

WEST AFRICAN ATLANTIC EXPLORER, (ZDF)

Freetown to Dakar 23 days, departing 13 Mar 2021



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TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Style:	Overlanding
Route:	Freetown to Dakar
Duration:	23 days
Transport:	Overland expedition vehicle, 4x4, Pirogue (dugout canoe)
	45% 55%
Accom:	Hotels, Guesthouses, Campsites, Wild Camps

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 is a fairly challenging trip; you may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through cold and windy or hot and steamy areas.

ROUTE MAP



COUNTRIES VISITED

Guinea



BEAUTIFUL, UNTOUCHED COUNTRYSIDE

Guinea is a country that very few travellers ever visit, but can boast of some of the most beautiful landscapes in the whole of Africa, a strong musical tradition, and very friendly people.

You will be awed by the beautiful forests of the

Guinea Bissau



Guinea Bissau, a former Portuguese colony, is one of the smallest nations in continental Africa. It is one of the world's least-visited countries, so you'll be greeted with a warm welcome and lots of curiosity! The nation is emerging from its turbulent past and will charm you with its off the beaten track feel and welcoming people.

north and the stunning grassy highlands and impressive waterfalls of the Fouta Djallon region, which provides some of the best trekking terrain in West Africa. In the thick humid jungles of the east we'll be able to look for some of the traditional vine bridges spanning over rivers and canyons, a particular highlight in this beautiful part of Guinea.

WILD CAMPING IN GUINEA

Guinea also contains some of the most beautiful and untouched countryside in [West Africa](#), and we'll travel and wild camp through some incredible remote and challenging roads on our journey through the country.

Rich in culture and tradition, Guinea is one of West Africa's most superb highlights!

Senegal



GO OVERLAND & EXPERIENCE THE REAL AFRICA

Senegal is one of West Africa's most fascinating destinations. Long white sandy beaches, a superb traditional music scene, a crumbling colonial heritage, a wide variety of landscapes from the dry Sahel of the north to the lush wetlands of the south, the abundant birdlife and friendly people make this a superb place for those who want to explore West African culture, or just kick back and get into the vibe of the real Africa.

The cosmopolitan capital city of Dakar is the westernmost point of Africa, and has a beautiful coastal location, a temperate climate and a vibrant atmosphere that reflects the country's modern and diverse outlook. You

A NOSTALGIC TRIP TO WEST AFRICA

The capital city of Bissau is a city suspended in time, with its crumbling colonial architecture, pastel coloured buildings, and narrow alleyways which are interesting to explore. Moving further inland, the mangrove-lined rivers and tropical vegetation kicks in, signalling a return to the more typical landscapes so associated with West Africa.

Sierra Leone



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Sierra Leone is one of the world's biggest travel secrets, with an exploration of the idyllic tropical beaches of the [Freetown](#) Peninsular reason enough to visit! The stunning white sands of Bureh Beach and River Number Two Beach are a paradise of palm trees, sunshine, calm ocean, and the gentle rhythm of local life. Lush mountains meet white sand and turquoise tropical waters, fitting many people's dream of perfection.

However, many perceptions of Sierra Leone are quite different. With a sad history including slavery, civil war, and disease, Sierra Leone has endured its fair share of problems. Today the country has a functioning democracy and is

can spend time browsing around the museums, the colourful markets, or just relaxing on the stunning beaches.

Whether you want to mingle with the trendsetters of urban Africa or be bask in the serene sounds of nature, Senegal is the place to be.

moving on from a troubled past. The tenacity, affection and spirit of the people of Sierra Leone is what really defines the country. The capital Freetown is fast becoming a must-visit city in Africa and the lively bars and clubs are abuzz with the latest sounds and rhythms!

Further inland is the curious and remote [Tiwai Island Reserve](#), a spectacular sanctuary of wildlife including many primates, a huge array of birds, river turtles, and the elusive and extremely rare pygmy hippopotamus. Back near Freetown you'll find the famous Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, which rescues chimpanzees and rehabilitates them into the wild.

Sierra Leone has huge potential for tourism, and now is the time to visit!

The Gambia



The Gambia is Africa's smallest country, hugging the shores of the mighty Gambia River. Although tiny, the Gambia contains some of the world's most stunning wetlands and a bewildering array of birdlife. A boat trip around the lush waterways of Tendaba is one of the best locations to spot herons, pelicans, egrets, ibises, hawks, falcons and much more - it's so good that many birdwatchers travel back to Gambia every year to get their fix!

