

## Golden Ring of Russia - ARGR

8 days: Moscow to St Petersburg

### What's Included

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- Moscow's Kremlin and Armoury, The Golden Ring, Catherine's Palace and Gardens, St Petersburg Walking tour

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2013 - December 31st, 2013

### Itinerary

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### What's Included

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Moscow's Kremlin and Armoury, The Golden Ring, Catherine's Palace and Gardens, St Petersburg Walking tour

### Highlights

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Admiring St Basil's Cathedral and Red Square, gawking at the Kremlin Armoury treasures, visiting Golden Ring churches and monasteries, relaxing at Lake Nero, exploring St Petersburg's back streets and ornate buildings

## Dossier Disclaimer

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## Itinerary Disclaimer

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While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## Important Notes

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1. You will require a Letter of Invitation for Russia for this trip in order to get your Russian visa. You must complete the visa information form which will be automatically sent to you via email upon time of booking. Please, note that name in your application should be exactly the same as on your passport. If you have middle name - it should be reflected in the application.
2. Visiting the embassy remember, that Russia is a bureaucratic country. Bring with you a lot of patience and a huge sense of humour, then your experience will be greatly enhanced.
3. On arrival in Russia you will receive a double immigration card, you must fill out both parts and one is taken away upon entry, the other must remain with your passport at all times and you must have it on leaving Russia to hand to the relevant authorities.
4. Booking Theatre tickets in advance: To avoid disappointment we recommend that you book any theatre performances that you wish to attend in Moscow or St Petersburg in advance. Please consider carefully which performances you are going to want attend and make sure that the dates correspond to your trip. Here are some useful internet sites to check for what will be on (ballet, opera, exhibitions, etc) in Moscow and St Petersburg when you are there. In particular we recommend you see what's playing at the Bolshoi and Mariinsky, as it may be difficult to get tickets when you are there especially during White Nights in St Petersburg. The most useful sites to check in English are [www.mariinsky.ru](http://www.mariinsky.ru), [www.bolshoi.ru](http://www.bolshoi.ru) and [www.ticketsofrussia.com](http://www.ticketsofrussia.com).
5. Due to the restrictions on changing money in Russia, only notes/bills printed after 1996 and in good condition are accepted for exchange. You might get much lesser rate if notes are not new or look "worn".

## Group Leader Description

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This G Adventures group trip is accompanied by one of our 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. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. 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 - we think it's the best of both worlds.

## Group Size Notes

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Max 15, Avg 10

## Meals Included

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4 Breakfasts, 1 dinner

## Meals

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Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. 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. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. The above information applies to G Adventures group trips. For Independent trips please check the itinerary for details of meals included. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

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## Meal Budget

Allow USD160-250 for meals not included

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## Transport

Private bus, public bus, train, metro

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## About our Transportation

Overnight train Yaroslavl to St Petersburg on day 5 is a standard 2nd Class Kupe Soft sleeper: 4 berth compartments that have lockable doors. There is enough space for standard sized bag/backpack under bottom bunks and overhead locker up top. Bed lined is provided on all trains. Each carriage has two toilets and one hot water boiler. There are two train attendants in each carriage - they take care of passengers and clean the facilities. Train has a dining car.

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## Local Flights

All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

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## Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

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## Single Supplements

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## Accommodation

Hotels (5 nts), guesthouse (1 nt), sleeper train (1 nt)

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## My Own Room Exceptions

Night 5, Sleeper train

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## About Accommodation

Hotels (6 nts), Sleeper train (1 nt)

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## Joining Hotel

Izmailovo - Gamma Hotel  
71 Izmailovskoe Schosse  
Moscow 105613  
Russia  
Metro Station: Partizanskaya

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■■■■■■■ 105613

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Tel: +7-475 - 737-7000

<http://www.izmailovo.ru/en/>

## Joining Instructions

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Hotel - Gamma (■■■■■■■-■■■■■■■) - is situated near metro station Partizanskaya (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) on the dark blue line. Hotel is just five minutes walk from the metro station. It is in 5 metro stops from the Red Square and the Kremlin. Please, note that the station has changed its name in 2006 and can appear on some maps as Izmailovsky Park (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■). Izmailovo hotel was constructed to accommodate tourists during Moscow Olympics 1980, it consists of 4 big buildings. Make sure you going to the wing Gamma.

