Trip Notes – all Destinations

The following document contains trip notes for all current tours.

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La Dolce Vita – The Best of Italy

# 15 Day tour of Italy

Welcome to Sojourn Adventure Travel real life experiences... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do.

La Dolce Vita, the good life, is exactly what this trip is all about. Starting in the Eternal City and ending by the canals of Venice, uncover the best of northern Italy. Experience food, wine, style and character - all the things this wonderful country is famous for - and discover the natural beauty of this spectacular region.

# Style

This is how it all started; the trips that made us one of the world's leading operators of small group adventures. And they're still as popular as ever! Original trips are all about variety: the places, the people, the activities, and even the accommodation and transport we use. From home stays to market trips to visits to community projects, there's a new experience every day, with many activities included.

# Trip Map



# Itinerary

## Day 1 Rome

You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the important welcome meeting at 6:00pm. If your flight arrives too late we recommend that you consider booking a night's accommodation prior to the trip so you can ensure you are able to attend this meeting. We will collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting so please ensure you have all details on hand to provide to your leader.

Your group leader will leave a note at reception telling you where this important meeting will take place. Please ask a member of reception for this information. If you are going to be late please inform the hotel reception.

Check-in time at our joining point hotel is after 2:00pm. Early check-in is not guaranteed, however if you arrive early, luggage storage is available. Speak to the hotel reception on arrival.

Joining Hotel: Hotel Castelfidardo, Rome.

## Days 2-3 Rome/Florence

There is arguably no other city in the world with so much history as Rome and the best way to experience that history is with a walking trip. On the morning of day 2 your Group Leader takes you on an optional orientation walk around Rome where you see some of the world-famous sights such as the Colosseum and Arch of Constantine, the Forum (centre of ancient Rome), the Victor Emmanuel Monument and Piazza Venezia, Piazza Navona, the Pantheon, the Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps.

On Day 2 you can make an optional visit to the Vatican Museums and Sistine chapel in the famous Vatican City. (Please note that the Vatican Museums are closed on certain days). You may also choose to visit St Peter's Basilica, either instead of or after the Vatican Museums. Entry to the Basilica is free, and there is a small charge to climb the dome for the ultimate breathtaking panorama over bella Roma.

The Vatican Museum:

The Vatican Museum is closed on some days including Sunday unless it is the last Sunday of the month. Check the Vatican website for these dates. www.vatican.va

Tickets for the Vatican Museum or alternatively the Galleria Borghese can be booked online at www.en.roma.waf.it

In the late afternoon on Day 2 we bid 'arrivederci' to Rome and board our train for Florence (approx. 2 hours).

We have ample opportunity to explore and enjoy all that Florence has to offer, with its excellent restaurants, pavement cafes, bars and other nightlife. Easily discovered on foot, you can see the principal sights of this beautiful 'outdoor museum' of a city - the Pitti Palace, the Ponte Vecchio, the Arno River front, the many statues and monuments of the Piazza della Signoria, the Palazzo Vecchio, the 13th Century Duomo, Baptistry and Belltower and the Santa Croce Church.

Day 3 is a free day in Florence so we have plenty of free time to take in the many fine museums and art treasures such as the Medici Chapels, as well as time to shop in the markets and in the chic boutiques. Other possibilities are a visit to the Uffizi gallery, one of the top three art museums of the world, or see Michelangelo's famous statue of David in the Galleria dell' Accademia.

Florentine State Museums (Uffizi, Accademia, Pitti Palace, Medici Chapels, Bargello, Archaeological Museum, Davanzati) can all be booked in advance for a fee. Reserve your tickets by phoning (+39) 055 294883 from Monday to Friday 8:30am-6:30pm or Saturday 8:30am-12:30. You can also book online on www.en.firenze.waf.it. We suggest that you book at least 2 months in advance especially for the Uffizi as this museum experiences enormous queues all year round (up to 5 hours).

The individual museums have slightly different opening times and closing days between them but the website www.firenzemusei.it has everything you need to know about all of them. Make your reservations for these museums for Day 3 or morning of Day 4 of this itinerary.

In the evening of Day 3 we can climb uphill to Piazzale Michelangelo for that most photographed of all sunset views across the rooftops of Florence.

Our accommodation in Florence:

For nights 2 and 3 we stay in the centrally located hotel – Albergo Firenze. All rooms have ensuite.

## Days 4-6 Florence/Lucca/Pisa

In the afternoon of Day 4 we take a train (approx. 2 hours) to Lucca, our base for the next three nights.

Lucca is one of Italy's real hidden gems. We stay in our own apartments located within the city ramparts, providing easy access to the city centre and its centuries-old buildings, beautiful churches, charming piazzas and narrow streets.

While in Lucca we will set off for a cycle ride winding along a scenic river through the Tuscan countryside and perhaps stop for a picnic (4 km round the walls and 14 km by the river - approx. 4 hours). With two full days, there is also time to explore Lucca itself plus plenty of opportunities to sample traditional Tuscan cuisine!

We take a half day trip from Lucca by train to the nearby city of Pisa. There's ample time for you view the world-famous Duomo, Baptistry and Leaning Tower.

Our accommodation in Lucca:

For nights 4, 5 and 6 we stay in some unique accommodation - our own private apartments. We have several separate apartments located near the city centre so you may be a short walk away from your other group members and your leader. It is an approximate 25 minute walk from the train station to our main apartment in Lucca. Should you wish to organise a taxi for yourself or your luggage to get to or from the station, your leader will be more than happy to assist in arranging this for you at your expense.

The apartments in Lucca are a real treat. Staying in the city centre allows easy access to all the sights and the restaurants and bars- it is all an easy stroll from your front door. This is your chance to look behind those facades. Each apartment has 2-3 rooms with a shared bathroom. The kitchen is fully equipped and you can choose to buy your own groceries and supplies for meals. Some of our groups make Italian feasts with local ingredients during their stay. Our apartments are not hotels, there is no reception, room service or cleaning service every day, no televisions or washing machines, but plenty of charm and you just cannot beat the location.

## Days 7-8 Cinque Terre

On the morning of Day 7 we board the train bound for the small but lovely coastal town of Levanto (approx. 3 hours), where we stay for the next two nights. In the afternoon we have time for a dip in the Mediterranean and the chance to explore Levanto with its streetside cafes, parks and seafront promenade.

On day 8 you can walk along this stunning stretch of coast and the path of the Cinque Terre. Olive groves and vineyards cover the mountains that plunge into the sea - the vistas here are breathtaking.

If you're feeling energetic, walking the entire path (12 kms and approx. 5 hours walking time) will give you the best taste of the villages and countryside. However, you can jump on a train between any of the villages, or to get back to our base whenever you want. Please note that some sections of the Cinque Terre path can be quite difficult with challenging uphill stretches, narrow paths, steep cliffs and foot bridges.

* Riomaggiore to Manarola is easy and takes 25 minutes on a paved path.
* Manarola to Corniglia is easy and takes approximately 50 minutes on a partly paved and partly rocky path.
* Corniglia to Vernazza is medium level difficulty and takes approximately 1.5 hours on a rocky path.
* Vernazza to Monterosso is more challenging, taking approximately 2 hours on a rocky path.

Our accommodation in Levanto:

For nights 7 and 8 we stay at a centrally located 2 star Pensione – Hotel Europa. All rooms have en-suite.

## Days 9-10 Portofino, Liguria/Piedmonte

Early in the morning on day 9 we take a train (approx. 1 hour) to the Peninsula of Portofino where we store our luggage and have time for a 5-7km walk, finishing at the glamorous resort of Portofino. Walk up to the marvellous viewpoints surrounding the town, or join the rich and famous for coffee on the harbourside and enjoy the people-watching. Then we enjoy fabulous coastal scenery with a boat ride back from Portofino to Santa Margherita.

In the afternoon we travel on by train (approx. 2.5 hours) to the region of Piedmont, which is home to some of the finest and most sought after wines in Europe. It is also the best place to find 'tartufo' (truffles), a distinctive regional delicacy.

On Day 10 we visit a local winery and sample their vintages. The Ruche' grape variety, is unique to this region of Italy - it is grown in just seven small villages in the province of Asti and produces a ruby-red, intense and aromatic wine.

Our accommodation in Asti:

For nights 9 and 10 we stay at a centrally located small hotel. All rooms have en-suite.

## Days 11-12 Milan/Lake Como

On day 11 we depart on a train (approx. 2 hours) to Milan where we stop for a few hours. We store our luggage at the train station and after visiting the magnificent Duomo (cathedral) and its stunning Gothic roof, there is free time for stylish shopping and cafes - Milanese specialities! Check out the local cafes and indulge in some people watching along the streets and boulevards where the chic display their magnificent sense of style.

Only a short walk from the Duomo is a fabulous museum at the Castello Sforzesco. With an eclectic collection including one of only three unfinished Michelangelo Pieta and a Leonardo da Vinci ceiling the fortress also has pleasant grassy grounds that are free to enter.

The highlight of Milan is a visit to Leonardo Da Vinci's masterpiece, The Last Supper (not included). Please note that your Group Leader can not assist with tickets to see the Last Supper in Milan. These tickets are limited and generally sell out extremely quickly and well in advance (up to 6 months). If you expressly want to see the Last Supper, and we suggest you do, you need to make arrangements in advance. Day 11 of this trip between 13:30 and 15:00 are suitable times. Note that the viewing is 15 minutes and in order not to lose the reservation, visitors must arrive 15 minutes before the time allocated for the visit. For information and reservations call + 39 02 89 42 11 46 or use this site: www.cenacolovinciano.org or www.en.milano.waf.it

For those interested there is time for the museum at the Castello Sforzesco. It's a short walk from the Duomo and has a fascinating eclectic collection including one of only three unfinished Michelangelo pieta' and a Leonardo da Vinci ceiling. Or see La Scala - the famous opera theatre with an interesting museum attached.

We move on to Lake Como by train and bus, late in the afternoon (approx. 3 hours). It's time to unwind here - relax on the lakeside or explore the shops.

On day 12 we board a ferry to travel across the blue waters to Menaggio and Bellagio. The rest of the day is free to use the ferry pass and explore Varenna, Cadenabbia or Villa Carlotta.

If you're feeling energetic and you would like to explore the mountains around Lake Como, there are plenty of walking tracks from Menaggio to keep you occupied.

Our accommodation in Cadenabbia:

For nights 11 and 12 we stay at the Hotel Riviera - a small hotel by the lakefront. All rooms have en-suite.

## Days 13-15 Venice

On day 13 a train journey (approx. 6 hours) brings us to one of the most unique cities of the world - Venice. We arrive at approximately 3:00pm and then we take you on a brief orientation walk of the city and pass some of the famous sights - the Grand Canal, the old-world shops of the Rialto Bridge, the Palace of the Doge (ruler of Venice), the Piazza and Basilica di San Marco and the Bridge of Sighs.

Day 14 is a free day so you have ample time to revisit the major sights and wander the narrow, cobblestone streets and spacious piazzas and cross the hundreds of tiny bridges. There are shops, markets, galleries, museums, churches and stunning buildings around every corner. You could also choose to see Venice from a different perspective by taking a gondola ride along the canals.

Day 15 is departure day. There are no activities planned for today and you are able to depart the hotel at any time. Check out time from the hotel is 10:00am. If you are departing later, you can arrange luggage storage at the hotel reception. There may be a small service fee.

Our accommodation in Venice:

For nights 13 and 14 we stay at Casa Villa Rosa - a small hotel near the Train Station (we do not need to do the suitcase shuffle across the city!)

# Itinerary Disclaimer

The itinerary attached is correct at time of printing. Please note: occasionally our itineraries are updated during the year to incorporate improvements stemming from past travellers' comments and our own research. Our brochure is usually released in November each year. As such the information given in this itinerary may be slightly different to that in the brochure. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you print and review a final copy of your Trip Notes a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans. For the latest updated trip notes please visit our website: [www.sojournadventuretravel.com](http://www.sojournadventuretravel.com)

# Culture Shock Rating

You will probably have experienced food like this in restaurants back home and English is commonly spoken. Services are available most of the time but there may be some cultural differences.

# Physical Rating

Some easy physical activities included in your trip. No physical preparation is required to make the most of the journey.

# Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. For a list of optional activities and sightseeing available on this trip, see the optional activities section below. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

* Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence
* Cycling in Lucca
* Pisa half-day trip
* Cinque Terre hike
* Walk to Portofino and return boat ride
* Winery visit in Piedmont
* Milan half-day trip
* Ferry pass on Lake Como
* Traghetto across Grand Canal in Venice

# Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only.

They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Sojourn Adventure Travel nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, 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 Sojourn Adventure Travel.

Rome:

* Colosseum, Roman Forum and Palatine Hill - EUR11
* Vatican Museums - EUR14
* St Peter's dome climb - EUR6
* St Peter's dome elevator - EUR7

Florence:

* Duomo & Campanile climb - EUR6
* Accademia - EUR6.5
* Uffizi Gallery - EUR12.50

Lucca:

* Puccini Concert - from EUR15
* Guinigi Tower climb - EUR4
* Day trip to Barga by bus EUR8

Cinque Terra, Piedmont & the Lakes:

* Pesto Class in Levanto - EUR10
* Sea Kayak Hire in Levanto - EUR5 per hour
* Archaeological Museum in Asti - EUR5
* Villa Carlotta in Tremezzo - EUR8
* Trip to Switzerland by Public Bus from Menaggio - EUR6

Venice:

* Venezia Concerto - EUR30
* Gondola ride - EUR80 for up to 5 people
* Accademia Gallery - EUR7
* St Mark's Campanile - EUR7
* Doges Palace and Bridge of Sighs - EUR13
* St. Mark's Basilica Treasury - EUR2
* Ca' d'Oro - EUR3
* Guggenheim Museum - EUR12

Got extra time before or after your Sojourn Adventure Travel? Maybe there is an URBAN ADVENTURE in one of the cities that you're visiting on your trip?

Sojourn Adventure Travel's Urban Adventures are the city tour with a difference - there are more than 100 to choose from in over 30 cities around the world, with new trips added regularly. They are a great way to get under the skin of the city you're visiting, in just a few hours. To make a booking contact your local travel agent, Sojourn Adventure Travel consultant or visit [www.urbanadventures.com](http://www.urbanadventures.com)

Italy – Country Information

# General Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| capital city | Rome (population 3.8 million) |
| area | 301,230 sq km includes Sardinia and Sicily |
| population | 58 million |
| language | Italian (official), German, French and Slovene-speaking communities |
| currency | Euro (EUR) |
| time zone | GMT +1 (Central European Time) +2 in summer |
| dialing code | +39 |
| daylight savings begins | Last Sunday in March |
| daylight savings ends | Last Sunday in October |
| electricity | Type C (European 2-pin), Type F (German 2-pin, side clip earth), Type L (Italian 3-pin) |

# Times to go

* The climate of Italy is a typical Mediterranean climate with mild winters and generally hot and dry summers.
* The most crowded periods are Easter, May and June, October and Christmas. July and August are less crowded because of the heat.
* Generally, the hottest months are July & August (where temperatures can reach 38°C); the coldest month is January; the wettest month is November, with an average rainfall of 129mm; while the driest month is July, with an average rainfall of 15mm.
* Tourists flock to Italy at all times of the year for regional festivals, for fun in the sun and even skiing, so no matter what time you choose to go, Italy is a great place to travel all year round.
* It is always advisable to bring warm clothes, as cold spells are common, even in summer.

# Accommodation

## Accommodation:

* We use a huge variety of accommodation in Italy from small family run properties, charming old stone buildings to international standard multi-story hotels
* Rooms and beds tend to be smaller than you would expect from similar standard hotels worldwide- space can be a premium in the ancient towns and cities in Italy
* Bathrooms are not always private - some hotels have shared bathrooms accessed from the hallway
* Bathrooms in Italy have showers and usually bidets, but rarely bathtubs
* Some of our accommodation in is old historic buildings which means there is a lot of charm and character , but also antiquated plumbing and sometimes things do not work like they used to
* Our local friends in our accommodation sometimes do not speak English so this is your chance to practise your Italian
* Please take note of the luggage limit since some accommodation does not have lifts so you will be hauling your luggage up several flights of stairs
* Air conditioning is a luxury in Europe and the Europeans have a very environmentally friendly attitude to energy consumption therefore we do not often have AC at our accommodation. Where it is available, it usually costs more and you are required to make a per day payment to the reception
* Continental breakfast (simply a hot drink and a croissant) is sometimes included at our hotels
* We choose accommodation based on convenience of location, sometimes that means we stay very centrally - meaning all the bars and restaurants are at your doorstep and other times it means we stay near the train station so we can catch that early train
* Towels and linen are always provided unless otherwise stated - there is rarely a need for sleeping bags
* But bring your own toiletries and hair drier since these are rarely provided at our accommodation
* Some accommodation has TVs, but there are no English channels
* Although rooms are cleaned everyday, towels and sheets are only changed when a passenger vacates the room. Hot running water is sometimes not guaranteed throughout the day.
* Most hotels have a check in time of 14:00 and a check out time of 11:00

## Apartments in Lucca:

* On some trips we stay in private apartments with 2-3 rooms per apartment
* They are very centrally located in the historical centre of Lucca which means all the bars and restaurants are at your doorstep
* When using our apartment the group will not all be together in the same building as you would be in a hotel, so you may be separated from other member of the group an even your leader
* Each apartment has a fully equipped kitchens so you can cook up a feast
* This is a great way to experience what it is like to live like a local in the centre of town.

## Luggage Storage at our accommodation:

* Some hotels offer luggage storage but we do not advertise this as it is usually a very small space and is inconvenient for them
* Storing luggage can incur additional costs if luggage exceeds one piece per person and can normally be stored on departure day only and not for long periods of time
* Passengers should pay attention to the luggage limit that we outline in our trip notes
* If you must store luggage then you can do so at some train stations, for around EUR30 per week

# Transport

## Trains:

* We use a variety of transport from trains, coaches, local buses, trams, metro, walking, bicycle, boats and vaporetto
* We rarely use private charter transport because trains are comfortable with functional toilets and dining carts
* Trains vary in standard from Intercity to regional trains
* Sometimes the carriages are open with airplane style seating, other times they are closed cabins with 6-8 passengers
* There are non-smoking sections in all trains
* Trains do not usually have reclining seats
* Sometimes we have assigned seating and other times you can sit anywhere
* Trains sit quite high off the platform which means you should stick to our luggage limits as you will be required to lift your luggage onto trains and into overhead luggage storage

## Buses:

* On buses be wary of winding and narrow roads - there are many of these in Italy
* Some local buses we use are very crowded
* Luggage on buses is 'self help' so drivers in Italy do not load your luggage for you- you are expected to lift your own luggage onto buses and ferries and trains
* Luggage sometimes goes on the bus with you and not in luggage lockers under the bus
* Toilets are not usually available on buses

## Public transport:

* You always need to validate your ticket in a stamping machine when entering the public transport system
* Keep the ticket on you until you exit the metro system
* You will be fined up to 200EUR if caught without a ticket and tourists are often targeted
* Never believe an inspector who says that the stamping machines are not working; this is a scam

# Events

## Public Holidays

* **1 Jan** New Year's Day
* **6 Jan** Epiphany
* **5 Apr** Easter Monday
* **25 Apr** Liberation Day
* **1 May** Labour Day
* **2 Jun** Anniversary of the Republic
* **15 Aug** Assumption
* **1 Nov** All Saints' Day
* **8 Dec** Immaculate Conception
* **25 Dec** Christmas Day
* **26 Dec** St Stephen's Day

According to http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/129/public\_holidays/Europe/Italy.html

# Food & Drink

## Meals:

* Eating out in Italy is an adventure and a delight but is very different to what you might be expecting. Italian cuisine has been adapted around the world so you can not expect the same meals as you would at home
* A cover charge is often added to bills and it is customary to tip approximately 10%
* Italy can be an expensive destination and so you should budget 35 EUR per day for meals alone
* Generally meals are not included on Sojourn Adventure Travel trips in Italy other than Comfort or Family trips.
* A typical meal with cover charge will cost between 15-25 EUR. If you are on a budget there are many shops that sell local produce - great for picnics
* In Italy you pay for waiter service and views and you also may pay more for sitting on the sidewalk as opposed to inside. Generally if the view is nice- the prices will be inflated
* Often restaurants have a cover charge of about 10% or 2EUR per person on top of the bill.
* You should order your side dishes separately in Italy.
* Usually have to pay for water at restaurants and they will not provide tap water.
* Sometimes a light breakfast is included at our hotels (simply a hot drink and a croissant)

## Must try food in Italy:

There are some fabulous food experiences to be had:

* The original pizza in Naples
* Sitting in waterfront restaurants in Sorrento
* Eating Umbrian cuisine on a vine covered terrace of a medieval building in Gubbio
* Trying local produce and exclusive wines in an enoteca in Umbria
* Pesto making in Levanto on the Cinque Terre
* Having a local feast in an Agriturismo near Asti in Piedmont
* Joining in the aperitivi culture - where you buy a drink and can snack on finger food - this happens at local bars from about 6:30pm.
* Sampling local food and drink in the region of origin is a highlight such as Limoncello on the Amalfi Coast, Ribollita in Tuscany, Pizza in Naples and Bolognese sauce in Bologna
* Pasta plays a substantial part in Italian recipes, but nearly all regions have developed their own special dishes.
* Some of the best cheeses include mozzarella, caciotta romana (semi-hard, sweet sheep cheese), pecorino (hard, sharp sheep's milk cheese).
* Italy has over 20 major wine regions, from Valle d'Aosta on the French border, to Sicily and Sardinia in the south. Wines are named after grape varieties or after their village or area of origin. The most widespread is the Chianti group of vineyards, governed by the Chianti Classico quality controls (denoted by a black cockerel on the neck of each bottle).
* Risotto - Rice that has been sautéed and cooked in a shallow pan with stock. The result is a very creamy, and hearty dish. Meat, poultry, seafood, vegetables, and cheeses are almost always added depending on the recipe and the locale. Many restaurants, families, towns, and regions will have a signature risotto or at least style of ristotto, in addition or in place of a signature pasta dish (risotto alla Milanese is famous Italian classic).
* Arancini - Balls of rice with tomato sauce, eggs, and cheese that are deep fried. They are a southern Italian specialty, though are now quite common all over.
* Polenta - Yellow corn meal (yellow grits) that has been cooked with stock. It is normally served either creamy, or allowed to set up and then cut into shapes and fried or roasted.
* Gelato This is the Italian version of ice cream, The non-fruit flavours are usually made only with milk. The fruit flavours are non-dairy. It's fresh as a sorbet, but tastier. There are many flavours: coffee, chocolate, fruit, tiramisù... To try absolutely.
* Tiramisù Italian cake made with coffee, mascarpone, cookies and cocoa powder on the top. The name means "pick-me-up."