The Gambia's idyllic cocktail of sunny days, warm welcomes and the beautiful wildlife of the wetlands makes this a place you will not want to miss.

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DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Freetown (Sat 13 Mar)

Border information: if you are joining in Freetown, you will most likely enter Sierra Leone at Freetown Lungi International Airport (IATA code: FNA).

There will be an important group meeting at 10:00am at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport, visas, and insurance details at this meeting.

The afternoon will be free to explore Freetown and it's surroundings.

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

In Freetown we will stay in a comfortable hotel with good facilities.

The fastest and most reliable way to Freetown from the airport is by water-taxi, as Lungi is across a bay from the city. The departure times for the water-taxis are linked to each flight in and out of the airport, so there will be transport available for you when you land. Exit the airport and walk to the right, and you'll see the water-taxi office at the end - you'll have to buy your ticket there for USD40 or EUR35, and check in your large bags. You'll take a minibus for 15 minutes, then the water-taxi for 30 minutes. The boat lands at the jetty, where you hand in your luggage ticket to get your large bags back.

The jetty is in the Aberdeen district of Freetown, only a 200m walk from our hotel. Just walk up the hill to the main road - the Raza Guesthouse is slightly further down and on the other side of the road.

Hotel for the night: Raza Guesthouse

Raza Guesthouse

62 Sir Samuel Lewis Road

Aberdeen

Freetown

Sierra Leone

Tel - +232 3350 6305

Activity

Approximate Cost

See the Freetown Cotton Tree, the city's most famous landmark and home to hundreds of bats that fly out at dusk

Free

See the King's Yard Gate, where the ancestors of all modern Creole people will have passed through on their way to a free life after their rescue from illegal slaving ships

Free



Learn about Sierra Leone's traditional history and cultures at the National Museum Free

Visit the Sierra Leone National Railway Museum, a remarkable collection of old trains that was hidden from destruction for 30 years USD 5

Take a boat to the overgrown ruins of the old slaving fort of Bunce Island, from where the ancestors of most modern African-Americans were shipped to the New World USD 150

About Freetown:

Freetown, the lively capital of Sierra Leone, is steeped in history and culture. In 1787, British philanthropists founded the "Province of Freedom" which later became Freetown, a British crown colony and the principal base for the suppression of the slave trade. By 1792, 1200 freed slaves from Nova Scotia joined the original settlers, and the city began to grow as the new home for freed slaves. The city became the capital of British West Africa between 1808 and 1874, and was the base for the Royal Navy's mission to enforce the ban on the Atlantic slave trading.

In more modern times, Freetown saw a lot of fierce fighting during the Sierra Leonean civil war, and in ultimately unsuccessful attacks from the rebel armies. Today, Freetown is a thriving and bustling city and the centre of Krio culture in West Africa. There are some wonderful highlights nearby, including the famous Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary in the mountains overlooking the city.

Day 2 to 3: Freetown Peninsula (Sun 14 Mar to Mon 15 Mar)

Today we leave Freetown for the stunning beaches of Freetown Peninsular, where we will spend 2 nights.

There are a few different options for which beaches we could choose to visit, our favourites being Bureh Beach at the south of the peninsular and River Number 2 Beach in the western part.

Estimated Drive Time - 2-3 hours (please note that all drive times given here are the approximate number of hours that the truck will be in motion only, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors - flexibility is essential on any overland trip!).

We will have a full day for optional activities on the wonderful beaches -



we could go fishing, take a boat to explore the Banana Islands, get to know the local communities, and of course relax on the beautiful beaches!

On Freetown Peninsular we will camp on the beach, with some options to upgrade to basic guesthouses.

Activity

Approximate Cost

Relax on some of the best beaches in the world dotted along the Freetown Peninsula	Free
Take a boat trip to explore the beautiful and overgrown Banana Islands off the coast of the Freetown Peninsula	USD 25
Visit the orphan chimpanzees at Tacaguma Chimpanzee Sanctuary outside of Freetown, a wonderful organisation that rehabilitates rescued chimpanzees for their return to the wild	USD 15
Head out with the locals in their traditional wooden boats to try your hand at fishing	USD 10
Hire surfboards to take out onto the waves of Bureh Beach, one of West Africa's best surfing spots	USD 10
Head out on a diving trip around the reefs and shipwrecks off the Banana Islands	USD 180
Snorkel through the idyllic waters off the Banana Islands near Freetown Peninsula	USD 120

About Freetown Peninsula:

Sierra Leone's capital city of Freetown is perched on the northern tip of a mountainous peninsular on the Atlantic coast. The peninsular is one of the most beautiful areas of Africa, and features some incredible tropical beaches - the beaches are lined with palm trees, have stunning white sands and glittering blue oceans, and are dotted with lively beach communities and fishing villages.

