phenomenal ruined Mayan city, atmospherically located in the dense rainforests of northern Guatemala. Mainly built between the 2nd and 10th Centuries CE, Tikal was one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient Mayans - the city-state conquered much of the surrounding area and dominated the economy, politics, military, and culture of the Yucatán peninsular during this time.

Knowledge of the site was never totally lost amongst the native Guatemalans, but Tikal came to the world's attention again when German expeditions were guided there in the 1850s. Tikal is one of the most spectacular and well-understood Mayan ruins due to the amount of artefacts and murals found there - a complete lineage of the dynastic rulers has been constructed from the information discovered there, as well as a detailed history of the complex relationships with rival states such as Teotihuacan, Copán and Caracol.

On a visit there, we are able to explore the old religious centre and even climb up some of the iconic pyramids to get an unrivalled view of the area below!

### Day 20 to 21: Poptún ( Sat 03 Oct to Sun 04 Oct )

Today we have a short drive to the small town of Poptún, stopping in the colonial town of Flores en route. We will arrive at our fantastic eco-lodge near Poptún and have a free afternoon.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

On the following day we will have free time to take part in the many optional activities offered at our eco lodge.

In Poptún we will camp at an eco-lodge on a working Guatemalan ranch.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Trek out to the incredible River Cave near Poptún, walking through the stunning Guatemalan rural landscape and exploring the underground rivers by candlelight	GTQ 115
Stay at a wonderful eco-lodge on a working Guatemalan farm near Poptún	Included in Kitty
Take a day tour out to the nearby Mayan ruins of Ixcun, the comprehensive museum of Dolores and the beautiful waterfall of Mopan	GTQ 150

### Day 22 to 23: Rio Dulce, Livingston ( Mon 05 Oct to Tue 06 Oct )

Today we will have a short drive to Rio Dulce in Guatemala's beautiful central region. On arrival we will have a free afternoon to take part in some optional activities.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

On the following day we will have an included boat trip to the village of Livingston on the Caribbean coast, before returning to Rio Dulce.

In Rio Dulce we will stay in an eco-lodge.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Enjoy a beautiful boat ride down the Rio Dulce to the Caribbean town of Livingston	Included in Kitty
Take a kayak out to explore the beautiful waters around Rio Dulce at sunrise	GTQ 150
Explore deep into the Guatemalan rainforest on foot and trek on the canopy bridges near Rio Dulce	GTQ 135

#### **About Rio Dulce:**

Located in central Guatemala, the stunning river of Rio Dulce flows through dense forests and jungle that comes right down to the water's edge. A boat trip along the river is truly special, with dense foilage and tropical birds nesting in the trees and flying overhead. The river arrives at the Caribbean coast in the small and isolated village of Livingston - with no roads connecting it to the rest of the country, the village has developed its own unique character and laid-back feel.

#### **Day 24: San Andres Itzapa ( Wed 07 Oct )**

Today we will drive day to San Andres Itzapa, a small village located in the mountains around Antigua. We will spend one night at the community centre of Manos Amigas, run by the Italian NGO 'Mani Amiche' in support of local women who have been abandoned and abused, and who are staying in the centre with their children.

In San Andres Itzapa we will stay in dormitories at the community centre (please note that there is no option to upgrade to private accommodation here).

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Spend a night at the Manos Amigas community project, a centre which has been set up to support local women and their children	Included in Kitty

### About San Andres Itzapa:

San Andres Itzapa is a small village tucked away on the mountains around Antigua, Guatemala. It is the location of one of our supported community projects, Manos Amigas, that works with women and children who have been victims of violence or abandoned. The centre creates a safe space to build their lives while benefitting from some of the health and education projects run by the organisation, such as professional training in craftwork, social sanitary projects, medical and dental treatment, and promotion of sustainable farming practices.

### Day 25 to 26: Panajachel, Lake Atitlan, Chichicastenango ( Thu 08 Oct to Fri 09 Oct )

Today we will spend the morning at the Manos Amigas project before heading off on a short drive to Panajachel, situated on the shores of the beautiful Lake Atitlan.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

On the following day we will have free time to enjoy some optional activities such as a boat on the lake out to some of the small local villages along the shoreline. If possible, we will include a visit to the famous Chichicastenango Market during these days, depending on the weekday. *Please note that the market is only open on Thursdays and Sundays so you may not be able to visit during your trip.*

In Panajachel we will stay in a nice local hotel.

#### Activity

#### Approximate Cost

Head out on a boat trip to visit the traditional Mayan villages dotted along the coast of Lake Atitlan	USD 30
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Take a tour through the spectacular highlands surrounding Lake Atitlan and Panajachel, visiting picturesque villages and hot springs	USD 45
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Visit the bewildering Mayan markets at Chichicastenango, taking in the incredible sights, smells, and atmosphere (provided it is running while we are in the area)	Included in Kitty
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### About Panajachel:

The beautiful sparkling waters of Lake Atitlan can change colour from emerald and azure to lapis and olive, all in one day. The lake is perfectly set amongst forest-clad hills with three volcanic peaks on its far shores, making it one of the most scenic lakes in the world! All around the lake's edge are small villages where the local Indian life has changed little for hundreds of years - the people from each village have their own typical dress, and make all the textiles themselves in designs

passed down through generations. The largest settlement of Panajachel is an ideal base to explore the lake and its villages - you can walk to the nearest village, Santa Catarina Palopo, where you can watch the women weaving their huipiles, or perhaps take a boat to the further villages of Santiago Atitlan or San Pedro la Laguna. Santiago is known for its colourful markets, whereas San Pedro has a very tranquil atmosphere.

#### **About Chichicastenango:**

Chichicastenango is a small village that has perhaps the most colourful markets in all of Guatemala - everywhere you look, your eyes are met by stalls of multi-coloured textiles, local people in their multi-coloured clothes, and by the colours of the fresh produce in the vegetable market. The amazing sights, sounds and smells all contribute to the heady atmosphere of the markets, and its the ideal place to get a slice of local life and pick up all those souvenirs!

### **Day 27: Antigua ( Sat 10 Oct )**

Today we will have a short drive to the magnificent city of Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated 60 kms from Guatemala City.

The rest of the day is free to explore the beautiful colonial city and its dramatic surroundings.

In Antigua we will stay in a delightful colonial hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

#### **About Antigua:**

Antigua is the commonly-used name for Antigua Guatemala, the old colonial capital founded in its present location in 1543 with the original name of Santiago de los Caballeros. The delightful historic city boasts a wealth of well-preserved colonial buildings in a Spanish Baroque style, so much so that the whole historical centre has been granted UNESCO World Heritage status. Antigua is also exquisitely located in the central highlands of Guatemala, surrounded by the towering volcanoes of Fuego, Agua and Acatenango.

Antigua is only a short distance from the modern capital of Guatemala City, and remains the cultural centre of the country - its old buildings and cobbled streets juxtapose wonderfully with its lively mix of Indian markets, indigenous marimba music and many bars and restaurants, creating a fantastic and unforgettable atmosphere. There are also countless optional adventure activities to be enjoyed here, including a possible excursion to the nearby active Pacaya Volcano.

### **Day 28: Antigua ( Sun 11 Oct )**

**Border information:** if joining in Antigua, you will most likely enter Guatemala at Guatemala City La Aurora International Airport (IATA code: GUA).

There will be an important group meeting at 18:00 at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with

more details about this important meeting.

The rest of the day is free to explore the beautiful colonial city and its dramatic surroundings, and to take part in some optional activities. Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Antigua 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 Antigua.

In Antigua we will stay in a delightful colonial hotel.

Hotel for the night: Posada La Merced

**Posada La Merced**

7a Avenida Norte 43

Antigua

Guatemala

Tel - +502 7832 3197

## Day 29: Cerro Verde National Park ( Mon 12 Oct )

Today we will cross the border into El Salvador and drive to the stunning Cerro Verde National Park, where we will be surrounded by awe-inspiring volcanoes and countryside. In the morning we will have will take a guided trek up the nearby Santa Ana volcano (approximately 4 hours).