## Food and culture:

* It is fun to try and master the dos and don'ts of food customs such as when it is an appropriate time to have different types of coffee (for example cappuccino should be consumed before lunch only)
* Or parmesan is only provided with dishes that should be accompanied by it - for example not all pasta sauces should have parmesan
* Garlic bread is not an Italian dish, nor is Fettuccine Alfredo.
* Fruiterers don't appreciate self service in fruit shops and squeezing fruit, like you may do at home, to test its ripeness is not appropriate

## Water:

* Tap water in Europe is considered safe to drink but to be sure to avoid any stomach upsets due to different chemicals or bacteria, bottled water is best a solution
* Bottled water is expensive in Europe and is available everywhere

# Communication

## E-mail:

* There is internet in almost all locations
* We are never more then 3 days between Internet locations
* Internet can cost up to 8EUR per hour but can be as cheap as 1EUR per hour in the big cities
* Hotels rarely have internet but usually internet cafes are open daily and into the evenings
* Due to new anti-terrorism laws, you are required to show photo ID when using the internet in cafes

## Telephone:

* There is excellent mobile coverage in Europe and mobiles with global roaming work very well - check with your provider in advance of departing your home country to ensure your mobile is able to access foreign networks
* We are rarely more than one day away from mobile reception
* Hotels do not always have telephones available
* All public phones operate on phone cards which need to be purchased in advance- they cost from 5EUR.   
  Each country has a different phone system so you need different local phone cards for each country.   
  It is possible to buy long distance phone cards which work in several countries

## Post:

* Receiving post is not convenient as we are usually doing something or travelling during the opening hours of most post offices
* Postage from Europe is generally reliable and usually takes about 7 days to reach destination
* Postage is approx. 0.65EUR for a postcard stamp and line-ups at post offices are usually long

# What to buy

* Avoid purchasing fake designer labels- anything cheaper than at home and NOT sold in a shop IS fake.
* There is a huge crack down on fake brands in Italy and passengers should be aware that purchasing fake brands off street vendors can result in a 5000EUR fine
* Care should be taken when buying antiques since Italy is renowned for skilled imitators.
* Prices are generally fixed and bargaining is not general practice, although a discount may be given on a large purchase.
* Florence, Milan and Rome are famous as important fashion centres, but smaller towns also offer good scope for shopping.
* Some places are known for particular products, e.g. Lake Como (Lombardy) for silk, Prato (Tuscany) for textiles, Empoli (Tuscany) for the production of bottles and glasses in green glass, Deruta (Umbria) and Faenza (Emilia-Romagna) for pottery, Florence (Tuscany) for leather, Venice (Veneto) for glass and lace.
* Check with your local customs officials to ensure that you are able to import some items back into your home country. Australia and New Zealand for example have strict quarantine laws.

# Culture

## Toilets

* Expect to pay between 0.30 and 1.50EUR to use a public toilet
* Almost all accommodation has western style toilets and sometimes bidets however squat toilets are common in Italy

## Museums:

* If you are interested in some museums on your trip it is worth keeping in mind that many Museums are closed on Mondays or Tuesdays. To avoid disappointment we recommend passengers prepare themselves. There is information in your trip notes about booking museums in advance where it is likely to be an issue.
* Some museums have huge line ups such as the Vatican and the Uffizi. Bookings can usually not be made while travelling since they need to be booked well in advance.
* The Last Supper in Milan needs to be booked up to 6 months in advance.
* The Uffizi needs to be booked up to 5 months in advance

## Smoking:

* Smoking is slowly being phased out of public enclosed spaces.
* Italy has banned all smoking on public transport , but not yet in restaurants.

# Handy links

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/italy/  
http://www.italiantourism.com/  
http://wikitravel.org/en/Italy

# Reading

*Italy* by Lonely Planet  
*The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri.  
*Concise History of Italy* by Vincent Cronin.  
*The Penguin Book of the Renaissance* by JH Plumb.  
*The Travels of Marco Polo* by Marco Polo  
*Winter Stars* by Beatrice Lao  
*The Agony and the Ecstasy* by Irving Stone  
*Under the Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes

Egypt Adventure

*Valid for departures between 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020*

# Introduction

Welcome to Sojourn Adventure Travel real life experiences... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do.

Revel in a taste of Egypt's history, beauty and colour on this short but action-packed trip along the longest river in the world. Cruise the Nile on a felucca, discover the largest and most impressive pharaonic temples, chat and dine with interesting locals and live it up in this country of deserts, bazaars, monuments and good old-fashioned adventures.

# Original Style

This is how it all started; the trips that made us one of the world's leading operators of small group adventures. And they're still as popular as ever! Original trips are all about variety: the places, the people, the activities, and even the accommodation and transport we use. From home stays to market trips to visits to community projects, there's a new experience every day, with many activities included.

# Trip Map



# Itinerary

## Days 1-2 Cairo

Salaam Aleikum. Welcome to Egypt!

You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the important welcome meeting at 4pm. Look for a note in the hotel lobby as to where this important meeting will take place. If you are going to be late please leave a message with the hotel reception.

At the group meeting we will be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information, so please ensure you have all details on hand to provide to your leader.

After the meeting, there is the option of joining your fellow travellers for dinner.

If your flight is scheduled to arrive late we recommend that you consider booking a night's accommodation prior to the trip so you can ensure you are able to attend the important group meeting.

Check-in time at our joining point hotel is after 2pm. Early check-in is not guaranteed, however if you arrive early, luggage storage is available. Speak to the hotel reception on arrival.

Our first night is spent in a hotel.

Following the meeting, we head out to Khan al-Khalili to check out the madness and colour of this famous bazaar.

Wonderfully chaotic, crowded, and always colourful, Cairo is a fascinating mixture of modern city and ancient wonders. If you arrive early there are plenty of things to see and do. Take a walk along the Corniche or travel along the river by felucca. If the crowds and the noise of the city are too much, catch the metro into the oldest part of the city, the Coptic Christian sector. With its narrow cobbled streets and ancient churches, it is a haven of peace and quiet.

On day 2 we travel out to Giza to visit the unsurpassed pyramids and Sphinx. We will aim to get away early to avoid the heat and crowds for the experience. We make a stunning approach to the Pyramids across the surrounding dunes by camel allowing stunning panoramic views of this iconic sight. After our fun with the camels your local guide will take you through the amazing history of the area.

We will have some time to explore the Pyramids up close: Pyramid of Khufu (The Great Pyramid of Cheops), Pyramid of Khafre (Chephren) and the Pyramid of Menkaure (Mycerinus)- the smallest. From a distance Khafre's pyramid looks larger than Khufu's, but this illusion is due to the structure being built on higher ground. When they were built they were covered in white limestone- they would have been gleaming but now most of the casing stones have been removed but you can still see some on the apex of Khafre's pyramid.

If you wish to enter the inside of a Pyramid ask your Group Leader to assist. Entrance is not included although there is time to do so. Please note that the inside thoroughfares of the Pyramids are very small and very warm, so those suffering from claustrophobia should not attempt.

The statue of the Great Sphinx still retains the mysteries which have puzzled scholars, tourists and scientists for thousands of years. It is made from an outcrop of stone left behind from the quarrying for the Great Pyramid, it has been buried by desert sands, excavated and repaired many times. The body of the Sphinx is almost 60m long and 20m high. It was known as 'Abu Hol' or Father of Terror to the Arabic people. We don't know who first built the statue- this is one of the mysteries of the colossal monument.

Please note that you will be required to walk around the complex of the Pyramids. It can be very hot in the summer months so be prepared for some hot and sweaty walking with little relief. Don't forget to take some water with you.

After the pyramids there will be a break for lunch and a chance to try some of the local specialities for those who are hungry. We then head back to the city centre to visit the Egyptian Museum. With thousands of exhibits, it's easy to lose yourself in the many corridors - but don't miss the Tutankhamun rooms, where the famous golden death mask of King Tut and his gilded sarcophagi are displayed. The afternoon is free to continue exploring the city.

This evening, we board an overnight sleeper train to Aswan. Please ensure you return to the hotel with plenty of time to spare before departure for our train. Your leader will designate a meeting time and we will travel together to Giza Station in the early evening.

For your comfort we travel aboard a sleeper train with fold out beds (as opposed to a seater train) to Aswan (approx. 13 hrs). This is a very comfortable air conditioned, 2 berth cabin. All bedding is provided on board by the porter. Western style toilets are located in each carriage. In rare circumstances you may be paired with a group member of the opposite sex in your cabin dependant on the group configuration. On other occasions you might have the opportunity to share with a local person of the same sex, again determined on the group configuration. Included dinner and breakfast are served on board. If you are a vegetarian you may want to purchase something extra beforehand to supplement your meal as only a single type of meal is served for dinner which always includes meat.

## Days 3-5 Aswan/Nile Felucca

The Nile, Elephantine Island and white-sailed feluccas: welcome to Aswan. This Nubian city is Egypt's southern gateway to Africa and an important market town - take time here to check out one of the country's best bazaars.

After settling in we head out to enjoy the spectacular scenery around Aswan where the Sahara meets the Nile. We take a motor boat ride to a nearby beach where you can climb a sand dune for a rewarding view. Later in the afternoon we take a walk around the magical Elephantine Island for our first taste of Nubian life and visit a nearby village where we join a local family for dinner and an unforgettable insight into the life and culture of the local people.

On day 4 you have the option to travel to the temples of Abu Simbel. There are 2 ways to make the journey south to see these remarkable temples.

### Option 1: Flying to Abu Simbel

Some travellers prefer to fly to Abu Simbel from Aswan. The flight time is 40 minutes each way. Flights can be booked on-line through EgyptAir:- http://www.egyptair.com/English/Pages/Default.aspx#

Return flights vary throughout the season, the day of the week booked, and how far in advance you book, but expect to pay between 150-300USD

Due to the southerly location it is recommended to book the early flight and visit Abu Simbel at sunrise to avoid the heat

### Option 2: Private minivan

A less expensive option is to hire a minivan with other group members who are also interested. This can be organised from Aswan. The ride is 3 hours each way with a very early departure from Aswan at approximately 4AM.

Please note that Abu Simbel is an optional activity. Your group leader will not be travelling with you on this visit. The entrance fee is paid on arrival to the site, and if you wish a local guide can be hired on arrival.

For those that don't wish to travel to Abu Simbel a visit to nearby Philae Temple is highly recommended. Dedicated to the goddess Isis, Philae was painstakingly moved and reassembled after the construction of Aswan High Dam flooded its original island location.

Nights 3 & 4 we stay in a hotel and on day 5 we board feluccas to spend the day out on the river and then a night under the stars. Our Nubian sailing crew provides all the meals, which are hearty and delicious.

A felucca is a traditional wooden sail boat with broad canvas sails. The boat has a canopy that offers shade and protection from the elements, however there is no cabin or enclosed section. Please note that conditions are basic during our felucca trip but if you are prepared to rough it a bit you are sure to have the adventure of a lifetime. We sleep outside, on the deck of the felucca on mattresses. While blankets are provided, a sleeping sheet is recommended. During the colder months (October to March) it can get very cold at night (as low as 5 degrees) so a sleeping bag is recommended for this period. Unfortunately there is no sleeping bag hire available.

There are no toilets on-board our Nile felucca, but while sailing we will stop at the groups requests on the riverbank for toilet stops with nature. For your convenience at the completion of the days sailing we will assemble a western style toilet and tent close by on the riverbank. Any assistance from the group building the toilet tent is always much appreciated.

Please note that we may need to make slight alterations to our Nile itinerary throughout the year, depending on winds and currents. As the felucca is a sailing craft without any outboard engine, if there is no wind - we will not travel very far.

Nonetheless watching the sun setting across the Nile in the evening is a sight you will remember. This is the absolute highlight of the trip for many of our travellers.

## Days 6-7 Luxor

We say goodbye to our felucca and the crew before transferring by road to Luxor (approx. 3.5 hrs).

Situated on the banks of the Nile, Luxor was once the ancient Egyptian capital of Thebes. From the spectacular temple complex of Karnak to the unbelievable paintings and hieroglyphs in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, this open-air museum is full of wonderfully preserved reminders of the Pharaohs.

On arrival to Luxor we take some time to freshen up before we head out to our Sojourn Adventure Travel Foundation Project - Animal Care Egypt, to check out the great work they are doing here for the local animals. Next is a late afternoon visit to explore the magnificent Karnak Temple, perhaps the most impressive of all the ancient Pharaohs' monumental works. It is a jam packed day, but what a great introduction to this extraordinary city.

We start our West Bank tour early on day 7 transferring to the west bank of the Nile to the Colossi of Memnon - two 17 metres high statues on the West Bank. Carved from granite blocks they represent the Pharaoh Amenhotep III.

We then hop onto donkeys (in the winter months only of October - May) for a ride of a different kind through the nearby local villages and fields such as sugar cane (approx. 30 mins). We dismount our donkeys and continue on to the spectacular royal burial site of the Valley of the Kings to visit 3 of the most interesting tombs. Here your group leader will explain the history and legends of these remarkable people.

Please note that a visit to King Tutankhamen's tomb is not included in our visit, but can be arranged as an option with advance notice. Ask your Group Leader if you are interested for details.

After our fun in the Valley of the Kings we are invited to a local family's home for lunch to try some tasty traditional home cooking.

The rest of the afternoon of Day 7 is free before we catch an overnight sleeper train back to Cairo. Options for this afternoon would be to visit the Luxor Museum, the Luxor Temple or the Mummification Museum. You can hire a bicycle to ride out into the surrounding countryside. For a more upscale option perhaps check out the Winter Palace, a lovely 5-star historical building with wonderful views over the Nile - a great place for a refreshing cocktail.

