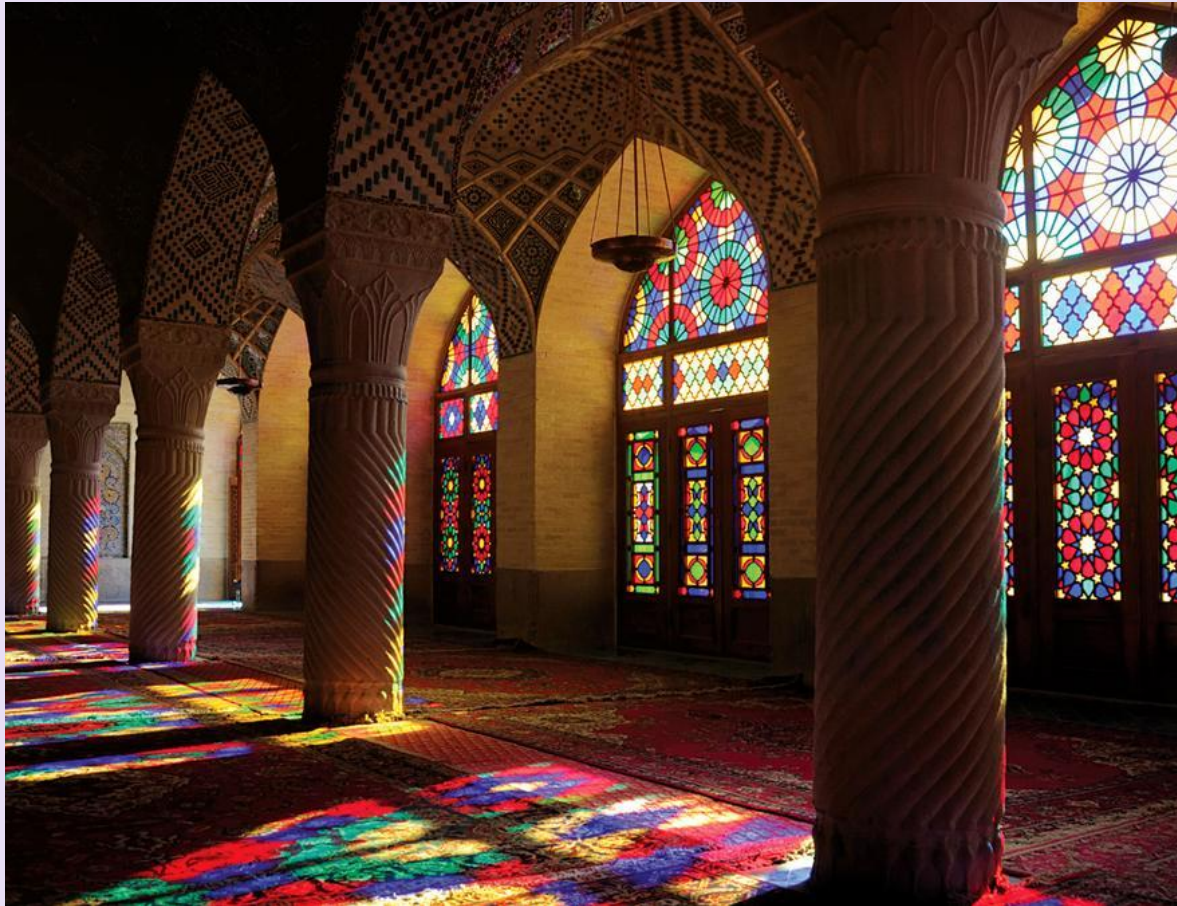




Istanbul to Tehran by Rail

17 days, Istanbul to Tehrān

Trip code ETIR

What's included

- Your Local Living Moment: Dinner with Local Family, Çavuşin
- Istanbul orientation walk

- Anitkabir visit
- Traditional dinner with local family (Göreme)
- Open Air Museum visit
- Trans-Asia train
- Mt Ararat day trip (Van)
- Ishak Pasha Palace visit
- Ahtamara Island visit
- Van Castle visit
- Tehran city tour, including Sa'd Abad Palace and the National Jewelry Museum
- Karim Khan Citadel visit (Shiraz)
- Vakil Mosque visit
- Hafez and Sa'adi tombs visit
- Persepolis guided tour
- Naqsh-e-Rostam visit
- Koran Gate visit
- Pasargadae visit
- Isfahan city tour
- Golestan Palace visit (Tehran)
- National Museum visit
- Carpet Museum visit
- Transport between destinations and to/from included activities

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, 2016 - December 31st, 2016

Itinerary



NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1

Istanbul

Arrive at any time.