In Cerro Verde National Park we will camp with basic facilities.

**Border information:** Exit Guatemala at Ciudad Pedro de Alvarado, enter El Salvador at La Hachadura.

Estimated Drive Time - 9 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!).

### About Cerro Verde National Park:

The centrepiece of El Salvador's Cerro Verde National Park is the towering peak of Cerro Verde, an extinct volcano which last erupted around 2,500 years ago. On the top of its crater there is one of the few cloud forests in the country, located at 2,030 meters above sea level. Cerro Verde, along with the volcanoes of Santa Ana and Izalco, form one of the most impressive landscapes in El Salvador. These volcanoes can be viewed from lookout points inside National Park, and there are some wonderful treks enabling you to see some fantastic views of northern El Salvador.

## Day 30 to 31: Suchitoto ( Tue 13 Oct to Wed 14 Oct )

After our trek up the volcano, we will take a short drive to the beautiful town of Suchitoto, where we will have a free afternoon to explore the town, with its cobbled streets and whitewashed houses, and to learn about the incredible work of the Dragoman-supported community centre in which we stay.

In Suchitoto we will stay in dormitory rooms at the Centro Arte Para La Paz community centre, which runs many programs for the local communities to build cultural identity, unity, teaching skills, self-sufficiency, environmental equality and a culture of peace.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

On Day 4 we will have a day to explore Suchitoto, have a guided walking tour of the town, head out on a sunset boat trip or take a day trip to San Salvador.

#### **About Suchitoto:**

Suchitoto is a reminder of El Salvador's past - a beautiful colonial town with painted houses and cobbled streets, it is a world away from modern El Salvador. The town overlooks the lake of Embalse Cerrón Grande, which is a haven for migrating birds, particularly falcons and hawks.

### **Day 32 to 33: Copán ( Thu 15 Oct to Fri 16 Oct )**

**Border information:** Exit El Salvador at Anguiatú, enter Guatemala at Anguiatú. Exit Guatemala at El Florido, enter Honduras at El Florido.

Today we will have a full day drive to return to Guatemala and then onwards to Honduras, arriving at the small village of Copán.

Estimated Drive Time - 8-9 hours.

On the following day we will have an included guided visit to the spectacular Mayan ruins of Copán, followed by a free afternoon to explore some of the other highlights in the area.

In Copán we will stay in a local hotel.

#### **About Copán:**

The ancient ruins of Copán are the southernmost of the great Mayan sites for which Central America is famed. The area was populated by Mayans coming from the region of Tikal, and the city flourished as a major Classic period kingdom between the 5th and 9th Centuries CE. Copán developed a distinctive sculptural style, and the site is unique due to the 21 columns that have been found there that are heavily carved with reliefs depicting the passage of time and the lives of the Royal families. There are also a number of small pyramid-shaped temples and excavated vaults to explore on our visit there.

### **Day 34 to 36: Roatán ( Sat 17 Oct to Mon 19 Oct )**

Today we will take a short drive to the town of San Pedro Sula and board a short local flight to Roatán, the largest of the famous tropical Bay Islands. On arrival we will transfer to the area of the West



End Bay, where we base ourselves for our stay.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

On the following 2 days we will enjoy lots of free time to take part in the wealth of optional activities available on Roatán, and of course to relax and swim on the stunning Caribbean beaches here!

In Roatán we will stay in a local hotel near the beach.

### **About Roatán:**

Roatán is the largest of the Bay Islands, the famous islands in the Caribbean off the coast of Honduras and one of Central America's most scenic spots. This archipelago of coral islands set in the sparkling Caribbean is known for its laid-back atmosphere, and the culture of the seafaring islanders is very distinct from that of the mainland. The scuba diving and snorkelling around the reefs is said to be some of the best in the world and extremely good value, and there are a wealth of activities available here such as kayaking and simply relaxing on the superb beaches.

### **Day 37: Lake Yojoa ( Tue 20 Oct )**

Today we will start early to transfer back to Roatán's airport and catch our flight back to the mainland, rejoining the Dragoman Bus! We will then continue our journey east through Honduras to the beautiful countryside of Lake Yojoa

In Lake Yojoa we will camp for the night in the grounds of a lodge and brewery.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

### **Day 38: Somoto ( Wed 21 Oct )**

Today we will cross the border into Nicaragua, we will head to the Somoto Canyon and stay in cabins near a village community.

In the morning we will have an included half day canyoning experience, or alternatively for those who wish a farm and village tour.

Approximate drive time - 364km / 8hrs

### **About Somoto :**

The Somoto Canyon had not been explored systematically until a group of scientists from the the Czech republic and Nicaragua "discovered" the canyon in 2004. The canyon is believed to have formed 5 to 13 million years ago.

### **Day 39 to 40: León ( Thu 22 Oct to Fri 23 Oct )**

This morning we will enjoy our canyon tour and then drive to the university town of León.

Estimated Drive Time - 212km / 4hours.

On the following day we will have free time to explore the town's wonderful colonial architecture or to take part in the many optional activities available here.

In León we will stay in a centrally-located hotel.

#### **About León:**

The original town of León was founded by the Spanish in 1524, but was moved to its current location in 1610 after the original site suffered from a series of earthquakes - the ruins of the original site (now known as León Viejo) can be visited and are one of Nicaragua's most incredible historical sites. The city has an abundance of old colonial buildings and an extraordinary array of old churches, including the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of León, a Baroque-era cathedral that is the largest in Central America and has a very distinctive style. As well as this fantastic heritage, the city is a lively university town, and has a bewildering choice of optional activities available in the surrounding volcanic countryside - as such it is a fantastic stop on our trips through Nicaragua

### **Day 41 to 42: Granada, Masaya National Park ( Sat 24 Oct to Sun 25 Oct )**

Today we will take a short drive to Nicaragua's oldest city of Granada, a beautiful town which oozes with colonial charm! En route we will have an included visit to the traditional markets in the small town of Masaya, and witness the incredible active caldera of the nearby Masaya volcano (if its volcanic activity isn't too high).

Estimated Drive Time - 4-5 hours.

On the following day we will have free time to explore the historic streets of Granada's old town, or take part in some of the myriad of optional activities that are available here.

In Granada we will stay in a centrally-located hostel, which has a mixture of private and dormitory rooms.

#### **About Granada:**

Granada is the oldest European-built city in the Americas, having been founded in 1524 - it was named after its counterpart in Spain, in honour of the recapture of the city from the Islamic Moors by the Catholic monarchy in 1492, which marked the end of the Moorish occupation of Spain. Being an important economic centre, the city saw many battles from English, French, Dutch and American pirates looking for supremacy over the area. Following Nicaragua's independence, the city entered into a bitterly-fought rivalry with León over which city should be the capital of the new country - in the end a compromise was agreed and the new city of Managua was constructed mid-way between the two!

Granada is a fantastic place to visit and explore, and has many exciting optional activities within reach.

#### **About Masaya National Park:**

In the stunning volcanic landscapes between León and Granada lies the incredible sight of the Masaya caldera. Formed by an eruption around

2,500 years ago and growing larger ever since, the caldera is a massive crater with a glowing red lava fire at the bottom, with pungent sulphurous fumes being almost continuously pumped out. It is a 'sub vent' into the colossal Las Sierras shield volcano that covers a wider area, and volcanic rocks and ashes still cover the area surrounding the caldera giving the place a very haunting atmosphere!

### **Day 43 to 44: Ometepe Island ( Mon 26 Oct to Tue 27 Oct )**

This morning we drive to the small town of San Jorge on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, Central America's largest lake. Here we will board a ferry to the stunning volcanic island of Ometepe, where we base ourselves in the port village of Moyogalpa and enjoy free time to explore on arrival.