## Day 8 Cairo

Returning to Cairo early in the morning on our overnight train, there is time for a farewell breakfast and a chance to reflect on the wonders we have seen.

You are free to depart at any time on day 8, but please arrange for departing flights after 3pm in case of any travel delays on the overnight train and bad traffic hindering your taxi or transfer.

# Physical Rating

Some easy physical activities are included in your trip. No physical preparation is required to make the most of the journey.

## Physical Preparation

Physical fitness levels:

A reasonable level of fitness is expected and will certainly help increase the enjoyment of the trip. Some of the archaeological sites and activities included involve a fair amount of walking.

Long and rough travel days:

There may be some long travel days and some rough travelling. Windy and rough roads make for some challenging travel experiences. If you experience travel sickness we recommend you consider medication to help ease the discomfort.

Early mornings:

On some long travel days we depart early in the morning to ensure we optimise our time at our next destination.

# Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. For a list of optional activities and sightseeing available on this trip, see the optional activities section below. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

* Khan al-Khalili bazaar visit
* Pyramids and Sphinx
* Camel ride at the Pyramids
* Egyptian Museum
* Aswan boat tour
* Nubian village visit and meal
* Overnight Felucca sailing trip
* Donkey ride (seasonal - not in Summer)
* Colossi of Memnon
* Valley of the Kings (3 tombs)
* Home cooked traditional meal with local family in Luxor
* Karnak Temple
* ACE (Animal Care Egypt) Sojourn Adventure Travel Foundation Project (if time)
* Comfortable overnight sleeper train (both directions- Cairo to Aswan & Luxor to Cairo)

# Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only.

They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Sojourn Adventure Travel nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, 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 Sojourn Adventure Travel.

These optional activities listed are suggestions about what is possible to do in each location. It may not be possible to do all activities listed in the time that you have. We recommend you do some planning in advance to decide what you most want to do in each location. Please note that the below prices are the entrance fees only and do not include transport fees to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated.

## Cairo:

* Citadel – EGP50
* Coptic Museum (Cairo) - EGP50
* Islamic Art Museum (Cairo) - EGP40
* Cairo Tower (Cairo) - EGP65
* Antiquities Museum Mummies Hall (Cairo) - EGP100
* Sufi dance performance at Khan al-Khalili (subject to performance scheduling) - free

## Giza Pyramids:

* Entrance to the Great Pyramid of Cheops - EGP100
* Entrance to the 2nd Pyramid of Khafre - EGP30
* Solar Boat Museum - EGP50
* Pyramids Sound and Light Show - EGP75
* Pyramid of Saqqara – 60EGP

## Aswan:

* Abu Simbel Temple Entrance - EGP90
* Abu Simbel transport by bus - EGP120
* Abu Simbel flight - from USD150 (book with www.egyptair.com)
* Philae Temple - EGP50 (+ EGP10 for boat)
* Philae Temple Sound and Light Show - EGP75
* Monastery of St. Simeon - EGP25
* Nubian Museum - EGP50
* Tombs of Nobles - EGP30
* Unfinished Obelisk - EGP30
* Kalabsha Temple - EGP35

## Luxor East Bank sights:

* Karnak Temple Sound and Light Show - EGP100
* Luxor Temple - EGP50
* Luxor Museum – EGP80
* Mummification Museum - EGP50
* Hot Air Balloon - USD110
* Bicycle hire - EGP10

## Luxor West Bank Sights:

* Tomb of Tutankhamun (KV54) (Luxor) - EGP100
* Hatshepsut Temple - EGP30
* Medinat Habu Temple - EGP30
* Ramasseum Temple - EGP30
* Valley of the Queens- EGP35
* Tombs of the Nobles – EGP30

## Shopping:

There are many opportunities to purchase souvenirs and handicrafts while on this trip. Popular purchases include: gold and silver jewellery, perfume and Pyrex perfume bottles, essential oils, papyrus art, alabaster statues and silver including cartouches (hieroglyphics).

While we do not make arrangements for specific shopping excursions due to our passengers feedback, there may be opportunities where your local guides can offer services if you are particularly interested. Please note it is customary for local guides (not Sojourn Adventure Travel Group Leaders) to accept commission from the factory or shop in exchange for their service.

You are under no obligation to purchase anything from local guides and we do encourage you to enjoy shopping in the markets to compare prices and quality.

Please note that in Egypt, silver is a common souvenir in the form of jewellery and other items. The silver in Egypt is generally stamped with '800' meaning that it is 80% silver and 20% other metal. This is a reduced quality to the silver you may be more familiar with which is '925'- higher quality.

## Hot Air Ballooning in Luxor:

There is a possibility of an optional Balloon Flight on the West Bank of the Nile in Luxor. There are many companies who offer flights. While we can arrange the balloon experience with our preferred operator, who has provided good and safe service in the past, we must advise that you are free to choose your own balloon flight operator if you have specific safety concerns. Please note this is an optional activity so any balloon flight is taken at your own risk.

You may notice other local agents around Luxor selling balloon flights at varying prices. You are free to choose your own options. Balloon rides organised through our preferred operators are sold at a fixed rate throughout the season. Ask your Group Leader to assist on arrival to Luxor.

Generally the activity is advertised as a flight over the Valley of the Kings. No matter what any agent says, this can not be guaranteed as the flight is entirely dependent on the direction of the wind. From our experience very few flights actually go over the Valley of the Kings and instead fly close to Hatshepsut and the Colossi of Memnon. While you may have booked a 'sunrise' balloon flight, please be aware that this does not always eventuate in time for the sunrise due to logistical reasons and weather conditions.

Got extra time before or after your Sojourn Adventure Travel adventure? Maybe there is an URBAN ADVENTURE in one of the cities that you're visiting on your trip?

Sojourn Adventure Travel's Urban Adventures are the city tour with a difference - there are more than 100 to choose from in over 30 cities around the world, with new trips added regularly. They are a great way to get under the skin of the city you're visiting, in just a few hours. To make a booking contact your local travel agent, Sojourn Adventure Travel consultant or visit [www.urbanadventures.com](http://www.urbanadventures.com)

# Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping, participating in optional activities and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

# Tipping

Tipping - known as 'baksheesh' in the Middle East is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry. If you are satisfied with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate and always appreciated. While it may not be customary to you, it is of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels.

We recommend that any group tips are collected in a envelope and handed directly to the intended recipient as a collective 'thank-you' by the group. The below amounts are suggested figures in USD for ease of calculating budgets, but should always be offered in local currency.

Restaurants: Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change. More up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your leader. We suggest US$1-2 per person per day for local guides.

Drivers: You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group however US$1-2 per person per day is generally appropriate.

Public toilet attendants: When using public toilets there will most likely be a attendant that will expect a tip. 20- 50 cents is appropriate.

Felucca Captains: If you are travelling in Upper Egypt many of our itineraries spend a night on a felucca. US$1-2 per person per day for felucca captains is appropriate.

Desert Camp hosts: If you have a night camping included on your itinerary US$2-3 is appropriate for the camp hosts.

Your Group Leader: You may also consider tipping your leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline US$2 per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

# Important Notes

## Travelling in the Middle East:

The Middle East is a region which may be very different to anything you have experienced before. Heat, pollution, poverty and the crowds can result in initial culture shock but should be seen as an exciting new challenge. During our time here we have come to love this wonderfully different region but we know that we should always expect to encounter some difficulties along the way. You will come across very different attitudes to time keeping, public cleanliness, privacy and service. If you are able to travel with a lot of patience and a sense of humour, then we know that you - like all of us - will be captivated by the fabulous Middle East.

## Expense in the Middle East:

The Middle East is often misjudged as being an inexpensive destination. With tourism booming, the influx of cheap flights from Europe, prices for some items are becoming more equivalent to prices you would be used to at home. Eating in local restaurants, road side stalls and from markets can be inexpensive, but for nights out at tourist friendly restaurants you can expect to pay much more. Budgets are a personal choice but please bear in mind that you should not expect the Middle East to always be a budget destination.

## Student cards:

If you are a student and can produce a valid student card you will be able to get discounted rates at some of the historical sites. Entrance prices are clearly posted at the ticket booth entry points.

## Seasons for travelling in the Middle East:

Please note that as a desert region, the Middle East can have extreme weather!

Winter (approx. December to February) can be very cold. Consider bringing a sleeping bag, thermals, scarf, gloves and a warm jacket for travel in this period, especially on itineraries which include camping such as on a felucca, in a desert camp, or at a Red Sea beach camp. Some of our guesthouses/hotels do not supply heating. In many cases this would be a major financial and environmental strain on our hotels and the local towns. Summer (approx. June to August) can be very hot everywhere we travel, which means that it can be quite uncomfortable for those not used to the heat. Not all our hotels have air conditioning, and in those that do, it is not always functioning.

### Alterations to the itinerary:

While we operate successful trips in the Middle East throughout the year, some changes may occur in our itineraries due to inclement weather and common seasonal changes to timetables and transport routes. This can happen with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to the route while you are travelling.

### Armed convoys and security while travelling:

Occasionally you may experience armed security and convoys between select towns or regions. Convoys are used to ensure all travellers are transported safely and, in many cases, tourists are only allowed to travel in scheduled convoys of buses and jeeps. On rare occasions you may have an armed guard in your vehicle. We want to warn you so you are not alarmed. This is a practice designed to keep tourists safe, although at time it can appear a little overkill.

### Ramadan & the Eid ul-Fitr festival

The important month of Ramadan will be in progress from the 1st August through till the 30th August, and the Eid ul-Fitr festival will be held directly at its conclusion for 3-4 days. Ramadan is a festival of sacrifice where the devout refrain from eating or drinking during daylight hours. During Ramadan business hours are shortened, including opening hours at some tourist attractions. Alcohol is not permitted during daylight hours and many restaurants will be closed. While you should expect some delays and inconveniences during this period, the month is a fantastic opportunity to travel in a Muslim country and witness this unique period, particularly the nightly celebrations when the sun sets and the fast is broken. Please note that although the Eid ul-Fitr festival can also be a fascinating time to travel it is a period of National holiday. Most government offices and businesses will be closed and some tourist site opening hours may be effected.

## Passport photocopies:

Please bring two (2) copies of your passport. These may be used to assist with hotel check-in, and sometimes at road security points.

A Single Supplement is available on this trip, please refer to your agent for further information. On the following nights the Single Supplement is not available:

* Day 2 Overnight train
* Day 5 Felucca
* Day 7 Overnight Train

# Group Size

Maximum of 12 travellers per group

# Accommodation

Hotels (4nts), felucca (1nt), overnight sleeper train (2nts)

Accommodation:

The style of accommodation described in the day to day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions alternative arrangements may need to be arranged due to availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

Additional accommodation:

If you have purchased pre or post trip accommodation, you may be required to change rooms at the start or the end of the tour.

Triple Sharing:

When we have 3 single female travellers or 3 single male travellers on a trip we occasionally make use of triple-share rooms.

# Meals

While travelling with us you will experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. On our camping trips we often cook the region's specialties so you don't miss out. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Please check the 'meal inclusions' section of these notes for details of meals included.

Allow USD $145 for meals not included.

## Meal Inclusions

4 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches, 4 Dinners

Breakfast is generally a very simple affair and typically consist of bread, jam & tea/coffee & on occasions tomato, cucumber, & juice (or similar).

# Transport

Overnight sleeper train, private bus, motor boat, felucca, taxi, camel, donkey (seasonal)

# Group Leader

All Sojourn Adventure Travel group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders or our local partners' group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Sojourn Adventure Travel endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders. Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see and recommend local eating venues. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects.

At Sojourn Adventure Travel we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit - and who better to hear it from than the locals themselves? If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture then your leader can recommend a local guide service in the most of the main destinations of your trip.

# Joining Point

**King Hotel**20 Abdel Rehim Sabry Street  
Dokki  
Cairo  
Egypt  
Phone: +20 2 333 59455

The hotel has 90 rooms with ensuite bathrooms, television and air-conditioning. Other hotel features include laundry service, roof top bar and restaurant.