There are no planned activities before an evening welcome meeting.

Day 2

Istanbul/Ankara

Enjoy an orientation walk around Istanbul before moving on to the capital city of Ankara.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Istanbul Orientation Walk

Istanbul

2h-3h

3km

Enjoy an orientation walk of Istanbul. Each walk varies, allowing your CEO to show off their favourite spots around the city. Pass by city highlights such as the Topkapi Palace, the Hagia Sophia (also known as the Aya Sofya), and the Blue Mosque. Walks may also include the atmospheric Spice Bazaar or breathtaking Grand Bazaar.

Visit Anitkabir, the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, before driving to the Cappadocia region. Enjoy a home-cooked dinner with a local family.

Visit Anitkabir before transferring to the town of Göreme, the base for exploring Cappadocia. With 2.5 days free to explore, there will be plenty of time to tour the area by bike, visit neighbouring villages, trek regional valleys or try a hot air balloon ride.

During one of the evenings, travel to a nearby village and enjoy dinner with a local family.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



Today's Activities

ACTIVITY

Enjoy seasonal homemade dishes, and talk with friendly hosts about life in rural Cappadocia.

Anitkabir Visit

Ankara

1h-2h

Visit the monumental tomb of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the republic of Turkey. Learn about his significance to gain more insight into your Turkish exploration.

Enjoy an included visit to the Göreme Open Air Museum before free time to explore this unique region. Opt to see it from above on a hot air balloon ride.

Outdoor enthusiast? Hire a bike to get around on two wheels or join your CEO on an optional trekking tour through one of the beautiful valleys of the region.

If you want to go further afield, take a local bus to explore nearby villages.

If you pre-booked the Cappadocia hot air balloon ride, you will be flying today (weather permitting).



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Göreme Open Air Museum Guided Tour

Göreme

1h-2h

Be inspired by the natural beauty of the historic Göreme Open Air Museum, a complex of medieval painted cave churches carved out by Orthodox monks. Tour the more than 10 caves on site, and enjoy the color and vibrancy of many of the churches that are up to 1,000 years old.

Day 5

Göreme/Tatvan

Enjoy one more morning in Cappadocia before driving to nearby Kayseri. Board an overnight train for Eastern Turkey.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Private Vehicle

Göreme – Kayseri

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Overnight Train (beds)

Kayseri – Tatvan

Stretch out and get some well-earned rest en route to the next stop.

Day 6

Tatvan/Van

Arrive to Tatvan and board a ferry for the scenic ride across Lake Van. Arrive to the other side and the town of Van in the afternoon.



Today's Activities

Ferry

Tatvan – Van

Get to the next spot on your route aboard a convenient and efficient ferry boat.

Day 7

Van

Enjoy a day trip to Mt Ararat with a visit to the Ishak Pasha Palace.

Day 8

Van

Use a full day here to enjoy Lake Van. Drive to Gevas for a short cruise to Ahtamara Island to visit a beautiful Armenian Church. Opt to swim at the local beach.

Day 9

Van/Tehrān

Enjoy another day in the Van area with a visit to the Van Castle. Board the Trans-Asia train in the evening for the journey to Tehran.



Today's Activities

Overnight Train (beds)

Van – Tehrān

Stretch out and get some well-earned rest en route to the next stop.

Day 10

Tehrān

Spend the day absorbing the scenery from the train, arriving into Tehran in the evening.

Day 11

Tehrān/Shiraz

Explore Tehran with a local guide, visiting the Sa'd Abad Palace and National Jewel Museum before boarding an evening train to Shiraz.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Overnight Train (beds)

Tehrān - Shiraz

Stretch out and get some well-earned rest en route to the next stop.

Day 12

Shiraz

Arrive in Shiraz in the late morning. Spend the day visiting the Karim Khan Citadel, Vakil Mosque, and the tombs of Hafez and Sa'adi.

There is free time to explore the city's beautiful Regents mosque, Nasiralmolk mosque, Khan madrasa, Bagh-e Eram gardens, and perhaps even listen to some poetry being recited at the Hafez tomb.

This vibrant student city is buzzing with life and is a great place to interact with some Iran's youth.



