



# Andes & Amazon between Cartagena and Quito (DZCQ)

**Cartagena to Quito 19 days.**

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- Trip Type: Traveller Basic
- Route: Cartagena to Quito
- Length: 19 days
- Transport: Overland vehicle
- Accommodation: Mainly hotels, with some camping and homestays.

## Trip Type: Traveller Basic

These tours are all about exploring the world with like minded people and getting under the skin of a country. Dip your toe beneath the usual tourist surface and discover the real essence of the region, people and culture - enjoy family homestays, interact with locals and experience a traditional way of life. These basic tours allow you the freedom to explore without breaking the bank. Plenty of free time to explore independently. Optional activities to suit your budget. Freedom to choose your own meals. Simple family run hotels. A colourful variety of transportation. Fully trained and experienced leaders.

## Countries Visited

### Colombia



For most people Colombia is an unknown, the forgotten part of South America. This makes it a fantastic place to explore. Colombia's geography is one of the most diverse in South America; it really is a kaleidoscope of colour, life and culture. It has an undeserved reputation due to some internal instability but the warmth of its people mean that it is worth the challenge to see such a fascinating country. Colombia is on the beautiful Caribbean coast and the home to some of the best coffee in the world.

The culture of fiesta is a central to the national psyche with the country, playing host to some of the most fabulous carnivals in the world. The Carnival of the Barranquilla lasts four days, celebrating the tradition of Colombian dance and music.

With many festivals and parties, the opportunity to relax might sound out the question, but along with the lively ongoing parties, cooking is an important icon of Colombia. Fritanga is a set of dishes

enjoyed throughout the country. A barbecue style meat full of flavours and aromas that will leave your mouth watering is accompanied by small potatoes and tortilla style bread. If meat isn't your preference, then the plantain of many vegetables and pulses is a beautiful choice of a meal.

Colombia's glorious sands and upbeat lifestyle is there to be cherished, and there is no doubt it will leave a special mark on your travels.

## **Ecuador**



Ecuador is a small country with a diverse landscape including highlands, volcanoes, numerous national parks, stunning Pacific beaches, and the enthralling Galapagos Islands.

The Amazon rainforest has the greatest bio diversity on the planet. And it's possible to take trips deep into the rainforest to see jaguars, monkeys, iguanas and uncountable numbers of insects. Off the coast is the Galapagos Islands, arguably one of the world's most prestigious wildlife destinations.

If heart racing activities is more your thing then Ecuador has plenty to offer. Surf the waves, trek through the foothills or step out of the ordinary and try some mountaineering.

Aside from the outdoors and wildlife there are lots of great colonial towns or cities. And Quito has a more relaxed atmosphere than most Latin American capitals. Lying in a hollow at the base of Volcano Pichincha, the old city is a maze of steep cobbled streets with finely carved overhanging balconies. Its mixture of colonial and new architecture together with its European and Indian cultures make this a fascinating city.

As you explore, the discovery of food will be found and the choice of a traditional meal is hard to turn down. Ecuadorian cuisine is again diverse, and different regions boast different meals. Meat, potatoes and rice are popular in the mountain regions, where as the coastal areas boast fantastic meals containing marinades of fish onions and delectable seasonings.

There are many types of music in Ecuador and the most popular is the rhythm filled, dancing type which can get you up on your feet and joining in with the sounds of panpipes, bamboo flutes, drums and charangos.

With so much to offer and explore - Ecuador is the place to be if you want to try something new every day.

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# Daily Itinerary

## Day 1: Cartagena

**Border Information:** If joining in Cartagena, enter Colombia at Cartagena airport.

Today there will be a trip meeting at 18:00 hrs. There are no activities planned for today. We stay in a comfortable hotel just outside the historical centre.

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

Hotel for the night: Villa Colonial

Villa Colonial

Calle de Maravillas (C10)

No 30-60, Getsemani

Cartagena

Tel: 664 4996 / 664 5421

### Activity

2 nights in vibrant Cartagena

### Approximate Cost

Included in Kitty

## Cartagena



Cartagena is one of the most historic cities in South America. It is legendary both for its history and beauty and tends to be a favourite of all travellers who visit it. Having been the centre of many battles, the city is heavily fortified and huge defensive walls surround its narrow cobbled streets and colonial buildings. The city is made up of various districts, the new town with its high rise hotels, apartments and nightspots; and the older colonial parts of the city. The old city is the main attraction particularly the inner walled town, packed with churches, monasteries, plazas and mansions. Wandering through the streets you get a real feel of the sense of history of this amazing city. The waters of the Caribbean surround Cartagena on three sides. It is possible to take a day trip by boat to the idyllic coral islands of Rosario. This archipeligo of small coral islands is surrounded by the largest and most magnificent coral reefs on the Colombian Caribbean coastline. Marine life is abundant and the whole area is protected under National Park status.