## Joining Point Instructions

It is by far the easiest option to take a taxi. Airport taxis shouldn't cost more than 100EGP (be prepared to bargain!). The drive can take between 40 minutes and 1 hour depending on the time of day and subsequent traffic conditions.

Alternatively Sojourn Adventure Travel offer a pre arranged private transfer service option. Enquire with your Agent on booking. If you have pre-purchased an arrival transfer you will be met by a transfer officer in the immigration area from our local representative in Cairo - TravelMark Agency. Look for the Sojourn Adventure Travel Logo and your name.

If for any reason you should not make contact with the transfer officer by the time you have cleared customs as can occasionally occur as many flights tend to arrive at once, please call TravelMark Agency on the following numbers:

Mr Tharwat (+2) 0127 606 605

Mr Abdel Nasser (+2) 0123 603 748

Give your exact location in the airport (find a landmark) and you will be attended to promptly.

In the very unlikely event that this process fails, you can find taxis at the front of the airport to take you to your hotel. Please inform your group leader at the initial group meeting if this occurs.

If your flight is going to be early, delayed or cancelled please call ahead on the above numbers to explain the situation and advise alternative flight details

If this is your first trip to Egypt a transfer is recommended.

## Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems (and nor should you!) but if for any reason you are unable to commence your

group trip as scheduled, please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader.

If you have pre-booked an airport transfer (where available) and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing

customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions in the Trip

Notes. Should this occur, please apply to your travel agent for a refund of the transfer cost on your return.

No refund is available on missed transfers or portions of your trip owing to a different flight arrival or delayed flight arrival. Any

additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

# Finishing Point

**King Hotel**20 Abdel Rehim Sabry Street  
Dokki  
Cairo  
Egypt  
Phone: +20 2 333 59455

The hotel has 90 rooms with ensuite bathrooms, television and air-conditioning. Other hotel features include laundry service, roof top bar and restaurant.

## Finishing Point Instructions

Check out time is 12:00 midday. Taxis can easily be hired from the street in front of the Hotel. Bargain for the fare and aim to pay approx 80EGP. Only the new yellow taxis have working meters. The drive can take between 45 minutes and 1 hour depending on the time of day and subsequent traffic conditions.

We can offer a pre arranged private transfer service option. Inform your agent at the time of booking if you are interested.

# Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, Sojourn Adventure Travel's local Cairo-based ground representative for the Middle East can be reached on Tel: +2 019 681 1067. For all other enquiries please contact our Reservations department which is open 24 hours, 6 days per week. For further contact details please use the following page: [http://www.Sojourn Adventure Travel.com/ourtrips/contact/](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/).

# Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, civil unrest or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route.

# Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

## Egypt:

Most nationalities require a visa to enter as a tourist into Egypt. Visas are easily attainable on arrival at Cairo airport for most nationalities for USD$15 to be paid in cash, but please check with your travel agent or embassy before departure. On arrival to Cairo airport you buy your visa at any of the banks before proceeding to immigration. You will be given a stamp that you then need to put into your passport yourself. A single entry visa is valid for three months from date of issue and entitles the bearer to one month in Egypt. Multiple entry visas are not available at the airport or any border crossings.

# Laundry

Some hotels offer a laundry service which by western standards is generally inexpensive. Self-service laundries are scarce, but laundromats are not uncommon in the main towns. If using a hotel or laundromat service note that damage to clothing is occasionally encountered. Leave your delicate evening wear at home. Consider bringing some bio-degradable laundry soap and hand wash so that you can wash any precious items yourself.

# What to Take

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking you should pack as lightly as possible. On the vast majority of our trips you are expected to carry your own luggage and although you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage (max 30 minutes) we recommend keeping the weight under 10kg/22lb.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for daytrips.

The smaller your bag the better! There is often restricted storage space when travelling and if your bag does not fit in these areas, then often the only place to put it is on your lap. So for maximum comfort, aim to pack small and light! It is recommended that your bag can be locked as on some transport it may be necessary to store your luggage separately.

Temperatures in the Middle East are generally hot with little rain. This can become extreme during the summer months of June to August. In the months of December to March it can be very cool at night, particularly next to the river or the ocean and out in the desert where night temperatures can drop dramatically. Even in the hot months, it can get cold in the desert at night.

A light water and windproof jacket is useful and a hat essential. As the countries we visit are Islamic nations, women may find a headscarf useful.

Sleeping bags:

All of our hotel accommodation contains suitable bedding, and simple light bedding is provided during camping activities such as: overnight felucca, desert camps, or at the Red Sea Beach camp stay. Most Sojourn Adventure Travellers find the bedding provided here adequate, but for your own comfort and if you are particularly sensitive to the cold, consider bringing your own sleeping bag if your itinerary includes camping over the winter months (approx. Dec-Mar).

# Local Dress

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative and you should dress accordingly. To respect the local culture and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. As a guideline, shoulders and knees at the minimum (and everything in between including midriff and cleavage) should be covered at all times. Wearing shorts and singlet tops is not appropriate and may well restrict your entry into sites of a religious nature, family homes, and will limit your local interaction opportunities in general. Loose, lightweight, long clothing (3/4 trousers that come to the calf is fine) is both respectful and cool in the predominantly warm climate.

# Checklist

The following checklist is to be used as a guide only and is not intended to be a complete packing list. Any other items that you wish to pack are at your own discretion however you should attempt to comply with the suggested luggage weight limit.

* Passport
* Visas required for this trip
* Travel insurance; including insurer details, 24hr emergency contact telephone number and policy number
* Flight Tickets
* Sojourn Adventure Travel trip confirmation voucher
* Photocopies of important documents to be kept separately (we recommend you keep a copy at home as well)
* Latest trip notes (this information)
* Money, cash, credit cards
* Money belt or pouch
* First aid kit, personal medication/prescriptions
* Prescription glasses or contact lens & solution
* Sunglasses
* High protection sunscreen
* Lip balm
* Hat
* Insect repellent, Insect bite cream
* Antihistamine
* Antibacterial gel
* Ear plugs
* Alarm clock
* Torch/flashlight and spare batteries
* Travel sickness tablets
* Swimming costume & towel
* Comfortable walking shoes with good grip (sturdy trekking shoes are recommended if your itinerary includes climbing Mt Sinai)
* Camera, film, memory card, spare batteries
* Day pack - for your personal needs during the day
* Local language phrase book
* Reading material
* Luggage lock
* Smarter clothes for nights out
* Toiletries
* Sleep sheet
* Travel plug/international adapter
* Mobile phone - check you have international roaming access
* Tampons (can be difficult to find on tour)
* Winter suggestions (Approx. Dec to Mar):
* Warm clothes
* Waterproof jacket
* Thermal underwear
* Gloves
* Beanie/wooly hat
* Sleeping bag (Not obligatory, but bring if you are particularly sensitive to the cold, and if your itinerary includes a desert camp, overnight felucca or Red Sea beach camp)
* Consider bringing some post cards/pins of your hometown to give to local people. Photos of your family to show local people help to get a conversation and the interaction started.

# Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com/).

The most convenient and cheapest way to acquire money is via an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) which are plentiful throughout all the main cities. Check with your bank for information on ATM international fees.

When leaving home don't forget your PIN and make sure you know the telephone number for cancelling your card if it is stolen. Keep this in a safe place. When using your debit card, check your receipts and keep them to compare against your statement when you get home.

We recommend that you carry some foreign currency cash for when ATMs can not be accessed, have broken down or run out of cash. There are few problems changing money at the many banks and currency exchange facilities. Cash in USD, EURO & GBP are easiest to exchange.

Occasionally banks will allow cash advances on your credit card, but it is not recommended to rely on this.

While some banks and 5 star hotels will change Travellers' Cheques the process is time consuming and commissions can be high (up to 10%) and it can be difficult to change on weekends and public holidays. The easiest cheques to change are Thomas Cook or American Express in USD, EUR or GBP. Traveller's cheques are not recommended in the Middle East.

The currency of Egypt is Egyptian Pounds (EGP). It is easy to get money when you arrive at the airport by money exchange or from the ATM.

# Departure Tax

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

# Keeping in Touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend email. Email cafes are generally available throughout the regions we visit, although it is possible you may be without email contact for several days on some itineraries. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our emergency contact details. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

# Issues On Your 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/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case please ask the leader if you may speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback which we ask you to complete within 30 days of 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.

# Health

All Sojourn Adventure Travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If in the opinion of our group leader or company representative any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Sojourn Adventure Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (including a spare pair of glasses) as they may not easily be obtained while on tour.

Sojourn Adventure Travel is very aware of the issues raised by H1N1 (swine) flu and these have been taken into consideration for all aspects of the trip you are about to take. In reviewing this itinerary we have followed the guidelines set out by The World Health Organisation (WHO) http://www.who.int/en/

Sojourn Adventure Travel reserve the right to make last minute changes to any itinerary in the very unlikely occurrence that an area should suddenly be deemed to be unsafe because of an outbreak of H1N1 flu.

Drinking water:

As a rule we recommend you do not drink tap water, even in hotels, as it contains much higher levels of different minerals than the water you may have at home. For local people this is not a problem as their bodies are used to this and can cope, but for travellers from places other continents drinking the tap water can result in illness. Generally this is not serious, an upset stomach being the only symptom, but it is enough to spoil a day or two of your holiday. Bottled water is widely available. Water consumption should be about 3 litres a day (this should be easy for most!) Rehydration salts, motion sickness tablets, and diarrhoea blockers are available from many pharmacies.

# Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. Please refer to our website's Safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips: [www.Sojourn Adventure Travel.com/safety](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/safety).

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Sojourn Adventure Travel itinerary, and Sojourn Adventure Travel makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Sojourn Adventure Travel's operational safety policy at [www.Sojourn Adventure Travel.com/safety](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/safety).

We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it is being implemented in the field.

### Fire Precautions & balconies:

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in the Middle East & North Africa may differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodation which we use has a fire exit, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms. Not all balconies measure up to standard dimensions.

### Seat belts:

Please be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in the western world or from your home country and not all the transport which we use provides seat belts.

### Petty theft and personal safety:

Although we feel that the Middle East & North Africa is a very safe region to travel in, please be aware that there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk in pairs or groups. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

### Traffic conditions and driving on opposite sides of the road:

Traffic will no doubt be more chaotic than you are used to at home. Traffic rules are not always adhered to and the traffic can tend to move very fast. Be aware and alert! Depending on where you come from please note that drivers in this part of the world may drive on the opposite side of the road from what you are used to. Look both ways before crossing any road.

### Water safety:

Please take care when taking part in any activities in the ocean, river or open water where waves and currents can be unpredictable. It is expected that anyone taking part in water activities are able to swim and have experience in open water. All swimmers should seek local advice before entering the water.

# Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact telephone number rather than the Bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

# Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Please note that due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

# Single Travellers

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. Please note some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis - where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes. On a selection of our Comfort and Original style trips you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you will have your own room (where available). Please refer to the important notes if this trip has a single supplement and any accommodation on the trip that the single supplement will not apply to. Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour, pre- and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

# Itinerary Disclaimer

The itinerary attached is correct at time of printing. Please note: occasionally our itineraries are updated during the year to incorporate improvements stemming from past travellers' comments and our own research. Our brochure is usually released in November each year. As such the information given in this itinerary may be slightly different to that in the brochure. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you print and review a final copy of your Trip Notes a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans. For the latest updated trip notes please visit our website: **www.Sojourn Adventure Travel.com**

Best of East Africa

**validity: 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020**

# Introduction

Welcome to Sojourn Adventure Travel real life experiences... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do.

Embrace the full spectrum of colours, smells and sounds on this brilliant adventure showcasing the best that East Africa has to offer. From the vibrant red robes of the Maasai to the emerald-green mountains of Tanzania and the luminous golden glow of a Serengeti sunset, Africa is bursting with enticing sights and enriching experiences. Meet proud warriors, enthusiastic children, welcoming villagers and hard-working crop-growers - the faces of modern-day Africa. Encounter cunning predators and majestic mammals while on safari, graceful birds while camping near shimmering lakes and colourful fish off the balmy coast. East Africa's temperatures are as warm as the people are - experience this personally on this memorable trip.