Meals included

Lunch | Dinner

Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Persepolis, the ceremonial palace of Darius, and admire its amazingly well-preserved carvings. Later, wander the streets and mingle with the students in laid-back Shiraz.

Travel to Persepolis to explore this fascinating sight. On the way back to Shiraz, visit the rock cut tombs at Naqsh-e-Rostam, the burial place of Darius the Great and his successors.

With free time, enjoy the vibe of Shiraz.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Persepolis Tour

Persepolis

4h

Visit the country's premier attraction, Persepolis. In Greek, Persepolis literally means the 'capital of Persia'. It was built in 518 BC by Darius the Great as the capital of the mighty Achaemenid Empire. Alexander the Great burnt the city to the ground in 330 BC, but many remnants of its former glory remain and Persopolis lives on as one of the greatest wonders of the ancient world.

Learn the history of this amazing ancient place and marvel at the stunningly preserved bas-relief carvings.

Naqsh-e-Rostam Visit

Fārs

1h30m

Visit the rock cut tombs at Naqsh-e-Rostam, the burial place of Darius the Great and his successors.

Day 14

Shiraz/Isfahan

Stop at the Koran Gate and the UNESCO-listed Pasargadae complex en route to Isfahan, one of the finest Islamic cities in the world.

Embark on an included visit to Pasargadae and explore the capital and burial site of Cyrus the Great.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Pasargadae Visit

Pasargadae

1h

Visit Pasargadae, the capital and burial site of Cyrus the Great. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site and also an important archaeological site.

Tour the beautiful city of Isfahan, enjoying the famous square, mosques, and bartering at the bazaar. Hang out on the many bridges that make Isfahan unique, or shop for an authentic Persian rug. In the evening, board a final overnight train to Tehran.

Wander the tree-lined boulevards of Isfahan, the jewel of ancient Persia. On a city tour, visit Imam Square and mosque, Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque, and the Ali Qapu Palace. Wander the bazaar and learn the history of Isfahan's bridges.

Stop in a miniatures shop and learn about this intricate art form before sampling some delicious gaz, a candy famous in Isfahan.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Isfahan City Tour

Isfahan

4h

Enjoy a tour of this fascinating city, with its beautiful tree-lined boulevards and an atmospheric bazaar. Start in the world's second largest public square – Imam Square. Learn about life under Persia's greatest ruler, Shah Abbas, and visit the Imam Mosque, Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque, and the Ali Qapu Palace. Imam Square, actually built as a royal polo ground, was once home to entertainers, storytellers, preachers, and Silk Road caravans. Explore the bazaar with its wonderful scents and spices, and watch the locals as they engage in masterful bargaining. You might pick up a tip or two!

Overnight Train (beds)

Isfahan – Tehrān

Stretch out and get some well-earned rest en route to the next stop.

Day 16

Tehrān

Arrive early and enjoy a final day of sightseeing in the busy capital of Tehran. Visit Golestan Palace, the National Museum, and the Carpet Museum.

Ramble through the enormous bazaar and visit the Imam Khomeini Mosque. View the many political murals that surround the former US Embassy then relax like the locals do by drinking chai and chewing on dates in a traditional chaikhuneh (teahouse).

Try some more of the fine Iranian cuisine like dizi (stew you crumble bits of bread into and mash up with a mortar and pestle right at the table!) while enjoying traditional music at a local restaurant.

Day 17

Tehrān

Depart at any time.



Meals included

Breakfast

What's included

- Your Local Living Moment: Dinner with Local Family, Çavuşin
- Istanbul orientation walk
- Anitkabir visit
- Traditional dinner with local family (Göreme)
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- Golestan Palace visit (Tehran)
- National Museum visit
- Carpet Museum visit
- Transport between destinations and to/from included activities

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Cover part of the Silk Road by rail, soak in the dramatic scenery of Cappadocia, savour the diverse flavours of Turkey and Iran, absorb the ancient history of the region, marvel at the dazzling bazaars and colourful mosques.

What are the main highlights of this trip?

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Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?

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.

What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Proof of insurance may be required at the airport to avoid purchasing local insurance.

CULTURE AND DRESS

Iran is one of the safest and friendliest places you can travel but it is VERY conservative. It is very important that before you sign up for this tour you are committed to following a strict dress code (particularly for women) in what may be quite warm weather.