## Day 2: Cartagena

A full day in the beautiful city of Cartagena. In the morning we will have a walking tour of the city and then the rest of the time is free for you to enjoy the many optional activities on offer or maybe relax on the beach.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Go diving or snorkelling around Islas Del Rosario	
Explore Cartagena on a guided walking tour	Included in Kitty
Visit the historic Castillo San Felipe	USD 20

## Day 3: Mompós

Today is a drive day as we head to Mompós. We take a ferry across Rio Magdalena and stay 2 nights in a lovely hotel.

## Day 4: Mompós

Free day to explore this colonial town where Colombian independence was first achieved. Wander the streets and soak up the atmosphere of the architecture and maybe visit the ancient cemetery.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Take a boat trip on Rio Magdalena to spot wildlife	

## Day 5: Lorica

Today is an early morning start to head back across Rio Magdalena. Overnight in Lorica in a simple hotel.

## Day 6 to 7: Medellin

A full day's drive takes us to Colombia's second city, Medellin, where we have a guided city tour. We stay 2 nights in dorm accommodation in a centrally located hostel allowing you to enjoy the vibrant nightlife.

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 nights to explore the vibrant city of Medellin	Included in Kitty
Guided city tour of Medellin	Included in Kitty

## Medellin

The rapid transformation that has taken place in Colombia's second largest city is one like no other. Having spent the 1980's and 90's with international reputation of one of the world's most dangerous cities, Medellín has certainly turned itself around.

With the infamous *Pablo Escobar* and the *Medellín Cartel* holding the largest drug-trafficking base here for decades, the city suffered a seriously damaged reputation amongst international travellers and has only recently become a popular destination amongst backpackers. Despite the damage of the city's past, the Paisas (as people from Medellin are known) have strived to change the it's reputation. Almost nothing of those former days can be seen in the character of the city today and visitors can comfortably enjoy the beautiful architecture, excellent facilities and all round well developed city!

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

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

Why not visit the Museo de Antioquia which combines pre-colombian exhibits with displays by several of Colombia's best known artists including a collection by the famous Fernando Botero and head to the 'Jardines Montesacro' to see where the infamous Pablo Escobar is buried.

A great side trip from Medellin is Santa Fe de Antioquia. Set in a lush low lying hot and sultry valley on the banks of the Rio Cauca, Santa Fe de Antioquia is the oldest settlement in the region. Founded in 1541 it served as the capital of the department until 1826 when the state capital moved to Medellin. The town has kept much of its Colonial charm, the narrow streets and whitewashed colonial style buildings many of which with large central courtyard in which to relax away from the midday heat. The central plaza is dominated by the principal church of the town. The plaza is also home to a daily market where vendors sell various varieties of Tamarind product that grow locally, take a tour of the stalls and try a few samples of this local delicacy. There are several other churches and important colonial buildings to visit but the greatest pleasure is simply exploring the narrow streets infused with history of the region.

## Day 8 to 9: Guatapé

A short drive takes us to the small town of Guatapé which is beautifully located aside a lake in rolling countryside. The town is famous for the towering El Peñón de Guatapé which will visit before enjoying 2 days in dorm accommodation by the lake for various activities in the local area.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Cilmb the 644 steps to the top of El Peñón de Guatapé for spectacular views.	Included in Kitty
Rent mountain bikes to explore Guatapé	USD 3
Hire kayaks to explore the lakes around Guatapé	USD 6

## Guatapé



Guatapé is a picturesque town surrounded by the Embalse del Peñol, an artificial lake built in the early 1960's and wonderful countryside yet with a colourful and historic centre. On weekends, the waterfront malecón (boardwalk) fills up with local vendors selling beautiful Paisa art, food, and souvenirs. The area is great for activities but one of the main reasons to visit is to see El Peñón de Guatapé, a 650 foot tall granite monolith that divides the countryside and offers amazing views from the top. El Peñón is very similar to Pão de Açúcar (Sugarloaf Mountain) in Rio de Janeiro and has 644 steps which you need to climb to get to the top, but it is well worth it.