To save you money and the hassle of booking multiple trips, this journey is a combination of some of our most popular adventures. As this is a combination trip your leader and group may change.

# Style

The best value adventures on the planet! On a Basix trip, you can expect some amazing experiences, but none of the inclusions or 'extras' that you may not want. Which means simple and often multishare accommodation and a lot of local transport. These trips are ideal for first time travellers seeking fun and independence with the security of a group leader at hand and for backpackers wanting minimum hassle and maximum flexibility at the lowest possible price.

# This trip is available in styles.

# Trip Map



# Itinerary

## Day 1 Nairobi

Jambo! Welcome to Kenya.

You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the welcome meeting tonight at 6pm. Your leader will leave a note at reception telling you where this important meeting will take place. Please ask a member of reception for this information. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport and insurance details at this meeting.

After the group meeting there is the option of joining the group for dinner.

Nairobi - a Masai word for 'Place of Cool Waters' has a cosmopolitan atmosphere. There are plenty of good bars and restaurants. Markets and shops have most things you could need or want, as well as various arts and crafts from the region.

If you arrive early why not head out and explore the National Museum of Kenya, the Karen Blixen Museum (author of Out of Africa), or Bomas (displays of traditional homesteads of several Kenyan tribes in an outdoor village).

## Day 2 Lake Nakuru

Leaving Nairobi in the morning, we drive north-west to Lake Nakuru National Park (170 km, approx. 3-4 hours). On the way, we will visit New Hope Children Centre - an orphanage that assists the less fortunate in society and gives them hope. The children here appreciate very much when they get reading and writing materials. You have a chance to give the children any thing you have brought; from toys to pens, pencils, story books, etc (of course these will be handed over to the proprietors).

The lake is nestled in a beautiful park of light acacia forest, a habitat which attracts large flocks of white pelicans, cormorants and a huge number of flamingos that transform the lake into an incredible shimmering pink haze. The savannah areas of this park also boast many fascinating mammals including giraffes, leopards, waterbucks and rhinos. We set up camp, and then enjoy an afternoon game drive before returning to our exclusive camp outside the park.

Tonight's campground is well situated and has flush toilets and showers.

## Days 3-4 Lake Naivasha

After breakfast, we head off to a nearby village where our guide will tell us about the local life here. This is the best time and place to interact with the local villagers. Afterwards, we drive to Naivasha and our camp situated near the lake (110 km, approx 3-4 hours).

Lake Naivasha, one of the few freshwater lakes in the Great Rift Valley, has floating islands of papyrus reeds and a border of flat-topped acacias. It is also home to a healthy population of hippos and a tremendous variety of birds.

The following day, you are free to take part in some of the many optional activities available or to relax in the beautiful lakeside surroundings.

Our campsite for these two nights has showers and flush toilets.

## Day 5 Loita Hills

We depart Lake Naivasha in the morning and do a spot of food shopping, taking our lunch break en route to our camp site at Loita Hills (220 km, approx. 5-6 hours).

Today's drive crosses the Great Rift Valley, Africa's immense and spectacular great divide, takes us into the remote region of Loita Hills, home of the traditional Maasai people. Here, we visit the Maasai, known for their vibrant red dress and elaborate jewellery, and gain an insight into the culture and ancient ways of this proud East African Community.

After setting up our tents, it is time to meet our Maasai hosts as we receive a fascinating talk offering insights into this remarkable and ancient culture from a local elder. Enjoy being shown around a traditional Maasai home and cattle enclosures, and we may even have the opportunity to participate in the milking of the precious cattle.

Tonight we stay in a bush camp with drop toilets and bush shower facilities.

## Days 6-7 Masai Mara National Reserve

It is 70 km from Loita to Masai Mara which will take us approximately 1-2 hours. The road is dusty when dry and could be slippery and soft when wet.

After setting up camp (outside the park) and having lunch, we enter the world-famous Masai Mara and explore this diverse environment While we hope to discover the "big five" there is a multitude of wildlife to view including, if we are lucky the elusive leopard.

We spend our entire second day in the reserve. After a pre dawn coffee and snack we head off in our wildlife spotting quest. We take our brunch/lunch by the side of the Mara River - a great chance to spot crocs and of course hippos.

An optional balloon ride over the Masai Mara at sunrise is an unforgettable experience. If you have pre-booked this activity (please see Important Notes) you will be picked up and driven to the launch site, receive a safety briefing from your pilot and help inflate the balloon. You then glide through the dawn, sometimes at tree height, providing amazing wildlife photography opportunities, sometimes ascending to get an overview of the enormity of the Masai Mara plains and the early morning movements of the teeming herds wildlife. Upon landing and before being returned to your vehicle and group you'll be treated to a five star bush breakfast. Please note if you are taking a balloon ride over the Mara you will be taken to the launch place from our campsite before dawn and returned to the group when you have finished your ride.

Our campground has flush toilets and showers.

## Days 8-9 Nairobi

Today we leave the open expanses of the African bush behind and return to the urban environment of Nairobi (270 km, approx 6-7 hours).

We expect to arrive back in Nairobi around 1pm in the afternoon.

Please note that this is a combination trip and the composition of your group and leader may change this evening. There will be another short group meeting at 6pm on Saturday night where you can meet your new travelling companions and hear more about the second part of your trip.

In Nairobi we stay in a simple hotel with swimming pool, restaurant and en suite rooms.

## Day 10 Arusha

We set off early today, heading for the border with Tanzania. We are able to spend some time in Arusha, before heading to our campsite on the out skirts of the city, Meserani (400 km, approx 8-10 hours).

Arusha is the gateway to some of Tanzania's most popular tourist destinations including the Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara and Mount Kilimanjaro.

Tonight we stay at a campsite with flush toilets and showers.

## Day 11 Karatu

This morning we drive for 1.5 hours to reach the village of Mto Wa Mbu where we participate in a local community village program. A local guide will take you on a leisurely stroll around the farming areas visiting a kindergarten, milling machine, local homes and farmlands. A great way to have fun, interact and find out more about life of the locals.

Later we take time to explore the market in this small village. Many crafts and fabrics are found here and the batiks and makonde wood carvings are particularly good.

After lunch, we then travel on towards Karatu, our base for launching into our Serengeti and Ngorongoro safari (approx. 1 hr).

Tonight we stay at a campsite with flush toilets and showers.

## Days 12-13 Serengeti National Park

Today we are up very early, leaving our truck behind, putting our camping and personal gear into 6 person jeeps and heading out for our three day excursion.

The wide, open plains of the Serengeti, green after the rains, brown and burnt in the dry season, and home to thousands of hoofed animals and fierce predators, is perhaps the quintessential image of Africa. Flat and rolling with long grasses and dotted with acacia trees, the plains get their name from the Masai word Siringitu - 'the place where the land moves on forever' (170 km, approx. 4-5 hours).

Game viewing in the Serengeti is amazing and as you camp out at night, don't be surprised to hear lions in the distance as you recount your amazing sightings from during the day. In normal circumstances we would expect to see the Big 5 during our stay in the Serengeti.

For an unforgettable experience you might like to do an optional sunrise balloon ride over the Serengeti. If you have pre-booked this activity (please see Important Notes) you will be picked up, driven to the launch site, receive a safety briefing from your pilot and help inflate the balloon. You then float over the Serengeti as the sun comes up, gaining an overview of the immensity of the Serengeti, seeing the abundance of wildlife in their early morning activity, and sometimes descending to tree height providing amazing wildlife photography opportunities. Upon landing and before being returned to your accommodation you'll be treated to a five star bush breakfast.

The bush camps where we stay are very simple (showers and flush toilets) but are located in the middle of the plains, surrounded by animals and the nocturnal noises - something to experience. Your leader will outline the basic safety rules to be followed when camping in an unfenced location where wild animals are present.

Responsible Travel Note:

You will notice many Masai villages in the region of the Serengeti and Ngorongoro crater. While it is of course fascinating to visit different cultures, past experience has shown that these villages exist primarily as businesses. You will be charged an entry fee of approx. US$20 and the Masai will try very hard to sell souvenirs to you. While many clients still enjoy the experience, others have found it artificial and uncomfortable. We would very much prefer that Sojourn Adventure Travel clients choose to bypass this activity as we feel it negatively impacts the Masai culture and your perception of this culture. Unfortunately the tourist village business is such a high earner that we have been unable to find an "Sojourn Adventure Travel" Masai experience in Tanzania, which is disappointing for all.

## Day 14 Ngorongoro Crater

We are up with the sun as we make an early start, exiting the Serengeti and heading for the world famous Ngorongoro Crater (approximately 3 hrs drive). After a picnic lunch we descend onto the floor of the Crater. We make the most of our safari in the crater, spending between four and five hours exploring this area

A huge, perfectly intact volcanic crater, Ngorongoro is home to some 30,000 animals including endangered black rhinos, lions, leopards, elephants, impalas, zebras and hippos. The crater floor offers excellent game viewing all year round and the photographic opportunities here are unrivalled.

Departing the crater late in the afternoon, we return to our campsite at Karatu for an evening relaxing at the campsite's bar reliving our safari experience.

Tonight we stay at a campsite with flush toilets and showers.

## Day 15 Marangu

Back on board our truck we climb high onto the slopes of Kilimanjaro and to the village of Mshiri (300 km, approx 5-7 hours).

In Moshi we will meet the very special kids of the Amani Children's Home. Amani supports street children giving them a safe place to stay and educational and emotional support. Check out the new school which has been built with the help of donors and be inspired by this project which is changing these children's lives.

We then drive on to the village of Marangu where we set up camp for the night. Our campground is basic with flush toilets and showers.

## Days 16-17 Usambara Mountains

We spend this morning with the team at the Village Education Project. Beginning with a walking tour of Mshiri Village, the base for the Village Education Project, we can witness the day-to-day life of the Chagga people, long established as crop-growers on the fertile slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro. We visit their homes, walk around the shamba (farm), and may visit a primary school as well as the other institutions where local young people are taught various skills. Lunch provides more opportunity to sample the local Chagga food, which is very filling. We also visit nearby waterfalls and stop to admire the view of the plains below. For more information on the Village Education Project visit www.kiliproject.org.

Then it's time to get off the well beaten track and head into the remote Tanzanian Mountains (270 km, approx 7-9 hours).

We have a two night stop in the beautiful Usambara Mountains to explore this lovely unspoilt area of Tanzania. Unlike the coast and the north, very few tourists visit this area and so it has a freshness that can be hard to find elsewhere. The mountains are located in the north east of Tanzania between Kilimanjaro and the Indian Ocean and overlook the vast Masai steppe. They are wonderfully lush and green and the area has been dubbed the Galapagos of the plant world. The forests stretch across the mountains and are ideal for easy hikes and guided walks. As beautiful as the place is, its real jewels are the local peoples and villages. The area has a reputation for gentle hospitality and we will visit some of the small communities. From our base we will organise a short day's walking trip out to the beautiful Irente viewpoint. On our way back we visit a local village cultural and ecological project based at Irente farm where we will have a picnic lunch.

We base ourselves at the old German colony of Lushoto where we stay in the grounds of one of the earliest hotels in Africa. Our campsite has flush toilets and showers.

## Day 20 Dar es Salaam

Leaving the mountains behind we have a long travel day today we travel further south towards the coastal city of Dar es Salaam (380 km, approx 9-11 hours).

Once in Dar es Salaam, we set up camp on a balmy beach outside of the city. The camp is on the grounds of a hotel and has flush toilets and showers. Feel free to jump in the ocean and have a swim before dinner.

## Days 19-21 Zanzibar

Today we catch a ferry to the "Spice Island" of Zanzibar (approx 90 minutes). Filled with idyllic beaches, winding cobblestone alleyways and fragrant bazaars, Zanzibar's rich history involves everything from slave traders to Arabian sultans and fruit exporters. The sight of traditional dhows sailing along the coast makes it easy to imagine what the island was like back in the days of Livingstone.

Our first night is spent in the exotic port town of Stone Town in a basic inn with double/twin share rooms.

The best way to see Stone Town is on foot exploring the bazaars, shops, mosques, palaces, courtyards and myriad intricate alleyways. When the sun is setting, why not enjoy a sundowner from a bar overlooking the seafront, before trying one of the island's local seafood curries for dinner at one of the town's many restaurants.