DRESS CODE

Iran is a traditional Islamic nation and a strict dress code (hijab) is enforced throughout the country. Men must wear long trousers at all times but can wear short sleeved shirts in less strict destinations. Plan to be as conservative as possible when visiting mosques or holy sites. Open toed sandals are now acceptable for men (again, in less conservative areas), though ankles must be covered.

Women must wear a headscarf at all times, apart from in their hotel bedrooms. Hijab for women is a head covering (some hair can show in front), a long shirt with a collar coming to the base of the throat and the bottom reaching to just above the knees, long sleeves (some places three-quarter sleeves are acceptable) and long pants. A typical outfit for stylish Iranian women would be something called a 'manteau' that looks a bit like a trenchcoat over a pair of jeans and converse sneakers. There is no rule for the colour of your outfit as long as it is modest and includes a head scarf. Iranian women are extremely chic and have found ways to follow hijab and still look fantastic. Bring only one or two headscarves as you are SURE to want to buy loads while you're there.

Travellers can easily wear the loose fitting clothes sold from Indian or hippie-style shops where the tops are loose long sleeved (tunics) and cover your bottom and a loose scarf for your head. You can wear any type of pants underneath as long as they cover your ankles. Women are allowed to wear open toed shoes and sandals as long as their ankles are covered. Typically, wearing a dress over a pair of pants works as well, if it follows all the other rules, too. If you are not sure what to bring or wear please email our office and we will be happy to help you out.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is strictly forbidden in Iran and will be confiscated at customs by anyone attempting to bring it into the country. Drug laws are also extremely strict and travellers face lengthy jail terms if caught. If found, pork, obscene material (even glossy magazines showing people in immodest poses), CDs and controversial literature will all be confiscated by custom officials. Upon leaving the customs hall all passengers are required to put their bags through the X-ray machines for checking.

MONEY

Due to the restrictions on changing money in Iran, only notes/bills printed after 1996 and in good condition will be accepted for exchange. Usually 50 and 100 USD/EUR notes get better exchange rate. We recommend to bring smaller denominations as well as many vendors accept them if you don't have local currency.

Iran is a strictly CASH country. Due to US banking restrictions no foreign credit cards can be used for withdrawing money at Iranian banks and ATMs. The only time you will be able to use your credit card in Iran is if you buy a carpet in a shop that has a bank account in Dubai or UAE. (See more details in Money section of this notes)

What we have found is that the farther from Tehran you travel the less conservative the dressing so while in Tehran please take a bit of care about what you wear. At holy sites female travellers will be given a thin full length abayah (head to toe covering) to use while visiting the mosques. In somewhere like Shiraz there are plenty of fashionable students pushing the limits of hijab. Go shopping!

RAMADAN

According to the lunar cycle, Ramadan will fall between May 15th and June 14th, 2018. Please note that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. There may be some limitations to services and disruptions to schedules during Ramadan, but generally our tours still operate effectively during this period and food is available to non-Muslims throughout the day. It is very important to display increased cultural sensitivity during Ramadan. Please wear loose fitting clothes, that cover knees and shoulders, and try to avoid eating, drinking or smoking in public out of respect for those who can't at that time.

TOILETS

Please note that while all accommodation has "western style" toilets, virtually all public toilets available throughout Turkey will be of the Asian squat variety. You are advised to carry tissues for times when toilet paper is not be provided. Expect to pay to use public toilets in Turkey - usually between 0.50 and 1 TRL. Public toilets may sometimes not be at the expected level of cleanliness.

What is the role of the group leader during this trip?

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO 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.

How large will the group be?

Max 15, avg 12.

What meals are included in this trip?

9 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners

What are the meals like on this trip?

TURKEY:

Many breakfasts are included as part of your tour. Turkish breakfasts are very different from your usual and pretty much universally consist of large slices of fresh "french style" white bread accompanied by slices of tomato, cucumber, cheeses, olives, jam and honey. This is accompanied by tea or coffee (which is pretty much always instant).

You will of course want to sample the famous Turkish coffee, but it is usually after a big lunch or dinner, or in the late afternoon with a pastry.

While we think these breakfasts are absolutely delicious, some travellers do find them a bit repetitive and enjoy buying market fruit the day before and eating this for breakfast.

Lunches

Will usually be simple and on the run. They are a great chance to try Turkey's delicious and healthy array of "fast foods".

This may include, "gozleme", a type of Turkish savory crepe, "chorba", delicious lentil soup, and of course doner kebabs in both beef and chicken varieties. You won't want to miss the chance to try "pide", Turkish pizza, and lahmacun- thin crust pizza you fold greenery into

You may also find "kumpir", Turkish stuffed potatoes.