## Day 10 to 12: Manizales

We head to Manizales where we stay for 3 nights on a coffee plantation, camping in the grounds of a traditional finca. During the next few days we will enjoy a night of music and dancing and a coffee plantation tour. Will will also visit a local childrens's charity which we support.

### Activity

### Approximate Cost

Enjoy a night of traditional live Colombian music

Included in Kitty

Explore a working Colombian coffee plantation

Included in Kitty

Visit to the Sagrada Familia project

Included in Kitty

## Manizales



Manizales is a friendly city right in the heart of Colombia's coffee region with a comfortable climate and plenty to see and do. Although still opening up to international tourism, Manizales has a lot to offer the visitor in the way of outdoor activities and ecological attractions. The town itself is a relaxed and friendly place centred around the magnificent cathedral with attractions such as the botanical gardens, thermal springs and eco-parks all easily access able from the centre of town. Venturing a little further, you will find coffee haciendas and plantations in the surrounding area as well as some beautiful country landscapes perfect for trekking or just taking a relaxing break in the great outdoors.

In Manizales we stay on one of these working coffee plantations covering approximately 480 acres which provides people from around the world a taste of the finest Manizales fair trade coffee. The

plantation employs around 100 people all throughout the year and about 400 people during the peak picking season.

## **Day 13 to 14: Cali**

Today we drive to Cali, Colombia's most lively city. There may be the chance to head out for a tour of the city in a traditional disco chiva bus or why not try some salsa classes. We stay 2 nights in dorm accommodation in a hostel.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Explore Cali in the evening on a chiva bus	USD 10
Learn to Salsa like a local	USD 20

### **Cali**

Cali is a big and bustling city with a warm climate and pleasant atmosphere. Although there are comparatively few sights of special interest, just wandering through the mix-match architecture and relaxing in the sociable parks and plazas is a nice way to spend some time.

The city has made its reputation in traveller circles thanks to its nightlife and social scene and as such is increasingly popular. The Salsa capital of Colombia provides great opportunities to test out those dance moves and hit the fashionable bars and restaurants with the locals. For party seekers and those who enjoy the faster paced city life, Cali shouldn't disappoint. Avenida Sexta, is Cali's party street. With rows of bars, clubs, restaurants and cafes, this is where to head for a night on the town.

For others, the old neighbourhood of San Antonio is a lovely spot with arty, Bohemian cafes, shops and restaurants lining picturesque Colonial streets.

Alternatively why not head to Las Tres Cruces which is a great point from which to catch the best views over Cali. It's quite a hike up there but it's a peaceful spot and a nice break from the rush of the city.

## **Day 15: Popayan**

A short drive brings us to the beautiful town of Popayan where we stay for the night in dorm accommodation in a hostel. The afternoon is free to explore the town.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Overnight in the beautiful old town of Popayan	Included in Kitty

### **Popayan**





Nicknamed the White City, Popayan is a beautiful colonial town of white-washed houses and grand churches encircled by rolling green hills. Although the capital of the Cauca region and the former capital of Southern Colombia, Popayan somehow retains its relaxed small town feel. The friendly locals can often be found sipping coffee in one of the city's excellent cafes or relaxing in one of the shaded parks, catching up with friends and watching the world go by.

The cool and sunny climate of the lower Andes makes Popayan a very comfortable place to stay and as the main university town of the region, there's a young, sociable feel to the city. The leafy parks marked with elegant church towers provide a sociable and relaxed location where you could easily spend an afternoon, while an evening's entertainment could be chatting with the friendly locals in a classy cafe bar or salsa club.

Whilst staying in the town there are some lovely walks offering excellent views of the Historic Centre, several worthwhile museums and galleries and many good cafes, bars and restaurants to make the most of.

Another highlight of this area is the Silvia Indigenous Market. This beautiful Andean market town is absolutely bursting with colour and energy when the market opens on Tuesdays. Guambiano Indians from the surrounding communities make their way into Silvia to sell their produce and socialise with friends from neighbouring towns.

## **Day 16: Ipiales**

Today is a drive day to the border town of Ipiales. We stay the night in a local hotel.