The famous spices are grown in plantations outside of Stone Town and we head out on a Spice Tour which will include a local meal, a tour around the sites of the stone town, including some history on its former slave market. Next will be the drive to the spice plantations where you will receive a guided tour and the opportunity to touch, smell and taste various spices such as cinnamon, vanilla and ginger, and teas made with these spices. At the end of the day there will also be an opportunity to buy some of the locally grown spices.

On our second and third days here we head to the northern beaches and enjoy white sand and sparkling blue sea - the Indian Ocean at its best. Try snorkelling and diving, eat sumptuous seafood, or simply relax in a hammock underneath a coconut tree with a good book.

Our accommodation in Zanzibar is in twin share rooms.

## Day 22 Dar es Salaam

Today we transfer back to the ferry (approx. 90 minutes) and return to our campsite by the beach outside Dar es Salaam arriving in the late afternoon.

# Itinerary Disclaimer

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# Culture Shock Rating

You will probably have experienced food like this in restaurants back home and English is commonly spoken. Services are available most of the time but there may be some cultural differences.

# Physical Rating

Some easy physical activities included in your trip. No physical preparation is required to make the most of the journey.

## Physical Preparation

There are many long hours spent driving on rough roads on all Africa itineraries. While most people love the chance to watch the changing landscape and daily village life, feedback shows that long periods of inactivity does not appeal to all clients. We provide the approximate daily distance covered and how long this normally takes to drive in hours so that you can choose the safari experience which is right for you.

African conditions are extremely tough on vehicles. While we fastidiously maintain our vehicles at our workshops, you should not expect Africa to be your traditional touring experience. While it is certainly our aim to avoid them, it is important that you set off on your trip knowing that the occasional breakdown can happen and are best treated as part of the Africa adventure.

The step up into the overland truck, 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.

# Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. For a list of optional activities and sightseeing available on this trip, see the optional activities section below. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

Game drives - Lake Nakuru National Park

Cultural talk and village visit - Loita Hills

Game drives - Masai Mara National Reserve

Community cultural activity - Mto Wa Mbu

Game drives - Serengeti National Park

Game drive - Ngorongoro Crater

Visit and donation to Amani Children's Home - en route to Marangu

Visit Village Education Project, village walk and lunch - Marangu

Day walk and local lunch - Usambara Mountains

Ferry, accommodation and spice tour - Zanzibar

# Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only.

They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Sojourn Adventure Travel nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, 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 Sojourn Adventure Travel.

* Karen Blixen Museum, Nairobi - US$14
* Giraffe Centre, Nairobi - US$12
* NNP Animal orphanage & Safari walk, Nairobi - US$20
* Carnivore Restaurant, Nairobi - US$30-35
* Bomas, Nairobi - US$10
* National Museum, Nairobi - US$14
* Boat trip, Lake Naivasha - US$50 per boat (price dependent on numbers interested)
* Entrance Hells Gate National Park, Lake Naivasha - US$25
* Guide fee, Lake Naivasha - US$4
* Bike Hire, Lake Naivasha - US$12 per day
* Crater Lake Walk, Lake Naivasha - US$35
* Visit Elsamere Conservation Centre, Lake Naivasha - US$10
* Balloon ride, Masai Mara - US$475 (must be pre-booked see Important Notes)
* Warrior Dance, Masai Mara - US$10
* Balloon ride, Serengeti - US$485 (must be pre-booked see Important Notes)
* Bike excursion around Musoma with local guide (approx 3 hours), Lake Victoria - US$20
* Snorkelling day trip, Zanzibar - US$35
* Scuba dive, Zanzibar - US$80
* Dhow trip, Zanzibar - US$40
* Prison Island tour, Zanzibar - US$25

Got extra time before or after your Sojourn Adventure Travel? Maybe there is an URBAN ADVENTURE in one of the cities that you're visiting on your trip?

Sojourn Adventure Travel's Urban Adventures are the city tour with a difference - there are more than 100 to choose from in over 30 cities around the world, with new trips added regularly. They are a great way to get under the skin of the city you're visiting, in just a few hours. To make a booking contact your local travel agent, Sojourn Adventure Travel consultant or visit [www.urbanadventures.com](http://www.urbanadventures.com)

# Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping, participating in optional activities and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

# Tipping

If you are happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it is of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Sojourn Adventure Travel destinations. We recommend that any tips are given to the intended recipient by a member of your group, rather than collected and passed on by the group leader.

The following amounts are based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

Restaurants: Please check the bill and if there’s an addition of 10% service charge, there’s no requirement for tipping. Otherwise, 10% of the total bill amount is appropriate.

Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change.

Local guides/Porters: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your leader. We suggest US$ 1 per person, per day for local guides/porters.

Your Crew (including the leader, cook and driver): You may also consider tipping your crew for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline US$ 2-3 per person, per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

# Kitty

A trip kitty of USD $1230 CASH per person will be required

On some overland trips you contribute to a kitty. The Kitty is an on-ground payment put into a central fund and overseen by travellers and the crew. On some trips it is compulsory while on others it is an optional contribution. It helps fund accommodation, camp meals and some included activities. Kitty amounts are subject to change to reflect local price increases.

Your kitty will be collected when you arrive for your trip either one the 1st day or in stages throughout your trip. Refer to your trip notes for exact details.

# Important Notes

### Local Partner:

Sojourn Adventure Travel runs this trip in conjunction with Dragoman Overland. Dragoman shares our ethos for adventure travel and has many years' expertise in over landing.

While Dragoman will run the West Africa and North African sectors of our Overland program, our Nairobi to Cape Town (and reverse) departures are code-shared, with certain departures run by Sojourn Adventure Travel (Sojourn Adventure Travel Guerba Kenya) in one of our vehicles others by Dragoman in one of theirs. This allows us to run many more departures so you have more choice when you want to travel. You'll get the same itineraries, activities and accommodation on both Sojourn Adventure Travel and Dragoman departures.

### Flexible Itineraries:

We must emphasize that the routes, activities and places visited or described in these Trip Notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. We intend following the route detailed but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Or it may be because we find a better, more interesting route. While actually en route, unexpected hospitality, a local festival or a great place to chill out can determine our exact route and itinerary on any given trip.

Overnight stops and driving distances each day may vary to best suit the needs of the group.

### Group composition:

The minimum age for this trip is 20 years old and bookings for minors, even if accompanied by a parent, cannot be accepted.

This is a combination trip and the composition of your group may change in Nairobi.

An optional sunrise balloon ride in the Serengeti National Park or the Masai Mara is possible on this itinerary. Please see days 6-7 and 12-13 for full details of activity. As the balloon only holds 16 people, places are limited and must be booked in advance. Please enquire when booking your trip to book this optional activity.

# Group Size

Maximum of 22 travellers per group

# Accommodation

Hotel (6 nts), participatory camping (15 nts)

* Accommodation on this trip is mainly in two person dome tents. (Please refer to the Checklist to see if you require a mattress or sleeping bag.
* The type and variety of accommodation is determined by conditions on each of our routes. Each route is different – on some we use a mixture of campsites and wild camps; on others we also use hotels.
* In Africa it is not usually practical to camp when staying in towns and cities so we use hotel accommodation and eat out in local restaurants.
* There may be the occasional night stop, when staying in the grounds of a hotel, or at a campsite which may also have cabins available. In this case there may be a choice of camping or upgrading to a room (at additional cost).
* Campsites do have facilities but are usually not to the same standard as you would find in western countries. For example the bathroom facilities can be very basic (the toilets may be squat style hole in the ground). There is rarely toilet paper provided and shower facilities can be as simple as a hose pipe spurting out cold water.
* Wild camps have no facilities at all.
* Not all campsites are as basic as this description; it's just to make sure there are no surprises for you.

# Meals

While travelling with us you will experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. On our camping trips we often cook the region's specialties so you don't miss out. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Please check the 'meal inclusions' section of these notes for details of meals included.

Allow USD $130 for meals not included.

## Meal Inclusions

* All meals while camping
* When travelling on an Overland trip you have chosen a participation camping tour. This means that you will be helping your cook prepare meals for the group. You may also get the chance to help with the shopping!
* Your cook (east Africa only) will come up with meal ideas and quantities needed for large groups. Participating in the camp is usually done on a duty roster system with group of 5 or 6 people (depending on group size) having a different camp job each day. If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting.
* A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee.
* Lunch is almost always a sandwich with healthy salad and assorted fillings, sometime with fruit to follow. There may be a chance on occasion to buy your lunch.
* Dinner might be a BBQ, rice dish, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some African food such as ugali/pap and stew.
* One thing is sure; you definitely won't go hungry or lose weight on your safari! When you are not camping you will have the freedom to decide where, what and with whom you eat.

Please Note: On the more remote sections of your trip (for example: West Africa & North Africa), your food and diet will be dependent on what is available locally as well as tinned and dry ingredients.

# Transport

Overland truck, 4x4, ferry

Our trucks are purpose-built, self contained safari vehicles. Sojourn Adventure Travel’s fleet of vehicles varies depending on your group size, trip route and style.

Please Note: In South Africa some departures may use vans and luggage trailers subject to group size and vehicle availability

# Group Leader

On this trip you will be accompanied by 3 crew members - Group Leader, Cook and Driver.

Sojourn Adventure Travel runs some of our basic overland trips in conjunction with our partners Dragoman Overland (please refer to Trip Notes (Important Notes) to see if your trip is run in conjunction with Dragoman) and as such the demographics of the crew may vary on each departure - if you are travelling on an Sojourn Adventure Travel-operated departure your crew will usually be Kenyan; if you are travelling on a Dragoman-operated departure your crew will be Westerners with an African cook.

Your Group Leader’s role involves organizing the overall operation and smooth-running of the trip, managing trip logistics, coordinating the kitty (where applicable) and will form work groups to take turns cooking, cleaning and shopping. (From time to time your leader may drive as well)

Your Group Leader will work towards making the trip as safe and enjoyable as possible for all travellers. Sojourn Adventure Travel trips are built around the co–operation and participation of all the group members under the supervision of the group leader. The group leader will show the group how to set up and use the equipment.

While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting, especially when tracking and identifying game - we think it's the best of both worlds. Regardless of the country of origin, our Group Leaders are chosen for their leadership skills and are wonderful ambassadors for our company and our beautiful continent and its people.

Your Cook is responsible for the cooking and will help to coordinate the work groups for preparing the meals and washing up! Cooks are also responsible for organizing food shopping (they are always happy to have you on board) and most importantly, they make sure high hygiene standards are kept at all times while camping.

Your Driver’s main responsibility is to get you to your destination safely; they are also responsible for the maintenance of the vehicles along the way.

Everyone is expected participate and carry their share of the workload/duties, making camp chores easier. The duties Rota system is adopted where all members share in general camp duties – cooking, shopping, washing up etc.

If the whole group participates it will be quicker, easier, and more fun.

We endeavour to provide the services of an experienced leader and crew; however, situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

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# Joining Point

**Kivi Milimani Hotel**

Milimani Road

Nairobi

00100

Kenya

Phone: +254-20-2722358

Fax: +254-20-2724685

## Our Joining Point Hotel

The Kivi Milimani hotel is very simple but clean, comfortable and safe. All rooms have en suite with hot water. The hotel's surroundings are lovely with a pool area perfect for relaxing and groovy retro (but original!) 70's bar and restaurant.

## Joining Point Instructions

If you have pre-booked a transfer please look out for our representative holding an Sojourn Adventure Travel Guerba board with your name at the arrival terminal. If you fail to see our representative walk to the Europcar desk which is located diagonally across on the far right hand side of the arrival terminal and request your transfer.

If you are making your own way to the hotel, there is a taxi stand outside the airport building. A taxi should cost approximately USD20, and must be paid in Kenyan Shillings.

# Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems (and nor should you!) but if for any reason you are unable to commence your

group trip as scheduled, please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader.

If you have pre-booked an airport transfer (where available) and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing

customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions in the Trip

Notes. Should this occur, please apply to your travel agent for a refund of the transfer cost on your return.