Dinner

Most Turks start their dinners with a couple of mezzes- small taster dishes such as grilled octopus, aubergine (eggplant) salad, and many more. You could also choose a soup made of fresh local ingredients.

Main courses tend to be based around the ubiquitous kebab- skewers of charcoaled meat which comes on bread with salad. There are plenty of variations of the kebab-many regions have their own speciality so be sure to ask your leader.

Desserts

It's all about the sugar. Baklava is something of a national obsession and it is believed the best comes from the East.

There are endless varieties of pastries and you are sure to spend at least some time in a Turkish bakery taste-testing.

Please note it is very difficult to get espresso or filter coffee in Eastern Turkey but of course you can get your caffeine fix with a thick and delicious Turkish coffee.

Alcohol is not readily available at restaurants in Eastern Turkey - do not expect to have a beer with your dinner- but can be purchased from liquor shops or at hotel bars.

IRAN

Persian food is delicious and plentiful. Typically there are two types of food in Iran - homestyle cooking and restaurant food. As a visitor you are likely to get the restaurant food a lot more often though there are occasions to visit restaurants that prepare homestyle food. These two categories are vastly different. Restaurant-style food is incredibly delicious, but by the end of the stay may start to be a bit repetitive. Just enjoy it while you can.

Meals typically consist of massive, delicious kebabs of different varieties, saffron rice, homemade yogurt and warm bread. Usually barley soup is available as well as a variety of "stews". These are prepared in small bowls and served with rice, offering many vegetarian options. Another option is dizi, which has a whole ritual associated with eating it. Your CEO will show you how. The most interesting part about Persian food is the variety of flavours with an abundance of saffron, pistachio, pomegranate, figs, dates and barberries.

Eating is a big part of travelling. 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.

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Trains, private vehicles, ferry, walking.

Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?

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.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotels/guesthouses (12 nts), sleeper trains (4 nts).

Will I get my own room?

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

Do any exceptions apply to Rooming or “My Own Room” on my tour?

Nights 5, 9, 11, 15 overnight train.

What kind of accommodation can I expect on this trip?

Accommodation in Eastern Turkey is quite different to that in the more "developed" areas of Turkey. Hotels tend to be for businessmen or cater to large groups of domestic tourists.

As a result they tend to be bigger and the rooms more simple. You can expect all rooms to have ensuite bathroom facilities with western style shower and toilet. Often there will be no shower curtain. Soap and towels are provided.

Reception staff will speak very little or no English but will try their very best to help you.

Please do inform your CEO if there are any problems with your room to enable them to help you as quickly as possible.

On this trip you can expect to stay in small family-run hotels or pensions (with the exception of the start and finish hotels, which are often larger city hotels), which will vary a little in standard and facilities: some may not have elevators, air-conditioning or English-speaking staff, but most importantly all are locally-run, with some traditional character, and in excellent central locations to give you maximum time for exploring the sights. Below are details on some of our unique accommodation experiences on this itinerary.

What is the joining hotel?

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

What are the joining instructions?

Please note that day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned on this day. Upon arrival to the city on day 1 (or earlier if you have booked pre-accommodation with us), please make your way to the joining hotel (note that check-in time will be in the afternoon). Once you arrive at the hotel, look for a note or bulletin board in the reception with a note from your CEO. This note will give the details of your Welcome Meeting on day 1 (usually between 5pm and 7pm), where you will get a chance to meet your CEO and other travellers, as well as learn more about how the tour will run. If you don't see a note, please ask reception for details!

If you are arriving later and will miss the Welcome Meeting, your CEO will leave a note at reception for you with any information you may need, and with morning instructions for the next day.

When you arrive to Istanbul Airport, you will have several options to get to the hotel:

If you have pre-arranged an arrival transfer, Istanbul Airport (IST): Istanbul Airport is no longer permitted to present branded/company signs. G Adventures has been allocated the characters 'M55'. After collecting your luggage, proceed through Exit Door 14 and look for an individual holding an "M55" sign. This person will transfer you to your first accommodation.

If you are unable to locate your transfer, please contact the local transfer company emergency number: +90 539 424 42 48.