We will normally camp on Bureh Beach, an idyllic stretch of coast on the southern peninsular which features some excellent surfing and boat trip opportunities. One highlight of a stay on the peninsular is to take a trip out to the nearby Banana Islands, a serene and historic island dotted with old buildings and ancient cannons.



Day 4: Southern Guinea (Tue 16 Mar)

Border information: Exit Sierra Leone at Kindia, enter Guinea at Pamaalap.

Today we will head north from Freetown Peninsular and cross into Guinea. Our co-driver will leave the truck this evening and take local transport to Conakry in order to obtain Guinea-Bissau visas for the group at the consulate there.

The rest of us will continue a short way past the town of Coyah and wild camp en route.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

Day 5 to 6: Labé (Wed 17 Mar to Thu 18 Mar)

Over the next 2 days we will continue our journey north through central Guinea to reach the town of Labé, the gateway to the Fouta Djallon highland region. Our co-driver will catch up with us in Labé, with everybody's Guinea-Bissau visa obtained.

In Mamou and in Labé we will stay in small local guesthouses.

Estimated Drive Times - 6-8 hours each day.

About Labé:

The city of Labé is the second-largest in Guinea, and was founded around 1755 by the Muslim leader Karamoko Alpha mo Labé, who introduced Islam in the region in the 18th Century and founded a theocratic state in Fouta Djallon. The town is the gateway to the spectacular Fouta Djallon highland region of northern Guinea.

Day 7 to 8: Fouta Djallon, Labé (Fri 19 Mar to Sat 20 Mar)

From Labé we will set off for an included 2-day excursion to the heart of the Fouta Djallon region of Guinea.

On the first day we will travel in 4x4 jeeps through very remote country roads to the small rural community of Aïnguel (approximately a 4 hour drive). After lunch there will be a short 3-hour trek to a waterfall viewpoint and to the nearby 'Pont de Pierre' rock bridge where we have the chance to swim in a beautiful natural lagoon.

On this night we will stay in a very small and basic community-run guesthouse - please note that if the group is large, some people may need to sleep in tents just outside.

On the second day there is a long 8-hour trek through the surrounding hills and villages taking in the incredible scenery. We will stop for a picnic lunch next to a stunning waterfall, where we have the opportunity to swim in the lagoon beneath. In the latter stages of the trek, we hope to be able to get to the base of a much larger and incredibly powerful waterfall, although this is dependent on the ground waters having receded enough after the rainy season to make this



route passable.

Upon returning after this walk, we will immediately drive back in the 4x4s to Labé to spend the night in our guesthouse there.

Activity

Approximate Cost

Guided 2-day excursion to the stunning highland region of Fouta Djallon, with treks through the scenic hills to the incredible waterfalls and local villages, and an overnight stay in a community guesthouse

Included in Kitty

About Fouta Djallon:

The dramatic highland landscape of the Fouta Djallon region consists of many towering sandstone formations, beautiful plains and forests. Erosion by rain and rivers has carved deep canyons and valleys into the sandstone, and have produced some incredible waterfalls to visit- the area has some of the best hiking trails in West Africa, and during our time here we'll stay with a small local community in their tiny guesthouse!

Day 9 to 10: Northern Guinea (Sun 21 Mar to Mon 22 Mar)

From Labé we journey up through the remote hilly areas of northern Guinea on our way towards Guinea-Bissau. The roads on this section are very challenging dirt roads which take us through some incredibly remote areas, and our speed will largely be determined by the state of these roads - although getting to these areas is very special and a great adventure, even more flexibility will be required on these days!

We will stop for 2 wild camps en route - the first is likely to be in the highlands before the village of Seriba, the second is likely to be near the border with Guinea-Bissau at Kandika.

Estimated Drive Times - 9-10 hours each day.

Day 11 to 12: Bissau (Tue 23 Mar to Wed 24 Mar)

Border information: Exit Guinea at Kandika, enter Guinea-Bissau at Kandika.