No refund is available on missed transfers or portions of your trip owing to a different flight arrival or delayed flight arrival. Any

additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

# Emergency Contact

Please note that Sojourn Adventure Travel code share the operation of this trip with our experienced local partners Dragoman Overland. Your departure may be run by either Dragoman or Sojourn Adventure Travel. If you are travelling on an Sojourn Adventure Travel Guerba Kenya departure in the case of an on ground issue or problem Sojourn Adventure Travel's Kenya Office can be reached on +254-20-892126/7/8/9 during business hours and +254-733-523-813 (24 hours) This is where all all reservation/ transfer, late arrival or general enquiry issues should be directed. In case of genuine crisis or emergency (ONLY), you can reach our local operator on: +254-736-213-383. If you are travelling on a Dragoman operated departure in the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call Tel: +44 (0) 1728 862 222 This an answer phone. If outside UK office hours for non urgent questions, please leave a message. There is a number provided to call for a 24 hour manned mobile in case of genuine emergency. For all other enquiries please contact our Reservations department which is open 24 hours, 6 days per week. For further contact details please use the following page: [http://www.Sojourn Adventure Traveltravel.com/ourtrips/contact/](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/).

# Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, civil unrest or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route.

# Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

KENYA

Kenyan visas are required by most nationalities. Visas are available at point of entry to most nationalities. Some nationalities require visas to be purchased in advance - you MUST check before departure. If you plan to purchase your visas on arrival you will need new (post 2003), clean American dollars cash and the cost is around USD50. All nationalities should check with the Kenyan embassy in their country for more information.

TANZANIA

A visa is required by visitors of most nationalities including from the EU, USA and Australia. It is recommended you purchase your visa in advance. The cost is approximately US$75 depending on nationality. At the present time you do not require a multi entry visa to Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda due to an agreement between the three countries (ie if you exit Kenya to Tanzania you can re enter Kenya on the same visa). However if your trip visits Tanzania twice after a visit to a country other than those listed above, you may need to purchase two visas.

Border crossings on this trip:

* Exit Kenya - Namanga
* Enter Tanzania - Namanga

### Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels but can be quiet expensive. Self-service laundries are scarce in Africa. There are few laundry facilities outside of the large cities in Africa. We recommend you bring non-polluting, biodegradable laundry soap and hand wash while travelling in this region. You may wish to bring a piece of rope to tie between trees to act as a line and maybe even a few pegs. Our trucks carry tubs which can be used for cold water hand washing.

Ask your leader/guide who can point out the best places to do your laundry on the trip. They are usually at any 2 night stop to allow enough time for drying. Note that laundry is often done by hand possibly resulting in some damage to clothes. Leave your delicate evening wear at home.

# What to Take

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking you should pack as lightly as possible. On the vast majority of our trips you are expected to carry your own luggage and although you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage (max 30 minutes) we recommend keeping the weight under 10kg/22lb.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags or backpacks with wheels are convenient although we recommend your bag has carry straps. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for daytrips.

## WATER

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 liter plastic bottle takes 2 liters of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments. Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilized water stored in the purpose built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your Overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your hip pocket! In some Southern African countries, tap water is treated and good to drink so you can avoid the purchase of bottled water by refilling from the tap.

## LUGGAGE

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

## CAMPING EQUIPMENT

A sleeping bag (we recommend a 3–4 season). It can get very cold at night in winter months in desert and mountainous regions. If you are travelling during the hot season you may wish to also pack a sleep sheet so you will be comfortable no matter what the weather. Pillows are not provided so please bring a travel pillow along. While we provide a mattress for each client, some travellers find they like the extra comfort of a double layer and choose to bring their own mattress.

A simple plastic bag/waterproof toiletry bag (that can hang on a nail on the back of a door) will be useful to keep your clothes dry inside basic camp shower structures.

## CLOTHING

You will need to bring a mixture of lightweight clothing, some warm items for the evenings, and long shirts and pants for protection against mosquitoes in malarial areas. Clothes should be easy to wash and dry. Some people like to take jeans for evenings out but they can be tough to dry and should not be used for trekking. Avoid nylon and other synthetics, which can be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Ex-military or military style clothing and equipment is NOT recommended.

## BATTERIES/POWER

Most of our trips have access to power to recharge batteries for phones and cameras every couple of days. We always recommend that you carry an extra battery for your camera just in case. Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt “cigarette lighter” socket which may be used at the crew’s discretion, however, do bear in mind 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. We suggest you bring a mix of normal and rechargeable batteries and the appropriate recharging unit. Hotels and most campsites have electricity and charging of batteries is advised before checking the following day.

## VALUABLES

Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables, and use your hotel safe and the safe on the overland truck to store the bulk of your money, passport, and airline tickets. It’s also a good idea to purchase a money belt or pouch that is easily hidden.

We strongly recommend that you photocopy all important documents e.g. air tickets, passport, vaccination certificate, etc. and keep the copies separate from the originals. While not valid, a photocopy makes it very much easier to obtain replacements if necessary.

### Local Dress

When packing, be aware that dress standards can be conservative in some parts of Africa. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means covering shoulders and no short shorts in culturally sensitive areas (Mosques, small villages, etc). We recommend a mixture of loose, lightweight clothing and warm clothing for the evenings. Topless sun bathing is unacceptable through out the whole of Africa.

# Checklist

The following checklist is to be used as a guide only and is not intended to be a complete packing list. Any other items that you wish to pack are at your own discretion however you should attempt to comply with the suggested luggage weight limit.

* Passport
* Any Visas required for this trip
* Vaccination Certificates
* Travel insurance including insurer details, 24 hr emergency contact telephone number and policy number
* Flight Tickets
* Trip confirmation voucher
* Photocopies of important documents to be kept separately (we recommend you keep a copy at home as well)
* Money (travellers cheques/cash/credit cards)
* Your Kitty (where applicable)
* Money belt or pouch (to be worn under clothes)
* First aid kit
* Personal Medication/prescriptions
* Prescription glasses
* High protection sunscreen
* Lip balm
* Hat / wide brim hat
* Sunglasses
* Insect repellent
* Antihistamine / insect bite cream
* Antibacterial gel / wipes
* Eye mask
* Ear plugs
* Alarm clock
* Torch/flashlight
* Night clothes/sleepwear
* Travel sickness tablets
* Swimming costume
* Swimming towel
* Walking shoes with good grip
* Refillable water bottle
* Camera
* Film, memory cards
* Binoculars
* Daypack to carry your personal needs during the day
* Luggage lock (and keys)
* Smarter clothes for nights out
* Warm clothes for the cooler nights
* Comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable, quick dry)
* Waterproof jacket or small umbrella
* Toiletries
* Bath towel
* Travel plug / international adapter
* Mobile phone - check you have international roaming access
* Rubber flip flops for showers
* Camping Equipment
* 4 season sleeping bag (one that zips down all one side is useful for warm nights).
* Inner sleep sheet
* Travel pillow
* Thermarest/Personal mattress (optional)
* Please refer to Trip Notes (What to Take) for more details

# Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com/).

The best way to manage your money in Africa is a mixture of cash, an ATM card (best to have both Visa and MasterCard) and some traveller’s cheques.

Cash

Cash is easily changed at exchange bureaus and they generally offer the best rates. US$ large bills, in good condition, 2003 series onwards only, are more widely accepted; any old or damaged notes may not be accepted.

EUR or GBP are also widely accepted. The South African Rand can also be used widely in countries of Southern Africa.

When changing money, only use reputable authorized money exchange vendors and never anyone on the street. There are many instances of travellers being given counterfeit notes or being tricked when money is being counted out.

Travellers Cheques

You should also carry some traveller’s cheques for back up emergency cash.

While traveller’s cheques are undoubtedly the safest way to carry money, they are becoming harder to cash around the world and can often result in unfavorable exchange rates. It can also be tricky to reach banks during banking business hours which are often short in many African countries. Note: Receipts for traveller’s cheques are required by banks and money changers.

Visa and MasterCard

With ATMs being increasingly available in the many major towns and cities, credit or debit cards are a convenient way to access money. A charge is made for each international transaction - please check with your bank how much this fee will be.

Check with your bank before leaving home that your card can be used as a debit card in Africa. You may also want to notify your bank that you are visiting Africa as it is not unknown for banks to freeze cards which show sudden transactions in other countries.

Kitty

We recommend that you organise cash for your kitty before arriving at your destination. If this is not possible, money exchanges can be found at the Airport upon arrival, or close to the starting point hotel.

If you are on a multi country tour, your tour leader will be able to give you an approximate idea of how much money you may need for your stay in each country.

## Departure Tax

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

# Keeping in Touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend email. Email cafes are generally available throughout the regions we visit, although it is possible you may be without email contact for several days on some itineraries. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our emergency contact details. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

# Issues On Your 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/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case please ask the leader if you may speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback which we ask you to complete within 30 days of 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.

# Health

All Sojourn Adventure Travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If in the opinion of our group leader or company representative any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Sojourn Adventure Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations and anti-malarial requirements before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (including a spare pair of glasses) as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. For legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drugs including headache tablets and antibiotics. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please note that the Tour Operator, Sojourn Adventure Travel, reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group leader they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Yellow Fever

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries in Africa. You may be needed 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 is also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

Please check with your doctor before leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you will be visiting.

Drinking water:

As a rule we recommend you do not drink tap water, even in hotels, as it contains much higher levels of different minerals than the water you may have at home. For local people this is not a problem as their bodies are used to this and can cope, but for travellers from other continents, drinking the tap water can result in illness. Generally this is not serious, an upset stomach being the only symptom, but it is enough to spoil a day or two of your holiday. Bottled water is widely available but we recommend that you fill up from your vehicle (we treat our water) if you are on a camping trip. Water consumption should be about 3 liters a day (this should be easy for most!)

First Aid:

The leader will be carrying a basic First Aid kit, but can not administer any drugs.

Re-hydration salts, motion sickness tablets, and diarrhoea blockers are available from many pharmacies.

Please inform the leader of any specific medical requirements on day 1 at your group meting.

# Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. Please refer to our website's Safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips: [www.Sojourn Adventure Traveltravel.com/safety](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/safety).

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Sojourn Adventure Travel itinerary, and Sojourn Adventure Travel makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Sojourn Adventure Travel's operational safety policy at [www.Sojourn Adventure Traveltravel.com/safety](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/safety).

We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it is being implemented in the field.

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in Africa differ from those in the western world and not all hotels have a fire exit or smoke detectors. You may stay at hotels with unfenced pools and no life guard on duty. Some hotel balconies do not meet UK standards in terms of the width of the balcony fence being narrower than 10cm.

Pick-pocketing is very common, especially in larger cities. We strongly recommend that you do not carry large amounts of cash and use a secure neck wallet or a money belt.

Travellers must exercise common sense and caution at all times. You should stick to set travel arrangements and avoid unknown areas. Always keep a photocopy of your passport, airline tickets and a record of your travellers' cheques and credit card numbers separate from where you keep the originals. You should avoid carrying large amounts of cash, or walking by yourself at night.

While staying in National Parks it is important that you listen to any advice given by your tour leader and the park rangers regarding responsible and safe behavior.

On some trip you will at times stay in unfenced campsites within National Parks. While this is a fantastic experience, there are a few safety rules to follow

# Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact telephone number rather than the Bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Please note that due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

Age restrictions apply to this trip: minimum age 20

# Single Travellers

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. Please note some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis - where applicable this will be specified in our Trip Notes. On a selection of our Comfort and Original style trips you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you will have your own room (where available). Please refer to the important notes if this trip has a single supplement and any accommodation on the trip that the single supplement will not apply to. Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour, pre- and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

# Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please refer to our website at [www.Sojourn Adventure Traveltravel.com/responsibletravel](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/responsibletravel/) for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

# A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for Sojourn Adventure Travellers. Sojourn Adventure Travel's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

**Sojourn Adventure Travel Express**

Express is our email newsletter that is full of interesting and exciting regular features, travel tips, competitions, great giveaways, reviews, recipes, travellers' stories and money saving specials! Plus we give you the chance to WIN an Sojourn Adventure Travel trip every week - subscribe for free at [http://www.Sojourn Adventure Traveltravel.com/express/](http://www.intrepidtravel.com/express/)