If you are unable to reach them or require further assistance, please contact the G Adventures Emergency Line: +44 1858 378 000

If you are arriving at Sabiha Gokcen (SAW) Airport, G Adventures has been allocated the sign "M55" for your airport pickup. After exiting the terminal, proceed straight across the road to the 10th column. At the end of the walkway, you will find an individual holding an "M55" sign. This person will be responsible for transferring you to your first accommodation.

If you are unable to locate your transfer, please contact the local transfer company emergency number: +90 539 424 42 48.

If you are unable to reach them or require further assistance, please contact the G Adventures Emergency Line: +44 1858 378 000.

We always recommend printing out the address of the hotel (in the native language as well as English if available), to show to your taxi driver.

A metered taxi from the airport to the hotel will cost around 40-45 Turkish Lira (USD 25-28) - please note, taxis are more expensive late at night/early morning. From Ataturk Airport to the Sirkeci area where our hotels are located will take between 30 and 45 minutes depending on traffic.

It is possible to take the metro from the airport to Istanbul city centre. Go to stop "ZEYTINBURNU". From here catch the tramway at "ZEYTINBURNU" point, going towards SIRKECI. Get off at the stop "GULHANE". You will see Port Shield Pub just on the corner. Take a right, walk straight through the Ebusuut Street and this time take the third right. You'll see our hotel.

One ticket for Metro is 1,50 Turkish Lira.

One ticket for Tramway is 1,50 Turkish Lira.

What happens if I experience problems when arriving?

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.

Who should I contact in case of an emergency?

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.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Representative (Turkey)

During office hours: + 90 212 296 80 36

After hours emergency number +90 532 481 51 73 (Yavuz)

G Adventures Turkey Manager - Yaviuz (Istanbul Turkey)

Emergency number: +90 532 481 51 73

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 Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

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

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

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

Are there any additional packing suggestions I should consider?

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

Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures travellers! Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags with wheels are acceptable, although we recommend your bag has carry straps as well, as you may be required to negotiate bus and railway station steps. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water and a camera etc for day walks and day trips.

What should be on my packing list?

Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, band-aids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

When can I do my laundry on this trip?

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.

What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

TURKEY: Passengers travelling to Turkey for tourism or trade can purchase an electronic visa prior to entering the country. This electronic visa will replace the “sticker” and “stamp-type” visas issued at Turkish points of entry.

This e-visa can be obtained by visiting the website: www.evisa.gov.tr.

Your passport must be valid for 6 months on the date that you enter Turkey. Length of validity of your visa is dependent on your nationality, but is commonly 3 months.

For country specific visa information we recommend the following link:<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/visa-information-for-foreigners.en.mfa>

Iran:

*****PLEASE READ THE ENTIRETY OF THE TEXT BELOW AS THIS IS IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR ENTRY INTO IRAN*****

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself with the Embassy of Iran. Please, keep in mind that all countries require passports valid for at least 6 months from the moment of departure from the country.

To apply for an Iran visa, all nationalities must present an official Iran Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number.

*****It is the responsibility of the traveller to check with their nearest Embassy and confirm the requirements for entry into Iran*****

IMPORTANT: Once your trip is confirmed, at 90 days prior to your entry into Iran, you must submit an application for your Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number. A link will be emailed to you in your confirmation email. The details will be forwarded to our local agent in Iran and you will be emailed your Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number approximately 45 days after you submit your application. As an Iran Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number is only valid for 30 days once it is issued, you must apply for your visa as soon as you receive this number. Iran LOI's cannot be rushed.

If you have booked the tour within 90 days of the start date, you must complete this Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number application at the time of booking. You will receive the Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number approximately 15 days before the start of your tour.

As Iran visas are dated specifically for entry and exit, please ensure you enter the correct dates. Americans, Canadians and British citizens must be accompanied by a guide at all times while in Iran, so these dates are important for obtaining your visa. Note that because a guide must be arranged, we can only provide an Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number for the length of the tour, plus any pre or post-night accommodation booked through G Adventures. We allow ONLY 2 pre-nights and 2 post-nights to be booked in Iran, and a complimentary guide will be provided in the cost of the hotel for these days. Any additional days must be requested (allowing 2-3 business days for a response), and will be subject to an additional charge for the guide.

Input your name the same way it is in your passport. The information on the application form must match your passport.

If you have an umlaut or other character not recognized in the english alphabet in your name (ie. ü), please enter it in the longer form (ie. ue).