### **Ipiales**



Ipiales is the border town on the Colombian side of the Colombia/Ecuador frontier. The town has some pleasant plazas squares and the sight of locals using a horse and cart gives it a quaint, countryside feel.

The star attraction of Ipiales, 7 km outside of town, is the famous *Santuario de Las Lajas*, the site of many a miracle and apparition over the years. Set amid breath-taking scenery, El Santuario is a spectacular gothic-style church straddling a dramatic gorge with rushing river below. It is one of the most impressive churches on the continent and its fantastic setting and quirky museum make it a highlight of any visit to Colombia.

## Day 17: Ipiales, Otavalo

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

Early morning start to visit Santuario de las Lajas outside of Ipiales. We then head south and cross the border into Ecuador. Tonight we camp just outside the market town of Otavalo.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the jaw dropping Santuario La Lajas on the outskirts of Ipiales	Included in Kitty

### Otavalo

Otavalo is a small town known for it's market, nestled in beautiful surroundings a short distance north of Quito. Many of the local indigenous communities in this area still wear their traditional clothing made from intricately woven and decorated fabrics, and the men tend to wear their hair in long ponytails. Infact, the Otovalan's weaving skills are quite renowned and they are rightly famous for their textiles, so rugs, wall hangings and knitwear are all well worth buying here. There are numerous other activities to do in the surrounding area, including horse-riding and trekking into the surrounding hillsides. If you have time, it may also be possible to visit the hot springs at Papallacta.

## Day 18: Quito

Drive to the capital, stopping en route at the Equator for some must have photos. We stay the night in a local friendly hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit the equator at Mitad del Mundo	Included in Kitty

### Quito



Quito has a more relaxed atmosphere than most Latin American capitals. Lying in a hollow at the base of Volcano Pichincha, the old town is a maze of steep, cobbled streets with intricately carved, overhanging balconies. Its mixture of old colonial and modern architecture and the mix of European and Indian cultures make this a really fascinating city. Wandering around, you will come across stalls displaying Indian textiles, colourful wall hangings, jewellery, pottery and woodcarvings - and the old town has some of the best examples of Spanish colonial art and churches anywhere in the Americas. With so much to see and do, it is well worth extending your time in South America to ensure you experience all that Quito has to offer.

## Day 19: Quito

**Border information:** If you are finishing in Quito, exit Ecuador at Quito airport.

The trip ends this morning. No accommodation is provided for tonight.

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## Important Notes

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

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

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

We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of

reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often without western infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

### **Multiple departures and amended itineraries**

South America is very busy for travel at certain times of the year, particularly in connection with the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro but also at other times of the year. Please note that there may be more than just one truck on your specific departure date, and in addition you may from time to time meet up with other groups at some locations to partake in activities jointly with other groups. Trucks on multiple departures will operate on slightly different itineraries and your day to day itinerary may vary from your trip notes. You will of course still visit all the highlights listed, and the presence of other trucks can make for a great atmosphere. If you should have any concerns then please contact your sales agent.

## **Physical Preparation**

### **South America - general**

South America is diverse continent from high altitude, to the steamy Amazon, to baking deserts. You should therefore be prepared for the full gambit of climates. There will be time for hiking and other activities such as horse riding and you will need to be reasonably fit. Overland travel can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions can be challenging to some. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. By and large the South America trips have a good range of hotel accommodation mixed up with camping so that life is not too rough.

## **Altitude**

### **Altitude Warning - this trip goes above 2800m**

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE).

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

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

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

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

## Visa Information

Many countries that we visit on our travels will require visas to enter. Some are best obtained before you leave home, and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please read the information very carefully to make sure everything is clear and you aware of what you need to do. Please also be aware that rules surrounding visas do change, often suddenly, and without prior warning. This is why it is important that you also double-check the information we provide for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance, you may wish to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy or consulate. If you require any supporting documentation for your visa applications, please complete the 'Visa Support Form' available at this link:

<http://dragoman-visa-support.thevisamachine.com/visa-support>.

However, for trips that involve multiple visas, our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost, it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to <https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com> and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application, thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. The visa service is not always available for all nationalities or non-UK residents, depending on the requirements of each specific embassy. The Visa Machine will advise you what they can and cannot provide for your specific circumstances.

As you will often need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure.

Most countries require that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after your entry into the country.