Today we will drive across the border into the very rarely-visited country of Guinea-Bissau, and drive to its capital of Bissau.

Estimated Drive Time - 10-11 hours.

On the following day, we will have time to freely explore the city and the old Portuguese centre of Bissau Velho.

In Bissau we will stay in a local hotel.

About Bissau:

Bissau is the small capital city of Guinea Bissau - its old Portuguese colonial centre of Bissau is noted for its crumbling pastel-coloured

buildings, bustling backstreets and busy dock area. Still bearing the scars of the civil wars of 1997-8, the city is quite under-developed - however, it does have a very unique atmosphere and is an interesting place to explore.

Day 13 to 15: Cap Skirring (Thu 25 Mar to Sat 27 Mar)

Border information: Exit Guinea-Bissau at São Domingos, enter Senegal at Mpack.

Today we will journey through western Guinea-Bissau and cross the border into the southern Casamance region of Senegal, arriving at the beautiful beaches of Cap Skirring.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

We will have 2 full days in Cap Skirring, where there will be good opportunities for optional activities such as swimming, biking, fishing, quad-biking and sun-bathing!

In Cap Skirring we will camp in the grounds of a good beach hotel, where there will likely be the opportunity to upgrade to rooms.

Estimated Drive Time - 7-8 hours.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Relax, sunbathe, swim and explore on the idyllic beaches of Cap Skirring and Kabrousse	Free
Head out on a fishing trip on the Atlantic near Cap Skirring, having your catch for dinner that evening!	XOF 15000
Go out on a great day trip on the pirogues along the coast of Cap Skirring and to some nearby scenic islands	XOF 20000
Hire bikes to explore the beautiful coastline of the Atlantic near Cap Skirring	XOF 5000
Head on an exhilarating quad-biking expedition down the miles of sandy beaches on the Cap Skirring coast (when available)	XOF 35000

About Cap Skirring:

Cap Skirring is a town on the beautiful Atlantic coast of the Basse Casamance region of Senegal. It is a popular seaside resort with miles

of palm-fringed sandy beaches and perfect ocean temperatures. The area has long been populated by fishermen, but the French immigrants first started to use the area for beach tourism back in the 1960s - today it is very popular with Senegalese and foreign tourists, and there are many optional beach activities available here.

Day 16 to 17: Tendaba (Sun 28 Mar to Mon 29 Mar)

Border information: Exit Senegal at Senoba, enter The Gambia at Soma.

Today we will head across the border from Senegal into the small country of The Gambia, and head to the famous Tendaba Camp on the southern shore of the Gambia River. Tendaba Camp was the first inland hotel in The Gambia, and is one of the most popular spots in the country for birdwatchers.

Estimated Drive Time - 6-7 hours.

Tendaba is located opposite the Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve, one of the premier birdwatching sites in Africa. On our full day here we will have an included morning boat trip into the wetlands to spot some of the stunning area's wildlife and natural scenery. We will also have an opportunity to take an optional safari drive around the nearby forests of Kiang West National Park.

In Tendaba we will stay in a basic guesthouse.

Activity

Approximate Cost

Explore deep into the stunning wetland delta of the Bao Balong Reserve on a motorised pirogue, discovering one of Africa's best birdwatching areas

Included in Kitty

Take a fun safari truck ride through the dry deciduous forests of Kiang West National Park

GMD 350

About Tendaba:

Tendaba Camp, on the southern shore of the River Gambia, was the first inland hotel in the country. It remains incredibly popular with tourists and birdwatchers, many of whom return year upon year to immerse themselves in the wonderful birdlife of the area. The nearby Bao Bolong wetlands and Kiang West National Park comprise of some wonderful mangrove and woodland eco-systems, and are home to over 300 species of birds including vultures, harrier eagles, sand grouse, kingfishers, hawks and falcons!

Day 18 to 19: Toubakouta (Tue 30 Mar to Wed 31 Mar)

Border information: Exit The Gambia at Fass, enter Senegal at

Karang.

Today we cross the Gambia River on a local transport barge and cross the border into the main part of Senegal, heading to the small town of Toubakouta, situated close to the stunning wetlands of the Sine-Saloum Delta. The ferry can be quite a chaotic local experience!

Estimated Drive Time - 6-9 hours (depending on the ferry crossing).