For the following multi-country trips, the days spent in Iran are as follows:

ETIR - Istanbul to Tehran by Rai: Days 9-17

Please note: The Iran Government has implemented a new requirement for all American citizens asking passengers to provide a resume or CV in order to issue the LOI. Please make sure to attach this to your LOI application below as both are required to begin this process. This should be a copy of your resume or CV and should contain a cover letter detailing the place and date of your birth, as well as any education and employment you have had and any change in location (countries only). If you have married or had children, it should also detail the dates and locations of these events as well as full names. Finally, please conclude this letter by stating where you currently reside. If you are retired, please also include your date of retirement.

If your country has an official Iran Consulate/Embassy, you must choose this as your 'Visa pickup Embassy'. If you do not see a local Consulate/Embassy on this list, please locate your nearest neighbouring Embassy or Consulate. Please contact your Travel Agent or G Adventures for further assistance if needed. Most nationalities may be able to obtain a visa upon arrival at the Tehran Airport (Canadians, Americans and British citizens may NOT obtain their visa on arrival), but you must make sure to check with your Embassy if this applies for your nationality before choosing this option. A visa obtained on arrival is only valid for 15 days, so for stays of longer than 15 days you must apply for your visa in advance. A copy of your flight tickets is also required for this option.

At time of writing, the below documents will be needed to obtain your visa (however, we do advise you confirm this with your nearest Embassy):

1. A standard visa application form from the Embassy or Consulate where you will collect your visa
2. 2 colour, passport sized photos, taken within 14 days (most Iranian Embassies require female travellers to have their hair covered under a scarf in these photos)
3. Payment for the visa (this will be dependent on nationality and will sometimes need to be made at a local nearby bank - check with your Embassy to confirm details)
4. Passport with empty pages and at least 6 months validity
5. Iran Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number
6. Resume or CV (for Americans)
7. Trip vouchers as well as proof of onward travel (flight tickets entering and leaving the country)
8. No evidence of any Israeli stamps inside the passport is allowed (your visa WILL be refused if you have Israeli stamps)
9. We also recommend bringing a copy of the itinerary, printable from our website. While this may not be needed, we recommend having a copy on hand if needed.

Please carefully check all the information below prior to submitting

Once you have received your Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number you can apply for your visa by going to the Iran Embassy you listed in the online application. Processing times vary but generally are between 3 and 6 business days. However, it is best to check with the Embassy/Consulate for clarification on this. Please be aware that Iranian Embassies and Consulates observe many statutory holidays and are often closed, delaying processing time.

We advise all travellers to contact their nearest Embassy to find out the best way to apply for their visa. Depending on nationality and how close to the tour start date it is, there may be a need to visit the Embassy in person

When you are completing your visa application at the Embassy or Consulate, please make sure that you write the Authorization Number/Visa Approval Number directly onto the application. If there is no spot to do so, please write it clearly on the top of your application.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Because this is a time sensitive process, we highly recommend NOT using a visa service to get your Iran visa.

As the LOI is issued by the Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs - unexpected delays can occur.

Information accurate as of December 9th, 2015

What should I consider when planning my personal expenses and discretionary spending for this itinerary?

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.

What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?

TURKEY

The local currency in Turkey is the Turkish Lira (TRY).

Almost all local purchases in Turkey (meals, souvenirs, optional activities, etc) will be paid for in TRY.

ATMs are found within main cities in Turkey and will generally accept cards on the Visa and Mastercard networks. It is a great idea to travel with both a Visa and Mastercard if at all possible as while there is no hard and fast rule, some banks seem to only work with one brand of card. Please note, your bank will charge a fee for overseas withdrawals.

Cash is recommended for times when ATMs are not accessible. Euros, British Pounds and US Dollars are easy to exchange into Turkish Lira. Please note - while you should bring some cash with you for emergency situations, carrying cash only is a high safety risk. Money on ATM card/s and some cash is the ideal mix.

Cash advances can also be made with some banks but are time consuming and tend to have high fees attached.

Credit cards are in general not very useful in Turkey - they can be used at some larger stores if shopping for big items such as carpets.

As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates:
www.xe.com

IRAN is under sanctions by the USA which means travellers cheques of ANY brand or denomination CANNOT be exchanged in Iran.

CREDIT CARDS & ATM CARDS CANNOT be used in Iran - the only exception is for major purchases (generally USD300+) where the shop has connections abroad and can phone through and have the transaction processed in the UAE in Dirhams. This basically applies to carpet shops and should NOT be depended upon.