### Colombia

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

Please note that citizens of Canada will need to pay a reciprocity fee of COP160,000 (approximately

USD70) upon entry to Colombia.

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

## **Ecuador**

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

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

## **Flying to Central or South America via the USA**

If your flight to Central or South America goes via the USA, then you **must** obtain an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) before travel.

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

## **Personal Spending**

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

This will cover expenses such as your drinks, meals when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

## **What else you need to know**

### **Currencies & Cash**

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash and ATM cards is best. Most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

More and more people are choosing to travel with cash passports such as TravelEx cards (you can visit [www.cashpassport.com](http://www.cashpassport.com) for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change in South America with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. However due to a recent counterfeit scam central banks in several South American countries (Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile) have temporarily banned the circulation of \$100 notes bearing a series 2001 production date and a serial number starting with the letters CB or CF and ending in B2. The serial number is printed in green on the emblem. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from 2003 or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. If you are taking traveller's cheques, we recommend that you should only take those issued by American Express. Please note that Thomas Cook traveller's cheques may be used in some places, but are becoming more difficult to change. Brazil can be difficult for changing forex, it's handy to have a cash card as backup. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over \$50. Kitty contributions should be at least half in cash and be in the same denominations and currencies as suggested above. Any proportion of kitty contributions paid in travellers cheques should be increased to cover the commission charge incurred in exchanging them.

## **Overland Lifestyle and Trip Suitability**

Dragoman has 32 years experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose built iconic expedition vehicles on an off the beaten track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up close. Your journey will be overland across vast distances so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity. On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores etc.

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

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

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## **Who Travels with Dragoman?**

Our groups are made up of people from around the world and are always an interesting mix of

nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18 (or 7 on our Family Trips), as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

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## **Group Size**

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location; however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi, for example, will visit Zanzibar at the same time as group starting a trip in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

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

## **Our Crew and Guides**

Our crew are passionate about travel and are always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all the overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK, and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips, we usually have 2 western crew. The crew are responsible for the group and the overall organisation of the trip. On our trips in East and Southern Africa we either have 2 western crew or 1 western crew and 1 local driver. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and for them to offer suggestions of things to do and see.

On trips south of Nairobi in East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes.

In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or the entire journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

Dragoman endeavours to provide the services of experienced crew, however, due to the seasonality of travel, situations may arise where your crew is new to a particular region or training other crew. Your crew have a duty of care to all members of the group and therefore they have the authority to ask you to leave the trip if you require serious medical assistance, you are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

## **Accommodation on Tour**



Dragoman's overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying hotels, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip and whilst our crew will do their best to accommodate couples travelling together in twin rooms, all our travellers should expect to stay in multi-share accommodation from time to time.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary depending on what options are available in each of the areas we travel through and the nightstops on our routes; The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses.

Equally, the type and standard of hotel accommodation will vary greatly depending on what is available in the area; hotels can vary from very basic multi-share rooms without electricity or running water all the way to high standard hotels with good facilities!

One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp; this allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. Occasionally on some of our trips we are able to stay in villages or local homestays, this allows us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

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## **The Kitty**

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

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

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

The kitty system is very unique to overlanding and we believe it allows us to have flexibility and transparency on our trips. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally. It also helps to keep the costs competitive and save on administration costs so that we can pass the saving on to you. Dragoman makes NO PROFIT on kitties, as they are the group's fund. We constantly update the kitty prices on our website and the kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Prices can go up or down with no notice, and exchange rate fluctuations will affect costs. If there is money left in the kitty at the end of your trip, then this is divided between the group and you receive a refund.

Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

The kitty is payable in full at the start of your trip (in installments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips) or via our new scheme where you can pay in advance 3-4 weeks before the start of your trip (please see [http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty\\_doc\\_v1.pdf](http://www.dragoman.com/files/Kitty_doc_v1.pdf) for more details - this

letter will also be sent in your booking confirmation upon booking a trip).

If you are bringing the kitty out in cash, please try to pay in the specified currency on the website (US Dollars, or Euros in West Africa). Your tour leader will be able to accept some of the kitty in local currency if needed, and they will let you know the exchange rate locally - in most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines, using either a cash passport or a credit/debit card. Please bear in mind that most cards have a maximum withdrawal amount per day, local ATMs may run out of cash, and your bank could block the card despite you warning them of your travel plans, so it could be impractical to try to get the entire kitty out from an ATM.