Estimated Drive Time - 2-3 hours.

On the following day we will have free time to explore and take part in optional activities such as the challenging trek to the summit of the Concepción volcano that dominates the island, or seeing some of the mysterious ancient petroglyphs that are dotted through the landscape.

On Ometepe we will stay in a small local hotel.

#### **About Ometepe Island:**

The serene island of Ometepe is beautifully located in the middle of Lake Nicaragua and is formed of the volcanoes Concepción and Madera, which rise from the lake. The name of the island literally means "two volcanoes" in the Nahuatl language, from "ome" (meaning two) and "tepetl" (meaning mountain). The island's wonderful hourglass shape is home to great beaches, deep jungles, beautiful lakes and fantastic waterfalls, which are wonderful to explore on some treks around the island. For the fit and the daring, you can even try to trek to the summit of Concepción itself!

Ometepe has some unique petroglyphs dotted throughout the island, traces of the mysterious Niquirano civilisation that once occupied the island - the oldest of these date back to around 300 BCE, and many can be seen on your explorations of the island.

### **Day 45 to 46: La Fortuna ( Wed 28 Oct to Thu 29 Oct )**

**Border information:** Exit Nicaragua at Peñas Blancas, enter Costa Rica at Peñas Blancas.

Today we will take an early morning ferry back to San Jorge and drive to La Fortuna in Costa Rica, a stunning town under the shadow of the mighty Arenal volcano.

Estimated Drive Time - 4-6 hours.

On the following day we will have a free day to take optional treks through the incredible surrounding volcanic landscapes or forest canopies, or get involved in many different adventure activities such as zip-lining, white-water rafting, and canyoning. La Fortuna is also

famous for its outstanding hot springs, which we will have the opportunity to visit.

In La Fortuna we will stay in excellent cabanas outside of town.

#### **About La Fortuna:**

The small town of La Fortuna is dominated over by the huge conical volcano of Arenal. The town was founded in the 1930s, and was renamed to "La Fortuna" (meaning "fortune") in 1968 when the previously dormant volcano unexpectedly erupted and engulfed nearby villages - the current name was given to it to mark the good fortune that it was not also buried by the eruption. Between 1968 and 2010 Arenal was one of the world's most active volcanos, and could be relied upon to erupt on most days - however in 2010, the volcano suddenly stopped erupting and has been dormant once more since then!

La Fortuna is a beautiful and serene town, with the mighty volcano as its iconic backdrop. It is one of Costa Rica's most popular spots, and visitors are absolutely spoiled for choice when it comes to optional activities - there are forest treks to the 70m-high Catarata de la Fortuna waterfalls, whitewater rafting trips, zip-lining, canopy walks, horse riding, amongst many other options. After all this activity, you can enjoy a relaxing evening at one of the area's excellent volcanic hot springs.

#### **Day 47 to 48: Monteverde ( Fri 30 Oct to Sat 31 Oct )**

Today we will leave our overland vehicle behind and transfer by taxi and boat into the dense cloud forests and coffee plantations of Monteverde, a stunning area offering an incredible diversity of flora and fauna.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

On the following day we will have an included guided walk on the trails of the Monteverde Cloud Forest National Reserve, followed by a free afternoon to visit some of the town's highlights or enjoy some adventurous activities such as canyoning or horse riding.

In Monteverde we will stay in a local hotel.

#### **About Monteverde:**

Monteverde and the cloud forests which surround it are considered one of the top destinations to visit in Costa Rica, and certainly one of the top eco-tourism destinations in the world. The bulk of Monteverde's rainforest and cloud forest can be found in the Reserva Biológica Bosque Nuboso Monteverde, which attracts huge numbers of naturalists each year and the area is one of the best in Central America to try to spot the indigenous birdlife such as the Resplendant Quetzal.

The cool hills of the area is perfect for the growing of coffee, Costa Rica's most famous export - it is possible to visit several plantations around Monteverde to learn more about the process of coffee cultivation. The beautiful rich cloud forests are also perfect for trekking, canopy walks, and other activities such as zip-lining through the valleys and treetops!

## **Day 49 to 50: Manuel Antonio National Park ( Sun 01 Nov to Mon 02 Nov )**

Today we will continue by taxi to the small town of Tilarán, where we will rejoin our overland vehicle and drive to the spectacular beaches of Manuel Antonio National Park on the Pacific coast.

Estimated Drive Time - 5-6 hours.

On the following day we will have an included guided walk through some of the beautiful trails within park, learning all about its flora and fauna and immersing ourselves in the idyllic landscape. We will have free time in the afternoon to take part in some optional activities or relax on the wonderful beaches.

In Manuel Antonio we will stay in a hostel near the beach, with a mixture of private rooms and dormitories.

### **About Manuel Antonio National Park:**

Manuel Antonio National Park is one of Central America's most spectacular spots - stunning sandy beaches between the calm ocean waters and lush rainforests, complete with lots of walking, paddle-boarding, fishing and boating opportunities. There are plenty of animals to spot in the area, such as capuchin monkeys, iguanas, coatis and sloths - the park is a vertiable paradise, and it's possible to find some beautiful secluded beaches despite it being one of Costa Rica's most visited places.

## **Day 51 to 52: Boquete ( Tue 03 Nov to Wed 04 Nov )**

**Border information:** Exit Costa Rica at Paso Canoas, enter Panama at Paso Canoas.

Today we will drive across the Panama border into the Chiriqui highlands, arriving at the town of Boquete.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-5 hours.

On the following day we will have a free day to take part in some of the many optional outdoor activities which the town is famous for, including the opportunity to take the strenuous trek to the 3,478m summit of Volcán Barú, the highest point in Panama.

In Boquete we will stay in a local hostel, with a mixture of private rooms and dormitories.

### **About Boquete:**

Boquete is a picturesque small town in the stunning green hills of western Panama, close to the Costa Rican border. Its cool climate attracts many visitors, and its incredible forest scenery is some of the most beautiful in Panama. The area has gained a fantastic reputation for exciting outdoor activities such as rafting and forest treks, and is the base for a challenging day-trek up to the summit of Volcán Barú, Panama's highest peak at 3,475m - on a rare clear day it is possible to see the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea at the same time from the summit!

## Day 53: Panama ( Thu 05 Nov )

Today we will continue to Chagres National Park and explore the Grandfather of the Panama Canal: the Camino Real, a cobblestoned road from the Caribbean to the Pacific through the rainforests of Panama, established as the transport route of Gold and Silver by Spanish conquistadors in the 16th Century. The Camino Real was rediscovered only recently, and we will visit and stay overnight at a community, which worked together with researcher Christian Strassnig to identify the original route of the Camino Real in the jungle.

At Alajuela Lake we take a dugout boat to observe remains of the Camino Real at the lakeshore, then we arrive at the community and we are warmly welcomed by the people who are inspired with perspective of sustainable development through community tourism at the Camino Real. We have a typical Panamanian lunch and see then a presentation of authentic Panamanian folklore. In the morning we will undertake a hike the Camino Real, see the original cobblestone and be fascinated by stories of the mule trains, gold and pirates.

Estimated Drive Time - 6-7 hours.

### About Panama:

Panama is the southernmost country of Central America, where the continent narrows to its tiny join with [Colombia](#) and [South America](#). This piece of geography made Panama the perfect location for the world-famous and controversial Panama Canal, which was completed in 1914 and has a massive impact on world trade and history.

### EXPLORE PANAMA CITY & ITS SURROUNDINGS

The capital of Panama City is a bustling metropolis full of culture and with a buzzing nightlife. It contains several fantastic museums and an atmospheric old town as well as the modern business centre and marina. The county also has some amazing mountainous and coastline scenery, a myriad of exhilarating outdoor activities, incredible wildlife and wonderful coffee plantations.

Panama is an excellent place to start or end your Central American adventure with Dragoman!