On our full day in Toubakouta we will have an optional morning pirogue trip to a nearby village to see a slice of rural Senegalese life and to meet their charismatic female chief. In the afternoon we have an included pirogue trip to the mangroves, the 'Shellfish Island' and the 'Island of Birds' - if the weather is good, there are often some stunning sunsets across the delta.

In Toubakouta we will camp in the grounds of a small locally-run hotel.

Activity

Approximate Cost

Head out by pirogue to a nearby village to meet the locals (including their female chief!) and learn all about rural village life

XOF 2500

Take an evening pirogue trip into the heart of the Sine-Saloum Delta to explore the fascinating islands and enjoy the spectacular sunset

Included in Kitty

About Toubakouta:

Situated amongst a maze of mangroves, the tiny town of Toubakouta is one of the most beautiful spots on the Sine-Saloum Delta. We base ourselves here to take boat trips into the Parc National du Delta du Saloum, which is teeming with birdlife, features some beautiful mangrove scenery, and is dotted with small islands and villages.

Day 20 to 21: Touba, St. Louis (Thu 01 Apr to Fri 02 Apr)

Today we head north through Senegal to the old colonial city of St. Louis, formerly the capital of French West Africa. On the way we will see the landscape change as we enter the drier Sahel region, and we will stop to see the Grand Mosque of Touba, one of the best known mosques in Senegal and most holy site in the Mouride branch of Islam.

Estimated Drive Time - 8-9 hours.

On the following day we will have a free day to explore the streets of the old city and take an optional trip to the Langue de Barbarie National Park or the nearby Djoudj Birdlife Reserve.

In St. Louis we will stay in a colonial-era hotel with good facilities.

Activity

Approximate Cost

Explore Senegal's atmospheric colonial city of St. Louis	Free
Marvel at the abundant birdlife in the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary	XOF 25000
Explore the incredible landscapes of the Langue de Barbarie National Park on the tip of the sandy peninsular near St. Louis	XOF 10000
Visit some of the museums of St. Louis, including the Jean Mermoz museum dedicated to the history of the pioneering French aviators that open up the air route from Africa to South America in the 1930s	XOF 600
Visit the nearby Guembeul Nature Reserve, the centre for a gazelle reintroduction program and home to the African Spurred Tortoise	XOF 25000
Visit the stunning Grand Mosque of Touba, one of Africa's largest mosques and the holiest site of the Mouride Brotherhood, a sect of Islam that focuses on hard work as a form of salvation	XOF 3000

About Touba:

Touba is the second-largest city in Senegal and is the spiritual centre of the Mouride branch of Islam. The area was a remote wilderness until 1887, when Cheikh Amadou Bamba (the founder of the Mouride sect) is said to have had a moment of transcendence and decided to found the city of Touba here. The Mouride branch of Islam focuses on the doctrine of hard work, and sees working as holy an endeavour as prayer - Mourides make up about 40% of Senegal's population and are incredibly influential over the politics and culture of the country.

At the centre of Touba is the Great Mosque, completed in 1963 and purported to be one of the largest mosques in Africa. The mosque has five minarets, three large domes, and is the burial place of Amadou Bamba.

About St. Louis:

St. Louis is an old French colonial town on the Atlantic coast of northern Senegal, nestled at the outflow of the Senegal River on the border with Mauritania. Founded in 1659 by French traders, the town became the capital of colonial Senegal - from 1895 it was also the capital of French West Africa, until both were moved to Dakar in 1902. St. Louis was once one of the most important urban centres in Africa, and although its status has become more diminished since the rise of Dakar it still

exhudes a relaxed atmosphere and remains very popular with travellers.

The old town on the river's island of Ndar contains many atmospheric old streets and colonial buildings. The nearby Langue de Barbarie sand spit and Djoudj National Reserves are havens for some amazing birdlife such as pelicans and flamingos.

Day 22: Dakar (Sat 03 Apr)

Today our overland journey takes us south to Dakar, the bustling capital of Senegal and the most western point in Africa.

In Dakar we will stay in a comfortable hotel with good facilities in the city centre.