Traveller's cheques are becoming increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders are experiencing frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept TCs on our trips. As an alternative, in most destinations you can withdraw local currencies from ATM machines and use either a cash passport or a debit card.

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## **Meals and Group Participation**

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

An example of a typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, fruit and cereal as well as tea and coffee. When time allows it will also be possible to serve something hot such as eggs or pancakes. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto or pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

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## **Dietary Requirements**

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

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## Itineraries

Our itineraries are our intention but travel in more remote areas of the world is unpredictable – borders can close, there can be extreme adverse weather, strikes or maybe mechanical issues that affect the running of your trip but equally due to the nature of our trips we can often spontaneously include a local festival or event into the itinerary. This being said, the safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a priority for Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

- The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice
- Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers
- Leaders reports from off the road
- Local contacts we have built up over 33 years of experience

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## British Foreign Office Travel Advice and Warnings

Dragoman follows the British Foreign Office Travel advise when deciding where and where we are unable to travel. We will base our decisions on itineraries and alterations to published routes based on their advise rather than the advise of other governments.

However we recommend you check the latest travel advisories from your own government for the country you are travelling to before you book and prior to departure. Check to ensure that no travel warning is invalidating your travel insurance Here are a few useful addresses:

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

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

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

United States. [http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html)

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

Dragoman has also teamed up with the UK Foreign and commonwealth office (FCO) in their 'Know before you go campaign' [www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo](http://www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo). This website offers straightforward travel advice, top tips, and up to date country information to help you plan a safe trip. We recommend you check this out before you travel. We will advise you of any significant changes in advice before travel or whilst you are overseas.

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## Health

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope

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

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

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## **Altitude**

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

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## **Yellow Fever**

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

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

## **Malaria & other mosquito-borne diseases**

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your GP / travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue Fever and Chikungunya are continuing to spread and becoming a bigger problem around the world. Bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available.

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists, can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping outside, use a mosquito net. Use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permethrin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights and in hotel rooms

but cannot be used inside the tents.

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## **Vaccinations**

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel.

We also recommend you check out any specific health advice for the country you are travelling to either via your GP or the following websites: [www.nathnac.org](http://www.nathnac.org) or [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

In the UK, we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up-to-date vaccination and health information. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

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## **Safety & Security**

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

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

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

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## **Transport Safety**

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

- Check the location of the fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- Follow any safety instructions provided by the crew/driver
- Our vehicles are fitted with roof seats which can be used in certain conditions, such as when driving at low speeds, off main tarmac roads, etc. They can only be used with the express permission of the crew and you must never sit in them without seat belts.

## **Road Safety**

- Traffic in some countries travels on the opposite side of the road to what you may be used to, so ensure you look both ways before crossing the road.
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings.
- Crash Helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes overseas - we do not recommend you hire these vehicles.

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

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

## **Fire Safety - Campsites**

- Ensure you know where the nearest source of water or fire extinguisher is.
- Know how to raise the alarm.

- Extinguish all camping fires fully before retiring to bed.
- Observe any regulations regarding fires and bushfires in dry conditions.
- Proceed to an assembly point away from the tented accommodation/affected campsite.

### **Other Campsite Safety & Security**

- Familiarise yourself with the campsite and any known hazards.
- Group tents around our vehicle wherever possible.
- No open flames, smoking or flammable liquids in or near the tents.
- Ensure cooking area is well away from the tents.
- Ensure all water for cooking and drinking is purified first.
- Ensure any soil toilets are min 50m away from tents & cooking area.
- All food waste should be burnt or buried – min 100m away from the site.
- Ensure local advice is followed concerning any wildlife.
- Keep valuables locked in the vehicle.
- Be aware of any local security issues that might be important.
- Do not set out tents close to perimeter fences which may be a security risk.
- Be aware of the security arrangements and local guards for campsite and if in doubt ask them where and where not to pitch tents.
- If in doubt please inform the crew of any safety issues with campsite.
- When wild camping, ensure that you do not wander away from the camp alone. If you do leave camp ensure that you have notified the leader or other members of the group. Food Safety We prepare many meals during the tour and our crew are hygiene trained; however, some general tips can help in order to avoid the possibility of stomach upsets;
  - Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked.
  - Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold.
  - Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables, (notably those you can peel or shell yourself).
  - In many countries you should only drink bottled water or purified water and ensure any seal is intact when purchasing bottles.
  - On the Dragoman vehicles we have a tank of drinking water that is kept purified by the crew.
  - Avoid ice in drinks as this can cause upset stomachs in hot climates.
  - Make sure you wash your hands in antibacterial product when preparing and/or eating food.