## Day 54: Panama City ( Fri 06 Nov )

After early morning coffee you can go for an optional bird-watching hike on a trail with plenty of tropical birds (free with local guides). At return to community we have a hearty breakfast. We will then take a hike on the trail. Afterwards it is time to say good-bye and we return by boat to our Overland Bus.

We will then drive to the Miraflores Visitor Centre at the world-famous Panama Canal, learning all about its controversial history and incredible role in shaping trade and world politics in the 20th century. After our included visit we will complete the drive to the capital, Panama City.

In Panama City we will stay in a local hotel in the Bella Vista district.

Estimated Drive Time - 2 hours.

### About Panama City:

The bustling modern Panamanian capital has a long history - the original city was founded in 1519 by Spanish conquistadors, acting as an important stopover for the ships taking gold and silver from the Americas to Spain. It was also a base for several expeditions to explore and conquer areas of South America. This original city was burned down in 1671 by the Welsh pirate Henry Morgan, one of the most infamous and ruthless pirates operating on the Spanish Main. The city was rebuilt in 1673, just 8kms from the original settlement, around which the modern metropolis has evolved - the ruins of the original city are known as Panama Viejo, and can still be visited today.

[Panama](#) is perhaps most famous for the Panama Canal, located near to the capital. The 78km-long canal links the Atlantic and Pacific oceans via a narrow section of the Isthmus of Panama, allowing ships to pass between the oceans without having to traverse around the entire continent of South America. Completed by an American-led team in 1914, the canal has had a massive and controversial effect on worldwide trade, maritime, and international politics - in fact Panama owes much of its independence from Colombia to the USA backing separatist rebels in return for an agreement that they could set up a US-administered zone along the new canal they would build, a deal which caused a lot of tension between the USA and Panama throughout the 20th Century, with Panama only gaining full control over the canal in 1999.

### Day 55: Panama City ( Sat 07 Nov )

**Border information:** if you are finishing in Panama City, you will most likely exit Panama at Panama City Tocumen International Airport (IATA code: PTY).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Panama City. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact the Dragoman 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.

If you are continuing on to Cartagena with Dragoman, then your leader will assist you with airport transfers for your included flight - you will spend this night in a hotel in either Panama City or Cartagena (depending on the flight times and availability).

### Day 56: Cartagena ( Sun 08 Nov )

**Border Information:** if joining in Cartagena, you will most likely enter Colombia at Cartagena Rafael Núñez International Airport (IATA code: CTG).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Cartagena 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 Cartagena.

In Cartagena we stay in a comfortable hotel just outside the historical centre.

If you are continuing on from Panama, then your leader will have assisted you with airport transfers for your included flight to arrive in time for the joining meeting.

Hotel for the night: Villa Colonial

**Villa Colonial**

Calle de Maravillas (C10) No. 30-60

Getsemani

Cartagena

Colombia

Tel - +57 664 4996

**Activity**

**Approximate Cost**

Days diving or snorkelling trip out to Islas del Rosario, Cartagena COP 60000

Head out for a day of scuba diving amongst the reefs surrounding the Islas del Rosario in the Caribbean Sea USD 60

Discover the brutal history of the Spanish Inquisition at their former headquarters in Cartagena, the Palace of the Inquisition COP 15000

Learn all about Cartagena's naval tradition and history at the Naval Museum of the Caribbean COP 15000

**About Cartagena:**

Cartagena is one of the most historic cities in South America - legendary for both for its history and beauty, Cartagena is often one of the favourite destinations of most travellers who visit it.

The area was inhabited by various native civilisations for thousands of years before the city was founded in 1533 CE by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Heredia - the settlement was named after the city of Cartagena in Spain, where most of Heredia's sailors were from. Having suffered a tumultuous past full of battles, raids, invasions, destructions and reconstructions, the city became heavily fortified and huge defensive walls surround its narrow cobbled streets and colonial buildings.

The city is made up of various districts - the new town with its high rise hotels, apartments and nightspots, and the older colonial parts of the city. The old city is the main attraction for visitors, particularly the inner walled town which is packed with churches, monasteries, plazas and mansions.



## Day 58: Cartagena ( Tue 10 Nov )

Today we will have a full day in the beautiful coastal colonial city of Cartagena.

In the morning we will have an included walking tour of the city, and then the afternoon will be free to explore the city further, enjoy the many optional activities on offer, or simply relax on the beach.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore Cartagena on a guided walking tour	Included in Kitty
Visit the historic Castillo San Felipe	COP 17000
Visit the mudbaths at the Totumo Volcano	USD 25

## Day 59 to 60: Tayrona National Park ( Wed 11 Nov to Thu 12 Nov )

Today we have a short drive to the stunning Tayrona National Park.

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!).

The following day we have an included walk in the National Park.

In Tayrona we will sleep in Hammocks, no food is provided, but there are restaurants and cafes nearby by. There is an hour walk from where we park our truck to our campsite.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Relax and unwind on the unspoilt beaches in Tayrona National Park	Included in Kitty
Time to explore the Cloud Forests of the Sierra Nevada foothills	Free

### About Tayrona National Park:

Tayrona National Park is a wonderful protected area on the northern coast of Colombia, which contains a huge diversity of animal and plant species including 2,000 species of animals and 800 types of plants. This is in part due to the variation in geology of the area - at sea level

the climate is arid and the rugged coastline has some excellent beaches and coves, but the terrain quickly rises as you travel inland, where we find a sub-tropical climate and cloud forests on the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The National Park can be thoroughly explored on foot as there are many winding trails through the incredible scenery. Further biodiversity is present offshore in the warm water of the coral reefs, which offer an excellent opportunity for snorkeling and swimming.

### **Day 61 to 62: Lorica ( Fri 13 Nov to Sat 14 Nov )**

This morning we will walk back to our truck and leave Tayrona National park. We will head south for the pretty colonial town of Santa Cruz de Lorica on the Sinu River.

We will have a free day to relax and discover the historic centre, learn about the traditional Vueltiao hat or head to the coast and soak up the sun in San Bernardo del Viento.

### **Day 63 to 65: Medellín ( Sun 15 Nov to Tue 17 Nov )**

Today we have a full days drive to vibrant city of Medellin. the following morning we will have a guided walking tour of the city. We then have plenty of time to relax or take part in some of activities available here.

In Medellín we will stay in dormitory accommodation in a centrally-located hostel, allowing you to enjoy the exciting nightlife of the city.

Estimated Drive Time - 10 hours

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Day trip to Santa Fe de Antioquia	COP 3000
Take the pioneering Metroline cable car up to Santo Domingo, to see a very different area of the city and the revitalising effect the Metroline has had on the communities there	COP 1750
Visit the colossal Catedral Metropolitana in the city centre, built using over a million bricks between 1875 and 1931	Free
See Medellín's perfect blend of art, culture, and history by visiting the Plaza Botero and the nearby Museo de Antioquia and the Rafael Uribe Palacio de la Cultura	COP 10000

Relax and unwind on a stroll through the Medellín's gorgeous Botanical Gardens, and discover some of its 1000 different floral species on display

COP 2500

Head out on a fascinating walking tour of Medellín and learn all about its tumultuous past

USD 10

Explore the beautiful model Antioquian village of Pueblito Paisa and the interesting sculpture park at Nutibara Hill

Free

Explore the Museum of the University of Antioquia, and marvel at its collection of visual arts, anthropological exhibits, and over 20,000 pieces of pre-Colombian ceramics

Free

Head out and discover some of Medellín's vibrant and unusual nightlife at the Dulce Jesus Mio club

COP 10000

See some of Colombia's finest contemporary art at the Museo de Arte Moderno (NAMM), including the complete work of the local painter Débora Arango

COP 5000

Visit the planetarium and public science exhibits at the Parque de los Deseos

Free

### About Medellín:

The rapid transformation that has taken place in Colombia's second largest city is one like no other. Having spent the 1980s and 90s with international reputation of one of the world's most dangerous cities, Medellín has certainly turned itself around. Once synonymous with the infamous Pablo Escobar and the Medellín Cartel, the city suffered a seriously damaged reputation amongst international travellers and has only recently become a popular destination amongst backpackers. The Paisas (as people from Medellín are known) have strived to change the city's reputation, and almost nothing of those former days can be seen in the character of the city today - visitors can comfortably enjoy the beautiful architecture, excellent facilities and all round well-developed city!