US dollars and EURO notes are generally the only hard currencies accepted at Iranian banks and money-changers. Occasionally exchange booths will accept CAD, AUD or GBP, but this is not guaranteed and should not be relied upon. Banks and money-changers can be found in most of the places that we'll visit throughout the country. The largest Iranian Rial note is the 100,000 IRR note. You can also get a 500,000 IRR cheque, that can be exchanged into small denominations in shops and hotels.

We recommend to bring some of your cash (about 70 USD) in small denominations: 1, 5 and 10 USD notes. If you are not able to get local currency it's always possible to pay in USD or EUR.

Note: you cannot change Iranian Rials into hard currency outside of Iran. Remember if you run out of money while in Iran it is essentially impossible to get more sent to you.

We recommend you take at least \$300 US with you for your time in Iran. This will cover basic needs: optional activities, meals, special clothing requirements, some souvenirs and other small items. If you're a big shopper (and there are so many great things to buy in Iran, especially silverware and carpets) we recommend you bring more. Please take into consideration the safety issues of carrying so much cash with you so bringing a money belt with you is absolutely essential for your trip to Iran. Thankfully Iran is one of the safest countries that you'll probably ever visit and crime against foreigners is virtually unheard of.

How much emergency money should I bring on this trip?

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!

Should I be tipping on my trip?

It is customary in Turkey and Iran to leave a small tip for service providers, such as waiters, if you are pleased with the service (€1-2 or about 10%). Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons 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. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping local guides would range from €3-5 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 per person, per week can be used.

What activities are optional on this trip?

- No optional activities

Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

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.

DRINKING WATER: It is advisable to drink bottled water in Turkey.

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information 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.

What do I need to know to about safety and security on my trip?

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/

What are the trip specific safety considerations?

Like anywhere in the world, major cities have areas safer than others, use common sense, be aware of your surroundings and mind your personal belongings. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of 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.

What rules should I know before joining this trip?

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 people in the sex trade 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 utilize the services of paid sex workers, in any capacity.

Is travel insurance required for my trip?

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.

What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

How should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

While visiting mosques and other religious monuments in Turkey you should dress modestly, cover your shoulders and you shouldn't wear short shorts or skirts. Outside of Istanbul and the more touristic centres in Turkey, local dress is more conservative and as a matter of respect we recommend that both men and women dress modestly in loose-fitting clothes with shoulders covered.

As stated in the Important Notes section, Iran is a traditional Islamic nation and a strict dress code is enforced throughout the country. The code of dress must be adhered to at all times. Please read the Important Notes for information on what to bring.

Your CEO will advise you of what attire is appropriate for which destinations or activities during the welcome meeting. Upon arrival in Iran women not wearing a headscarf, long sleeves, closed shoes and a loose-fitting long skirt or pants may be refused entry into the country (to avoid this problem bring with you a thin full length raincoat if you choose to buy a manteau after you arrive). Men must be wearing long trousers upon arrival and shirts that cover their shoulders, or they may be refused entry.

Female travellers: Please don't bring tight fitting clothing with you to Iran as it's forbidden to show any hint of the shape of your body. You will see locals pushing the limits of this restriction but best to be as conservative as possible. You may wish to buy local 'manteaus' in country but to be prepared we recommend jeans or loose cotton trousers, potentially a knee-length dress to wear over those pants, Indian-style tunics or a combination of layers that keep you covered the appropriate amount (described in Important Notes). Additionally, a lot of make up is also against the rules, so plan to be as modest as possible. Many locals wear dark colours but there is no law requiring it.

How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

Earn 5% off your next G Adventures Tour (up to \$100 USD)*

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us and to thank you for your time, we are pleased to offer a 5% discount (up to a maximum of \$100 USD) off your next G Adventures holiday. All you need to do is submit the form within 4 weeks of the completion of your tour, and you'll be able to join the thousands of travellers who have taken 2, 3, 4 or even 10 or more tours with us!

Discount cannot be combined with other offers or applied to 'Independent' style trips. Maximum discount value is \$100 USD (or equivalent currency). Valid for new bookings only. G Adventures reserves the right to withdraw or modify this offer at any time without notice. Limited to one discount per person.

Does G Adventures have an email newsletter I can subscribe to?

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/

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.

How old must I be to join this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our [LGBTQ+ page](#) for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

Dossier Disclaimer

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 the operator. 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.

Itinerary Disclaimer

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. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

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