- Restaurant Food: This is grassroots travel and many of the restaurants that you will eat in, either as a group or as individuals, will NOT have the same standards of food hygiene as we have in the Western World. Unfortunately this is part of travel in these regions. Therefore think carefully about what food you order and be aware of the risks.

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## **Personal Safety**

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise you to leave any valuable jewellery, watches, etc, at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice. We have come up with a few pointers that we recommend you follow:

- Follow the crew's specific safety advice in each destination.
- Be aware, stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable.
- Avoid carrying too much money.
- Use of a money belt / neck wallet or is encouraged at all times while travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items.
- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas.
- Ensure your valuables are left secure when you go out.
- In any hostels/hotels, place all valuables in a safety deposit box, where available or with reception or locked away by the crew.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery/watches etc. away with you.
- If possible avoid walking around on your own; it is always safer to explore with others.

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## **Activity Safety & Optional Activities**

You will have the opportunity to take part in many exciting activities and excursions, some of which are included, whilst others are optional (i.e. hiking The Inca Trail, trekking to see Mountain Gorillas). These require a certain level of fitness, so it's important that you read through the trip notes thoroughly and make your own conclusions as to whether you feel that you are fit and healthy enough to enjoy this trip to its fullest.

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

Optional activities mentioned by Dragoman are not included in the trip price or kitty and do not form part of your contract with Dragoman. As such you accept that any assistance given by Dragoman



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

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

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

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## **Included Activities**

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

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## **Optional Activities**

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only. Prices are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. Optional activities are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Dragoman nor included in the price of this trip. If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

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## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

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

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel and make sure it covers any activity you intend to undertake. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries - for

example, that they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. On activities or side trips that are not recommended by us please ensure you are happy with the safety of the activity before participating.

Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas.

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## **Our Liability Insurance**

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

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## **Emergency Contact**

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in these trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

**Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564**

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## **Luggage & Kit List**

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances, you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker, so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use. Please be aware that due to the constant dust and vibrations your luggage bag will be subject to extreme wear and tear.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. 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 a maximum of 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips, Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will

vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats\*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to- there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember that even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**IMPORTANT:** Ground mats are provided on all of our overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town. This includes our Family trips between Nairobi and Cape Town.

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

- Sleeping bag\* - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months.
- Sleeping bag liner\* (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Ground mat or compressed foam\*
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)

- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper - this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp
- Extra batteries for your camera / phone etc as there are only limited opportunities to recharge. For a comprehensive kit list take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel has created. You will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists [www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list)

\*For trips with camping nights

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## **Personal Medical Kit**

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

[www.nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit)

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## **Passports**

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or

"visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

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## **Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Connecting Flights**

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand that you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer, as not all hotels offer this service.

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## **Continuing Your Trip**

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

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## **Contingency Emergency Fund**

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you will be required to contribute the additional costs involved and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

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## **Responsible Tourism**

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit. You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page.

[www.dragoman.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/our-commitment](http://www.dragoman.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/our-commitment)

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## **Water**

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilised water stored in the purpose-built storage tank 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 pocket!

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## **Electrical Equipment**

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket, so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

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

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## **A Few Rules**

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs is not only against the law, 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 Dragoman groups. It is one of our core values to treat all people we encounter with respect which of course includes all the local people who make our destinations so special. The exploitation of prostitutes or children 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 or abuse children. Equally Dragoman will not tolerate any violence or threat of violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff.

Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession, if they use prostitutes, abuse children, use violence or threaten violence, without a refund of the trip price.

We expect you to obey all the laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs (as above), firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any customer found contravening such laws or customs will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

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## **Issues on the Trip**

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

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

[customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk](mailto:customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk).

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

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## **Tipping**

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it.

On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD \$1 to USD \$4 per person per day, but check with your crew for an appropriate amount.

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## **Our Community**

At any time before or after you book, you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and to catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories and you can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in - it's free and easy. We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other

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## Feedback

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

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

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 06/03/2015