There are two international airports in Moscow: Sheremetievo terminals 1, 2 and C (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) and Domodedovo (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■). Airport Vnukovo (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) services mostly domestic flights.

**TRANSFER:** If you pre-booked arrival transfer, meet your driver in the airport arrivals area (exit luggage claim area). The driver will be holding a sign with your name.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** From Sheremetievo airport there are public buses and express buses, going to several metro stations. To metro Rechnoi Vokzal (■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■) you can get by bus #851 and Sheremetievo Express Bus (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■). To metro Planernaya (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) you can take bus #817. Please, remember that Moscow's traffic is very busy, and buses can be overcrowded at times. In general it takes about 30 - 50 minutes from the airport to the metro. Another option is to use Minibus service (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) - shared taxis. They connect airport with both metro stations - Rechnoi Vokzal and Planernaya. You should look for the station name on the list of stops that each minibus has. All buses and minibuses have standard fee: 20 - 40 RUB (2-3 USD) depending on the route.

From Domodedovo Airport you can get to metro station Domodedovskaya (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) by taking public bus #405 or Domodedovo Express Bus (fare is about 25 - 50 RUB). There are also minivans (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) going to Domodedovskaya (keep in mind that they usually don't have enough space for luggage). Domodedovo airport is also connected to Paveletskaya metro station (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) on dark green line. Journey lasts for about 40 min and cost approximately 120 RUB (4 USD). You can buy ticket from the booth at the airport exit.

**TAXIS:** Taxis in Russia don't use meter. Price is agreed by bargaining, and drivers usually don't speak English. We strongly recommend to avoid taxis both - in town (metro system is thousands times cheaper and stress-less) and on the way from the airport. Don't follow any strangers who tell you that their car is outside - you'll get the ride, but the price might come up to about 150 USD. Best option is to go to one of the official taxi desks located on the airport ground floor. Average cost of the taxi would be about 60 - 75 USD (1800 - 2100 RUB)

## Arrival Complications

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We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details.

## Emergency Contact

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Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

If you are experiencing complications with your Moscow AIRPORT TRANSFER that was booked through G Adventures please call: +7-916-197-52-03 (Maria)

#### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Representative (Russia)

+7 917 564 28 75 (Sandra)

G Adventures Asia Manager: Julie Fitzgerald

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time)

From outside Thailand: +66 2 381 5574

From within Thailand: 02 381 5574

After hours emergency number

From outside Thailand: +66 87 049 6074

From within Thailand: 087 049 6074

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 01805 70 90 30 00

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## What to Take

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You will be on the move a good deal, so pack as lightly as possible. It is in your own interest as you are expected to carry your own luggage, though distances are never great. Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, which is the most suitable. It is important that your bag can be locked. On overnight train, there is luggage space under bottom beds and above the door, but it is limited, and can not fit massive bags in.

## Checklist

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Travel documents: passport, visa, travel insurance, air tickets, voucher and their photocopies.

Health requirements arranged.

Money: cash/credit card, money pouch

First aid kit

Day pack to carry your personal needs during the day

Alarm clock and torch/flashlight

Lightweight travel towel

Msquito repellent

Inner sheet/sleeping sheet for train journeys - sheets are provided on the train but you may want to bring your own

Comfortable clothes for the train - tracksuits and open toe shower shoes are the best combination

Raincoat or umbrella

Some warmer clothes if the air conditioning on the train is turned up high

## Laundry

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Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge or ask your CEO where the closest laundromat is. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## Visas

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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 with the embassy. Your travel agent can assist.

Russia: All nationalities require a visa to visit Russia.

You will need a visa support letter to enable you to obtain your Russian visa.

You can obtain this letter through our visa support agent in Russia by completing our on line visa application. The visa support link will be sent to you or your travel agent, by email, at the time you confirm your booking. You must read the instructions carefully and fill out all the details. Name on the application should be the same as in your passport - if an application is missing second name, or spelling is different from passport, - embassy has a right to deny you visa.

We recommend to put arrival date a day or two before your actual arrival date to Russia, and the same for departure date - a day or two after your actual departure date from the country.

Your visa support letter will be emailed to you or your travel agent directly within 10 working days upon submission of your online application. Please, note - if you submitted online application more than 60 days prior to the trip departure, Support Letter will be sent to you about later than in 10 days (in general, about 60 days prior to the trip departure).