Estimated Drive Time - 5-6 hours.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the atmospheric and historic Island of Goree	XOF 5000
Explore Senegal's bustling capital, Dakar	Free
Discover the incredible beaches of N'gor and Yoff on the northern edge of the Dakar Peninsula	Free
See the controversial African Renaissance Monument in Dakar, completed in 2010 - the tallest statue in Africa and built to symbolise Africa's emergence from European domination, it has been criticised by many for its 'Stalinist' design	Free
Visit the IFAN Museum of Arts (otherwise known as the Théodore Monod Museum), one of the best museums in Africa with 9000 objects of African art and culture from across the region, including traditional dress, masks, drums, and tools	XOF 2500
Visit the Village des Arts, Dakar's hub for local artists to display and showcase their work in a large garden space	Free

About Dakar:

Senegal's bustling, cosmopolitan capital of Dakar is always bursting with life. This is a city of busy streets, colourful

markets and vibrant nightlife - at first it can seem chaotic, but embrace the rhythms of Dakar's life and you'll come to appreciate it just as much as the passionate people who live here.

The beautiful Île de Gorée is worth a visit, and you can learn about some of the appalling history of the Atlantic slave trade that was once common there in the 18th Century. The Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noir (IFAN) Museum has some great displays of show masks and traditional dress from all across the country. Or you may prefer to just wander the streets, browsing the markets and soaking up the atmosphere. Dakar also has a lively arts scene and you may be able to find some great live music here!

Day 23: Dakar (Sun 04 Apr)

Border information: if you are leaving at Dakar, you will most likely exit Senegal at Dakar Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport (IATA code: DKR).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Dakar, and is a free day to explore the cosmopolitan city and perhaps take an optional trip to the famous Île de Goreé.

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

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.

EXPLORATORY TRIP WARNING - THIS IS A NEW TRIP FOR US!

Please note that all or part of this trip is a brand new itinerary, and could be going through completely new areas for Dragoman. This is what we call a New or Exploratory trip, and it means that all the passengers on these trips for the first season are the route's pioneers!

However, while we have thoroughly researched all aspects of this new route and put the itinerary together with the best of intentions, please note that your crew will be finding a lot of information out for us on the ground, will be playing a lot of things by ear, and may alter the itinerary slightly in places where

it becomes necessary. Most trips will have slight or significant changes made to them after this first season, and frankly we would be very surprised if an Exploratory trip was to run perfectly to the published itinerary. Usually we find that this is rarely a problem but rather an exciting feature, that there are much more pleasant surprises in store than unpleasant ones, and these Exploratory trips are a fantastic opportunity to shape the trip as a group.

However, the warning is sincere and these trips must be viewed as Exploratory - if this concerns you or you would rather stick to a tried-and-tested itinerary, then we recommend that you wait a year or two until we have this itinerary perfected following operating it many times, or of course to consider one of the more established trips in our extensive portfolio.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR WEST AFRICA ITINERARIES

The roads in West Africa can be very rough, which makes for some long bumpy travel days. Much of the area is very hot and humid. It is however all worth it for the spectacular scenery and for travelling through regions that very few other westerners go!

Accommodation in the region tends to be very basic. Where there are public campsites or hotels, the bathroom facilities can be very basic, and may be non-existent in the case of many of the bush camps on this itinerary. There is never toilet paper provided and shower facilities, if existing, often consists of a bucket of cold water and a jug. Once again, the spectacular serenity and chance to sleep so close to nature makes a little inconvenience all worthwhile and part of the African overlanding experience. Note that not all campsites are as basic as this description; it's just to make sure there are no surprises for you.

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.

Lastly, 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 at least 8-10 times a day, as can the constant setting and packing up of camp.

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.

SIERRA LEONE

Citizens of all countries (except West African countries) **will** need a visa to enter Sierra Leone as a tourist for up to 30 days.

You must obtain the visa **in advance**, and you cannot obtain the visa at the border in any circumstance. You can either apply yourself directly to the embassy, or hire a specialist visa agency to make the application on your behalf (which is recommended, especially if you are applying for several visas). It takes approximately 10 working days to obtain and is valid for 3 -12 months.

A valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from all travellers upon entering the country.

You will need a copy of a hotel confirmation letter for the visa application, which Dragoman will provide. You may require a Letter of Invitation to obtain your visa; if so please contact us as soon as possible and we will require a clear scan of the information pages of your passport.

Please note that Letters of Invitation are typically issued once a day to the complete group of people that happen to have applied on the same day through the same agent addressed to the same consulate; as such your name, nationality and passport number may appear on a list on the Letter of Invitation alongside other tourists who may be on your Dragoman trip or travelling with other companies, and this list will be shared with everyone on it. As this is a standard practice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we do not have any control over this and cannot get around it; if you view this as an unacceptable breach of privacy, then you will be unable to apply for the Letter of Invitation.