Set amid the rolling green hills of the Aburrá valley and with a warm climate and comfortable altitude of 1538 metres, Medellín has seen more and more travellers flocking to the city in the past few years. With some of the country's finest museums, parks and most impressive architecture as well as a much safer and comfortable atmosphere, it's

easy to see why. Medellín is also one of Colombia's easiest cities to get around with the immaculate and convenient metro system passing all the main points of interest. If you use the metro then make sure you head up on El Teléferico, the city's cable car, as this is included on your metro ticket and gives you a great view of the city.

## **Day 66: Manizales ( Wed 18 Nov )**

Today we will head into the heart of the coffee region for a night at a beautiful Hacienda near the town of Manizales. Tomorrow we can relax in the grounds, take a bird watching walk to spot some of the many hummingbirds that frequent the area.

Estimated Drive time: 7 hours

We will stay in twin share accommodation in a lovely hacienda in the countryside.

### **About Manizales:**

Manizales is a friendly city right in the heart of Colombia's coffee region with a comfortable climate and plenty to see and do. Although still opening up to international tourism, Manizales has a lot to offer the visitor in the way of outdoor activities and ecological attractions. The town itself is a relaxed and friendly place centred around the magnificent cathedral with attractions such as the botanical gardens, thermal springs and eco-parks all easily access able from the centre of town.

Venturing a little further, you will find coffee haciendas and plantations in the surrounding area as well as some beautiful country landscapes perfect for trekking or just taking a relaxing break in the great outdoors. In Manizales we stay on one of these working coffee plantations covering approximately 480 acres which provides people from around the world a taste of the finest Manizales fair trade coffee. The plantation employs around 100 people all throughout the year and about 400 people during the peak picking season.

## **Day 67 to 69: Salento ( Thu 19 Nov to Sat 21 Nov )**

Today we will continue our journey south to the small town of Salento, the gateway to the spectacular Valle de Cocora.

Salento will be our base to take a guided trek through the Cocora Valley to see the Quindio wax palm trees, the largest palms in the world and the national tree of Colombia and also to do a coffee plantation tour.

Estimated Drive Time - 1.5 hours

In Salento we will stay in a local guesthouse within a working coffee farm, in dorm room accommodation.

### **Activity**

Learn all about the cultivation and production of Colombian Coffee on a

### **Approximate Cost**

Included in Kitty

guided tour

Head out on a half-day guided trek through the spectacular Cocora Valley, and see the incredible 50m-tall Quindío wax palms, the tallest palm trees in the world! Included in Kitty

### About Salento:

Salento is a small town on the edge of the Los Nevados mountain range between the cities of Cali and Medellin, in the heart of Colombia's coffee-growing region. There is a very pleasant cool climate in the hills, and we are able to visit some of Colombia's famous fair-trade coffee plantations in the area.

Salento is also the gateway to the Cocora Valley, which as well as its incredible scenery and walking opportunities contains the world's largest palm trees - the Quindío wax palm commonly grows 45m high, and sometimes stretches as high as 60m! We will fully explore the area of Salento and the Cocora Valley during our journey through southern Colombia.

## Day 70 to 71: Popayán ( Sun 22 Nov to Mon 23 Nov )

Today we will drive to the beautiful town and former colonial capital of Popayán.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore Popayán or take part in some excellent treks or other optional activities in the surrounding area.

In Popayán we stay in dormitory accommodation in a local hostel.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Relax in the volcanic thermal springs near the village of Coconuco, dramatically set in a steep-sided valley	COP 60000
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Trek to the 4,650m summit of the towering Puracé volcano near Popayán	COP 130000
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### About Popayán:

Nicknamed the White City, Popayán is a beautiful colonial town full of white-washed houses and grand churches encircled by rolling green hills. Although the capital of the Cauca region of southern Colombia, Popayán somehow retains its relaxed small-town feel. The cool and sunny climate of the lower Andes makes Popayán a very comfortable place to stay and as the main university town of the region, there's a young, sociable feel to the city. The leafy parks marked with elegant church towers provide a sociable and relaxed location where you could

easily spend an afternoon, while an evenings entertainment could be chatting with the friendly locals in a classy cafe bar or salsa club.

Whilst staying in the town there are some lovely walks offering excellent views of the historic centre, several worthwhile museums and galleries and many good cafes, bars and restaurants to make the most of. There are some excellent treks in the surrounding mountains, including an option to trek to the summit of the nearby Puracé volcano.

## Day 72: Ipiales ( Tue 24 Nov )

Today we will have a full day drive to the border town of Ipiales.

In Ipiales we will stay in a local hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 9-10 hours.

### About Ipiales:

Ipiales is the border town on the Colombian side of the Colombia/ Ecuador frontier. The town has some pleasant plazas and the sight of locals using a horse and cart gives it a quaint, countryside feel. The star attraction of Ipiales is the nearby Santuario de las Lajas, the site of many supposed miracles and apparitions over the years. Set amid breath-taking scenery, the Santuario is a spectacular gothic-style church straddling a dramatic gorge with rushing river below. It is one of the most impressive churches on the continent, and its fantastic setting and quirky museum make it a highlight of any visit to Colombia.

## Day 73: Otavalo, Ipiales ( Wed 25 Nov )

We will leave Colombia behind today and cross the border into Ecuador, we will have time for an included visit to the beautiful Santurio de las Lajas, before heading to Otavalo.

Tonight we will camp in the grounds of a pretty Guesthouse in Otavalo.

Estimated drive time: 3 hours.

**Border information:** Exit Colombia at Ipiales, enter Ecuador at Ipiales.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the jaw dropping Santuario Las Lajas on the outskirts of Ipiales	Included in Kitty
Take a short walk to the beautiful Peguche Waterfalls near Otavalo (if time allows)	Free
Village Tour Of Otavalo	Free

### About Otavalo:

Otavalo is a small town in northern Ecuador nestled in beautiful

surroundings a short distance from Quito. Many of the local indigenous communities in this area still wear their traditional clothing made from intricately woven and decorated fabrics, and the men tend to wear their hair in long ponytails. The Otovalan weaving skills are quite renowned and they are rightly famous for their textiles - so rugs, wall hangings and knitwear are all well worth buying here!

## Day 74: Quito ( Thu 26 Nov )

**Border information:** if you are finishing in Quito, you will most likely exit Ecuador at Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport (IATA code: UIO).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Quito. 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.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Take a trip on El Telerifigo, the world's second highest cable car	USD 8.5
Visit the Museo De La Ciudad	USD 3
Take a walk around Quito's incredible Botanical Gardens, which showcases all of Ecuador's various ecosystems and their flora	USD 3.5
Visit the Museo Mindalae, the extremely original project showcasing Ecuador's rich cultural diversity	USD 3

### About Quito:

Quito is the capital of Ecuador, nestled in a hollow in the mountains in between the volcanoes Cayambe, Pichincha and Cotopaxi - at 2,850m above sea level, it is the world's highest official capital city. Founded in 1534 by a group of settlers led by Sebastián de Benalcázar, the town slowly grew throughout the Spanish colonial era and after the region's independence from Spain in 1822.

The colonial old town is a maze of steep, cobbled streets with intricately carved, overhanging balconies, and some of the best examples of Spanish colonial art and churches anywhere in the Americas - along with Kraków, Quito was the first ever World Cultural Heritage Site declared by UNESCO in 1978. The modern area of the town is lively and has some fantastic restaurants and bars. Quito's mix of European and Indian cultures make this a really fascinating city, and you will come across stalls displaying Indian textiles, colourful wall hangings, jewellery, pottery and woodcarvings. Quito has some incredible museums, galleries and parks in the city, and some excellent

adventure activities and mountain treks nearby for those with extra time in the area.