Once you have received your visa support letter you can apply for your Visa by going to your closest Russian embassy or by using a visa service recommended by your travel agent. Do not obtain your visa until 6 weeks prior to your trip departing in the unlikely event that your departure is cancelled. Take this letter to the embassy along with your passport, three passport photos, the completed visa application form (please see below for helpful hints to completing your application), a copy of your trip voucher and proof of onward travel from Russia and they will issue the visa. It can take up to 15 working days for the embassy to issue your visa.

Company, that provides us Letters of Invitation is based in Russia. If you haven't gotten LOI within 10 days after submitting application, please, check your SPAM folder - emails from addresses with .ru server address are often redirected to SPAM.

Helpful Hints for completing your application.

\*Please wait until you receive your visa support letter before completing your application as information must match in order for you to receive your visa from the embassy.

\* The visa support letter states hotels that may not be the exact hotels that you will be staying at during your trip. It is critical however, that when you complete your Russian visa application that you copy the hotels that are on your visa support letter rather than those that are on your G Adventures voucher or dossier.

Fees vary with nationalities but the cost for a 30-day single entry tourist visa can range from \$45-\$170USD depending on nationality and processing time. Most countries have a Russian embassy or consulate. For more information, please consult the following websites:

[www.russialink.org.uk/embassy/](http://www.russialink.org.uk/embassy/)

[www.russianembassy.org/](http://www.russianembassy.org/)

[www.sydneyrussianconsulate.com](http://www.sydneyrussianconsulate.com)

\*Answers to questions on Visa Application:

1. The type/purpose of visa: Tourism
2. Company or organisation in Russia to be visited: Palladium
3. Name of Russian Travel Agency: Palladium
4. Reference number of Russian tour agency: 0155 (This is in the top right hand corner of your visa support letter)
5. Route of Journey: Copy the dates and cities that appear below your name on the left hand side of your visa support letter

## Spending Money

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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 and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

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Russia: US\$1 = 30 Roubles.

There are plenty of money exchange offices, banks and ATM's in all cities in European part of Russia. You will be able to exchange all major currencies. Please, be aware that exchange rate on the billboards in small currency exchange offices is for sums 1,000+ USD. You have to inquire with the teller about the exchange rate for amounts 1 - 1,000 USD. Many banks take a commission (20 - 50 RUB - equivalent of 1 - 2 USD) when exchange cash.

The easiest and quickest way is to change USD cash but you must be aware of the security risk of carrying large sums of money. In any case some money should be taken as cash in case of emergencies. We recommend that you don't use money changers on the street.

Major credit cards are accepted in the larger shops and restaurants but only in the bigger cities. Some banks in Moscow and St Petersburg will allow cash advances against a credit card but cash withdrawals are subject to a 3% to 4% service charge.

Please, note that if for security reasons you carry your money as travellers cheques, you might experience troubles exchanging them: there can be very long delays when changing travellers cheques, and not all banks in Russia accept them.

## Emergency Fund

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Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Departure Tax

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

## Tipping

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Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$2-3 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

## Optional Activities

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We suggest you bring along USD120 for additional sightseeing.

St Isaacs Cathedral (St Petersburg) - USD10

The Hermitage (St Petersburg) - USD15

Night Canal tour (St Petersburg) - USD15

Mariinsky Theatre (St Petersburg) - various USD25 - USD250

Peterhof (St Petersburg) - USD17

River Cruise (Moscow) - USD13

Pushkin Fine Art Museum (Moscow) - USD8

Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow) - USD8

St Basils Cathedral (Moscow) - USD6

Bolshoi Theatre (Moscow) - various USD50 - USD250

## Health

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Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information about before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets,

antibiotics, etc.

## Safety and Security

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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. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. 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 CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer 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. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

[www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/](http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/)

## Medical Form

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Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

[www.gadventures.com/medical-form](http://www.gadventures.com/medical-form).

## A Couple of Rules

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Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any 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 our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## Travel Insurance

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Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

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Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit [www.planeterra.org](http://www.planeterra.org)

### Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

## Local Dress

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When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout the area. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and practical. As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered at all times - shorts, singlets and tank tops are not suitable.

## Feedback

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After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Please visit <http://www.gadventures.com/evaluations>

## Newsletter

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Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/)

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

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Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](#), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](#) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at [wateringhole.gadventures.com](http://wateringhole.gadventures.com).