GUINEA

Citizens of all countries (except West African countries, Egypt and Tanzania) **will** need a visa to enter Guinea as a tourist for up to 30 days.

You must obtain the visa **in advance**, and you cannot obtain the visa at the border in any circumstance. You can either apply yourself directly to the embassy, or hire a specialist visa agency to make the application on your behalf (which is recommended, especially if you are applying for several visas).

In an emergency, it has been possible in the past to obtain Guinean visas in 1 day in Accra and Abidjan (for Westbound trips), Dakar (for Eastbound trips) and Freetown (for trips starting in Freetown), however please be aware that the rules on this are notoriously subject to change, so it would be much better to obtain the visa before you travel rather than relying on this.

IMPORTANT NOTE - if you are our trip that starts in Dakar and finishes in Accra (or vice versa), then you must obtain a Double Entry visa to Guinea.

A valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from all travellers upon entering the country.

You may require a Letter of Invitation to obtain your visa; if so please contact us as soon as possible and we will require a clear scan of the information pages of your passport.

Please note that Letters of Invitation are typically issued once a day to the complete group of people that

happen to have applied on the same day through the same agent addressed to the same consulate; as such your name, nationality and passport number may appear on a list on the Letter of Invitation alongside other tourists who may be on your Dragoman trip or travelling with other companies, and this list will be shared with everyone on it. As this is a standard practice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we do not have any control over this and cannot get around it; if you view this as an unacceptable breach of privacy, then you will be unable to apply for the Letter of Invitation.

GUINEA BISSAU

Citizens of all countries (except West African countries) **will** need a visa to enter Guinea Bissau as a tourist for up to 90 days.

The easiest way to obtain the visa will be **en route** whilst in West Africa, with the help of your tour leader. On **Southbound trips**, your crew will visit the Guinea Bissau Consulate in **Ziguinchor, Senegal** in order to make the application on behalf of everyone in the group; on **Northbound trips**, your crew will do the same in **Conakry, Guinea**. This is a simple process which is done in 1 day, please bring 2 passport photos for the application.

At the time of writing (2018), the visa costs are approximately USD80 from the consulate in Conakry or USD40 from Ziguinchor.

A valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from all travellers upon entering the country.

SENEGAL

Citizens of all countries **will not** need a visa to enter Senegal as a tourist for up to 90 days.

The exception to this rule are passengers from Australia. In March 2019 Senegal have started to enforce tourist visas for Australian citizens. You should get a free visa stamp if you enter at Dakar airport. As the system is very new you must double check your passport gets stamped with the visa on arrival otherwise you will encounter issues as you try to cross a land border.

If you do not enter Senegal through Dakar airport the visa can be obtained in Freetwon for a cost of 150 USD and 2 passport photos. This visa takes two days to process. You can not obtain the visa at a land border.

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).

THE GAMBIA

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and most EU countries **will not** need a visa to visit The Gambia as a tourist for up to 90 days. Citizens of the USA, France, Spain and Portugal **will** need a visa, but this can be obtained **on arrival** at the border. Citizens of South Africa, Slovakia and Ukraine **will** need a visa and this must be obtained **in advance**.

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](#).

PERSONAL SPENDING

WEST AFRICA CURRENCIES AND CASH

In North and West Africa we recommend bringing Euros and not US Dollars. Please note that although we do quote kitties, personal spending and other items in US Dollars (because we operate globally), for trips

passing through these countries it is better to bring Euros as exchange rates are more favourable. It is still possible to change USD if you need to. If you pay the kitty in EUR, the trip leader will confirm the exact exchange rate between USD and EUR to be used for the kitty at the pre departure meeting.

It is very easy to change your money into local currencies at borders and in most towns, so 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, but in West Africa travellers cheques are almost impossible to change so for that reason we recommend a mix of cash and ATM cards. Please note that most ATMs only take Visa cards NOT Mastercard.

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. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. Please bring the majority of the money you intend to change in large denominations (USD/EUR100 and 50 bills) as the exchange rate is often significantly worse if you try to change smaller bills; however, it is also a good idea to have some smaller bills as well, as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over USD50.

PERSONAL SPENDING - AFRICA

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on our trips in all of Africa, we recommend you allow between USD10 and USD20 per day.

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

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 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. 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

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

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
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: 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

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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 and 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:

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!

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.

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.

Issues on the Trip

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

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on

customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk.

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

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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 15/07/2019