## Day 75: Quito ( Fri 27 Nov )

**Border Information:** if joining in Quito, you will most likely enter Ecuador at Quito Mariscal Sucre International Airport (IATA code: UIO).

There will be an important group meeting at 6:00pm at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Quito 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 Quito.

**A note on altitude:** If you are joining in Quito, we strongly recommend arriving at least 24 hours before the trip begins to allow additional time to acclimatise.

In Quito we will stay in a friendly local hotel in the 'New Town'.

Hotel for the night: Fuente de Piedra II

### Hotel Fuente de Piedra II

Juan Leon Mera N23-21 y Baquedano

Mariscal Sucre

Quito

Ecuador

Tel - +593 2290 0323

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit one of the countless art galleries in Quito, such as the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana or the Museo Guayasamín	USD 6
Visit the equator at Mitad del Mundo	USD 3
Take a trip on El Telerifqo, the world's second highest cable car	USD 8.5
Visit the Museo De La Ciudad	USD 3
Take a walk around Quito's incredible Botanical Gardens, which showcases all of Ecuador's various ecosystems and their flora	USD 3.5
Visit the Museo Mindalae, the extremely original project showcasing Ecuador's rich cultural diversity	USD 3



Enjoy the fantastic view over Quito's Old Town from the statue of the Virgin Mary on top of the nearby Cerro Panecillo Free

Visit the Museo Nacional del Banco Central, showcasing the country's largest collection of Ecuadorian art and housing an impressive gold collection USD 2

## Day 76: Ecuadorian Amazon, Tena ( Sat 28 Nov )

Today our journey begins with a drive to a village on the edge of the Amazon basin, near the town of Tena, where we head to our lodge for an incredible 3-night stay.

Our lodge is a great example of eco-tourism, built and run by the local community and volunteers, who work to re-forest the reserve land at the lodge with native trees and medicinal plants. The lodge is set in secondary and primary rainforest, an area at risk of deforestation.

We will stay in a comfortable ecolodge with meals included.

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!).

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Spend 3 nights at our fantastic Ecuadorian ecolodge, taking in many activities such as boat trips on the Napo River, visits to local communities and treks through the jungle to some spectacular waterfalls and bat caves! Included in Kitty

### About Ecuadorian Amazon:

The eastern part of Ecuador consists largely of tropical moist broadleaf forests that cover the lower slopes of the Andes and spill down into the Amazon Basin. The upland rainforest is strikingly different to that which is found in the lower basin, and features steep, rugged ridges and cascading streams and waterfalls.

From our lodge near the city of Tena, we will explore these upland forests on foot and by boat - we'll aim to find various waterfalls, caves and creeks in the forest, all the while keeping an eye out for the area's elusive wildlife. We'll also visit a local Quichua community during our stay in the forest lodge.

## Day 77 to 78: Ecuadorian Amazon ( Sun 29 Nov to Mon 30 Nov )

Over the next two days we will head into the Amazon jungle, enjoying rainforest treks exploring the nearby waterfalls and caves, and trips down the Napo River in motorised dugout canoes, hopefully spotting plenty of wildlife on the way. We will also see some ancient fossils and petroglyphs, and visit a local Quichua community.

## Day 79: Rio Verde ( Tue 01 Dec )

Today we will drive through the highlands of Ecuador, arriving in Rio Verde near the famous Tungurahua volcano.

In Rio Verde we will stay at a well-equipped campsite with great facilities.

Estimated Drive Time - 3-4 hours.

### About Rio Verde:

A few kilometres from the town of Baños is the small village of Rio Verde, named after the clear green water of the river that flows through the town. A number of waterfalls are found along its course, the most spectacular being The Devil's Cauldron ('El Pailon del Diablo'), a 20 minute walk from our excellent campsite.

Whilst staying here, we will have the opportunity to take part in optional adventure activities like as horse-riding, canyoning, mountain biking and rafting, as well as making the short trip into Baños to visit the thermal springs.

## Day 80 to 81: Baños, Rio Verde ( Wed 02 Dec to Thu 03 Dec )

We will have two full days of free time to take part in a range of optional activities in Rio Verde, such as white-water rafting, trekking, canyoning, cycling, and other options. We will also have the opportunity to visit the nearby town of Baños and its popular volcanic thermal springs.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Explore the beautiful hills surrounding Banos with an abundance of activities on offer	USD 3
Go on an adrenaline-fuelled half-day rafting expedition on the Rio Pastaza near Banos, one of the best rafting experiences in South America	USD 25
Head out for an exhilarating half-day canyoning trip through the gorges near	USD 25

## Baños

Head out on a horse riding trip through the beautiful volcanic landscapes surrounding Baños USD 40

Hire mountain bikes to freely explore the winding trails around Banos USD 7

Go out on a half day rock climbing trip to the walls of natural lava rock just outside Banos, which have routes suitable for people of all levels USD 30

Take out some quad bikes on a tour around the winding trails near Baños USD 36

Take the famous zip-lining course through the Puntzan Canyon near Baños, flying through the forest canopy and past several waterfalls USD 20

Explore the stunning gorges, forests, and landscapes of the Baños area by foot, possibly trekking the Machay River trail or visiting the nearby waterfalls of Pailon del Diablo and Machay Free

### About Baños:

Nestled in the shadow of the fiery Tungurahua volcano is the exquisite town of Baños. Tungurahua is one of Ecuador's largest active volcanoes, and provides an incredible backdrop to treks and explorations in the area. There are some beautiful waterfalls, excellent trekking and mountain biking opportunities, and some famous volcanic hot springs which give the town its name!

## Day 82: Chugchilán ( Fri 04 Dec )

Today we will drive to the remote village of Chugchilán, via the spectacular highland scenery along the road of the 'Quilotoa Loop'.

In Chugchilán we will stay in a fantastic local hostel where breakfast and dinner are included, giving you a chance to enjoy traditional Ecuadorian food.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

### About Chugchilán:

Set on the slopes of the Rio Toachi Canyon, the peaceful village of Chugchilán is our base to explore the stunning green landscapes of central Ecuador. Several day hikes are available in the area, the most famous being one from the volcanic Lake Quilotoa back to Chugchilán - this is without doubt one of the most beautiful day-treks to be found in South America, and takes you through the canyon and the lush fields of the area.

### **Day 83: Chugchilán, Lake Quilotoa ( Sat 05 Dec )**

Today we will transfer to the village of Quilotoa to see its stunning crater lake, and take an included day trek back to Chugchilán through the local villages, canyons, and beautiful scenery. This walk is widely considered one of the best day treks in Ecuador!

The mostly-downhill trek usually takes between 4-6 hours, but please be aware that there is a section towards the end of the trek with a steep incline which you will need to be quite physically fit for - although we thoroughly recommend the trek, it can be skipped by anyone if they prefer.

#### **Activity**

Trek from Quilotoa to Chugchilán

#### **Approximate Cost**

Included in Kitty

#### **About Lake Quilotoa:**

Lake Quilotoa is a beautiful volcanic crater lake located at 3,600m above sea level in the hills between the towns of Zumbahua and Chugchilán. Its emerald water spans a circle with a diameter of 2kms - Quilotoa is an active volcano, but the last major eruption was over 850 years ago. It is possible to hike down from the crater rim to the lakeside. The descent takes 30 minutes and climbing back up takes about an hour. The lake also lends its name to the Quilotoa Loop, given to the winding circuit of spectacular dirt roads that connect Lake Quilotoa to Latacunga and the Pan-American Highway. The roads that lead away from Latacunga are unpaved, winding and have spectacular views of the mountains, rivers and verdant landscape. We will head to the town of Chugchilán on the northern section of the loop and head out on the southern section of the loop allowing you to see some of the more remote areas of the central Andes of Ecuador.

### **Day 84: Cuenca ( Sun 06 Dec )**

Today we will drive along the remainder of the Quilotoa Loop and then head south to the beautiful colonial town of Cuenca. We will pass through the stunning landscape of the Cajas National Park en route.

In Cuenca we will stay in a centrally-located hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

#### **About Cuenca:**

Cuenca is Ecuador's third-largest city and its small centre is home to some beautiful architecture. The city was founded in 1557 and named

after the city of Cuenca in Spain, the birthplace of the Viceroy of Peru at the time.

This small university town is a pleasure to explore, and you'll discover impressive churches that date back to the 16th and 17th Centuries, attractive colonial buildings, tranquil plazas and lively markets. The Ecuadorians consider it the finest city in the country, and many of its buildings are constructed from marble and decorated with stunning woodwork and ironwork.

Cuenca is also the home of the Panama hat, and you can visit one of the famous hat factories and watch the skills of the craftsman on your travels here.

## Day 85: Cuenca ( Mon 07 Dec )

Today we will have a free day to explore the colonial city of Cuenca. The town is the birthplace of the famous Panama Hat, and we will have the opportunity today to visit one of the factories to learn about the manufacturing process.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit one of the many factories that produce the ever-stylish Panama Hats, Cuenca's most famous export!	Free
Take a day trip out of Cuenca to visit the site of the Ingapirca ruins, the largest known Inca ruins in Ecuador	USD 25
Visit the Museo Pumapungo in Cuenca, featuring an impressive range of artistic, historical, cultural, and ethnological exhibits, and most famously housing a collection of shrunken heads from the Shuar civilisation	Free
Visit some of the volcanic thermal baths near to the colonial town of Cuenca	USD 6

## Day 86: Punta Sal ( Tue 08 Dec )

**Border information:** Exit Ecuador at Huaquillas, enter Peru at Tumbes.

Today we will have a long drive day south, crossing the border into northern Peru.

We will stay at a friendly local campsite just outside of Punta Sal, on a beautiful and serene beach on the shore of the Pacific Ocean.

Estimated Drive Time - 10-11 hours.

### About Punta Sal:

Situated on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in a long, curved bay, Punta Sal is a haven of sun and sand. The warm and tranquil waters are a pleasure to swim in and there's also the opportunity to set out on boat trips along the coast line. For those who prefer to stay on dry land, horse riding along the beach and salsa lessons can be arranged, or just kick-back in a hammock and laze the day away, enjoying the peace and quiet of this beautiful spot.

## Day 87: Punta Sal ( Wed 09 Dec )

Today we have a full day to relax on the beach and enjoy some activities in and around the stunning coastal area of Punta Sal.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Try your hand at surfing in the ideal waters of the Pacific Ocean near Punta Sal or Mancora	USD 20
Rent a mountain bike to explore the coast of Punta Sal and the beautiful nearby areas of Canoas and Plateritos	USD 20
Explore the coastlines of Punta Sal by foot, or head out trekking through the nearby hills and farms of Canoas	Free
Take a beginner's belly-dancing class with our hosts at the beaches of Punta Sal	USD 10
Take a yoga session at our beach campsite in Punta Sal	USD 10

## Day 88: Lambayeque, Huanchaco ( Thu 10 Dec )

Today we will have a full day's drive to Huanchaco, near the city of Trujillo.

In Huanchaco we will camp in the grounds of a local hotel.

Estimated Drive Time - 9-10 hours.

### About Lambayeque:

The small Peruvian town of Lambayeque is home to the impressive Museo Tumbas Reales de Sipán, a world-class museum that showcases the finest artefacts from the archaeological finds at nearby Sipán.

The ancient city of Sipán was a settlement of the Moche civilisation

that thrived in the area between 50-700 CE. The ruins were discovered in 1987, and when excavated revealed a set of fantastic and well-preserved royal tombs. Although some tombs had been plundered, many were found intact and full of some of the most extraordinary historical treasures ever discovered in the world!

Amongst the most impressive discoveries made here is the tomb of the famous 'Lord of the Sipán', a Moche priest found buried amidst an array of gold, jewels and fabrics - some phenomenal gold and silver ornamental and ceremonial artifacts were recovered, which demonstrate the outstanding craftsmanship of the Moche metalworkers.

### **About Huanchaco:**

Huanchaco is a small town on the Peruvian coast that is rapidly acquiring a reputation for the quality of the surfing off its relaxed beaches. Wandering along the sea front you will come across the local fishermen's "caballitos de tortora" - curved reed boats left propped up in groups together on the sand.

Huanchaco is an ideal location from which to explore the numerous archaeological ruins that surround the nearby city of Trujillo. One of the most impressive sites is that of the enormous Pre-Colombian complex of Chan Chan, a vast adobe city constructed as the capital of the Chimú civilisation which thrived in the area between 900-1470 CE, when they were finally invaded by the Incas.

Another incredible site is the pyramid-shaped Huaca de la Luna, the impressive remains of the capital of the Moche civilisation that flourished between 100-800 CE - this site contains some phenomenal adobe structures and well-preserved painted murals of the Moche deity Ai Apaec.

## **Day 89: Huanchaco ( Fri 11 Dec )**

Today we will have an included guided trip to explore the enormous adobe ruins of Chan Chan and the world-famous Moche archaeological site of Huaca de la Luna (Pyramid of the Moon).

### **Activity**

Guided tour of Moche Pyramids and the Chimu city of Chan Chan

### **Approximate Cost**

Included in Kitty

## **Day 90: Huaraz ( Sat 12 Dec )**

Today we will have a spectacular drive up the winding roads of the 'Casma Route' into the Cordillera Blanca section of the high Andes, reaching the mountain town of Huaraz.

In Huaraz we will stay in a local hostel in either dorm accommodation or private rooms, depending on availability.

Estimated Drive Time - 8-9 hours.

### **About Huaraz:**

Huaraz is situated high up in the Andes, dominated by the highest tropical mountain range in the world - the Cordillera Blanca. Looming over the town is Peru's highest peak, the 6,768m mountain of Huascarán.

Huaraz offers great opportunities for trekking, mountain biking, horse riding and rafting in the spectacular mountains, or even head out ice-climbing on the Pastoruri Glacier. There are some wonderful nearby historical sites, such as the ancient ceremonial centre of Chavín de Huántar which dates from 1200-500 BCE, and the Wilcahuaín ruins, once an outpost of the Wari civilisation between 600-900 CE.

## Day 91 to 92: Huaraz ( Sun 13 Dec to Mon 14 Dec )

We have two days in the spectacular area of the Cordillera Blanca for exploration and optional activities such as visiting the incredible pre-Inca ruins of Chavín de Huantar or trekking and climbing to the nearby lakes and glaciers.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the incredible ancient ruins of Chavín de Huantar, the religious centre for the Chavín culture which flourished in the area from 1200BCE-500BCE	PEN 100
Explore the remarkably well-preserved three-story mausoleum of Wilcahuaín near to Huaraz, built by the Wari civilisation that ruled the area between 600-900CE	PEN 15
Learn all about the area's incredible pre-Inca civilisations at the Museo Regional de Ancash	PEN 15
Take a horse riding trip from Huaraz to the incredible viewpoints of the Cordillera Blanca	USD 27
Enjoy a half-day rock climbing excursion followed by a rejuvenating dip in the nearby thermal springs	USD 30
Go canyoning in the waterfalls and gorges of the Huaraz region	USD 28
Go downhill mountain biking through the stunning mountains of the Cordillera Blanca near Huaraz	USD 55



Trek out to the phenomenal turquoise glacier lake of Laguna 69 in the shadow of Huascarán, Peru's highest mountain USD 45

### Day 93: Lima ( Tue 15 Dec )

Today we will have another full day's drive back to the coast via the 'Paramonga Route' and then on to the enormous Peruvian capital of Lima.

In Lima we will stay in a comfortable hotel in the city's historical centre.

Estimated Drive Time - 10-11 hours.

#### About Lima:

Lima is Peru's buzzing and busy capital city, and the second-largest city in the Americas behind São Paulo! Despite its colossal size and chaotic areas, if you explore the capital's streets, parks and plazas you'll discover a real gem of a city.

Lima was founded by the infamous Conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535 and was originally the administrative centre for Spain's Viceroyalty in South America, making it the continent's most important city for nearly three centuries. It became a city of great wealth financed by the massive quantities of gold and silver that were mined in the area, and became the capital of independent Peru after its liberation from the Spanish in 1821.

There are many museums in Lima showcasing the finest artefacts from the country's many ancient civilisations, and you can visit the finely preserved catacombs at the Church of San Francisco. There are many excellent restaurants in the city and a thriving nightlife in the lively district of Miraflores.

### Day 94: Lima ( Wed 16 Dec )

**Border information:** if you are finishing in Lima, you will most likely exit Peru at Lima Jorge Chávez International Airport (IATA code: LIM).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Lima. 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.

#### Activity

#### Approximate Cost

Visit the Gold Museum & Catacombs of Lima PEN 33

Visit the beautiful Baroque cathedral of San Francisco in Lima's historical centre, and PEN 15

explore the morbidly fascinating catacombs underneath

Visit the excellent Museum of the Nation in Lima, which has numerous exhibits highlighting many of the pre-conquest civilisations and an outstanding photo exhibit on Peru's Internal Conflict of the 1980s and 1990s

Free

Explore the bohemian areas of Barranco and Miraflores on a cycling tour of Lima

USD 50

See the incredible 'Magic Water Circuit' in Lima's Parque de la Reserva, an astounding evening display of water, music, light, images, and laser effects across 13 huge water fountains

PEN 4

Explore the Rafael Larco Herrera Museum in Lima, containing the largest private collection of pre-Colombian art in the world

PEN 30

Take a cebiche and pisco sour class at one of the top restaurants in Miraflores, a lively district of Lima

USD 40

## 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.

## ALTITUDE WARNING

**Warning - this trip goes above 2800m.**

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to

experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

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

[For further information please click here to download our AMS information sheet](#) or refer to the following website: [www.high-altitude-medicine.com](http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com)

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

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

**Some Travel Insurance companies will stipulate a maximum altitude limit. Please ensure that you are covered and if necessary pay the additional premium of extended cover.**

## **MULTIPLE DEPARTURES AND AMENDED ITINERARIES**

South America is very busy for travel at certain times of the year, particularly in connection with the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro but also at other times of the year. Please note that there may be more than just one truck on your specific departure date, and these trucks will travel in parallel with each other.

Trucks on multiple departures will operate on slightly different itineraries and your day to day itinerary may vary from your trip notes. You will of course still visit all the highlights listed, and the presence of other trucks can make for a great atmosphere. If you should have any concerns then please contact your sales agent.

Even on the majority of our trips where there is only the one truck, you may from time to time meet up with other groups at points on the road, and may partake in activities jointly with other groups on these occasions.

This may also occur occasionally in Africa, but is very unlikely in Asia or North and Central America.

## **PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

### **SOUTH AMERICA PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

South America is diverse continent, from high altitudes in the dry Andes, the steamy and humid Amazon, the cold moorlands of Patagonia, to the lush green pampas of northern Argentina. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and many other activities such as horse riding and white water rafting, and you will need to be reasonably fit to be able to participate in everything on offer.

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.

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.

## PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR CENTRAL AMERICA ITINERARIES

Central America is diverse continent so you should therefore be prepared for the adventure. There will be time for hiking and other activities such as horse riding, and you will need to be reasonably fit to participate in everything on offer.

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. The Central America 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 your entry into the country.

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.

## COLOMBIA

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Colombia as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Please note that citizens of Canada will need to pay a reciprocity fee of COP160,000 (approximately USD70 - 2015 price) upon entry to Colombia.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

## MEXICO

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Mexico as a tourist for up to 180 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**. Citizens of Russia, Ukraine and Turkey will need to apply for an Electronic Authorisation before travel.

## ECUADOR

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Ecuador as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**. Only a very small number of nationalities will require a visa.

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).

## PERU

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Peru as a tourist for up to 183 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**. Only a very small number of nationalities will require a visa.

## EL SALVADOR

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit El Salvador as a tourist for up to 90 days. Certain nationalities will need to buy a tourist card on arrival at the border for USD10.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

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).

## BELIZE

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Belize as a tourist for up to 30 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

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).

## GUATEMALA

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Guatemala as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

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).

## HONDURAS

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Honduras as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

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).

## NICARAGUA

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Nicaragua as a tourist for up to 90 days. All visitors will need to buy a tourist card on arrival at the border for USD10.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required, and whether it will be necessary to obtain it in advance.

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).

## FLYING TO CENTRAL OR SOUTH AMERICA VIA THE USA OR CANADA

If your flight to Central or South America goes via the USA, then you **must** obtain an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel (except for citizens of Canada, who will not require this). Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and most EU countries are part of the USA's Visa Waiver Scheme and are eligible to obtain an ESTA.

An ESTA must be obtained **online** and **in advance** via the following link and paying the appropriate fee - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/> - please note that you will be denied boarding your flight if you do not have this arranged.

If you are not eligible for an ESTA, then you will have to obtain a B-1/B-2 visa for temporary visitors, and you will need to obtain it **in advance**. In this case it would be advisable to book flights that do not go via the USA.

Please note that if you have travelled to Iran, Sudan, Iraq or Syria since March 2011, or hold dual-nationality with one of these countries, then you will not be eligible for an ESTA and must instead apply for a visa. There are some exceptions to this, please see the following link for more details - <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/01/251577.htm>.

Similarly, if your flight to Central or South America goes via Canada, then you must obtain a Canadian Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA) before travel (except for citizens of the USA, who will not require this). Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, most EU countries, South Korea and Japan are part of Canada's Visa Waiver Scheme and are eligible to obtain an eTA.

An eTA must be arranged **online** and **in advance** – please go to <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/> , apply and pay the appropriate fee.

If you are not eligible for an eTA, then you will have to obtain a Temporary Resident Visa, and you will need to obtain it **in advance**. In this case it would be advisable to book flights that do not go via Canada. Please note that several Eastern European nationalities will need a visa.

## **COSTA RICA**

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Costa Rica as a tourist for up to 90 days.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

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).

## **PANAMA**

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit Panama as a tourist for up to 180 days. Certain nationalities will need to buy a tourist card on arrival at the border for USD5.

Citizens of other countries should check with the relevant consulates as to whether a visa is required. If a visa is required, you will need to obtain it **in advance**.

## **PERSONAL SPENDING**

### **PERSONAL SPENDING – NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA**

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on trips in North and Central America, we recommend you allow between USD20 and USD40 per day.

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

### **PERSONAL SPENDING – SOUTH AMERICA**

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent in South America, we recommend you allow between USD15 and USD30 per day. This amount is usually lower in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru but slightly higher elsewhere.

This will covers expenses such as your optional activities, drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

## **SOUTH AMERICA CURRENCIES AND 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](http://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 and do not recommend that you bring them for your personal spending money.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are **no more than 8 years old**. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Brazil can be difficult for changing money, so 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 USD50.

Please note that due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of USD100 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.

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. ATMs can be difficult to find sometimes in remote areas, especially in Patagonia. 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.

## **NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA 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!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash and cheques and ATM cards is best. However, most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash. ATMs are everywhere through North and Central America so it is very easy to withdraw cash as you go, and throughout this region the US Dollar is king.

## **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 will 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 [http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty\\_doc\\_v10.pdf](http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty_doc_v10.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 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.

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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 16/09/2019