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# Tour Notes

Chad – Peaks of the Tibesti

Tour Duration – 22 Days



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●●○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●○○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●○○○○

Tour Pace - Busy

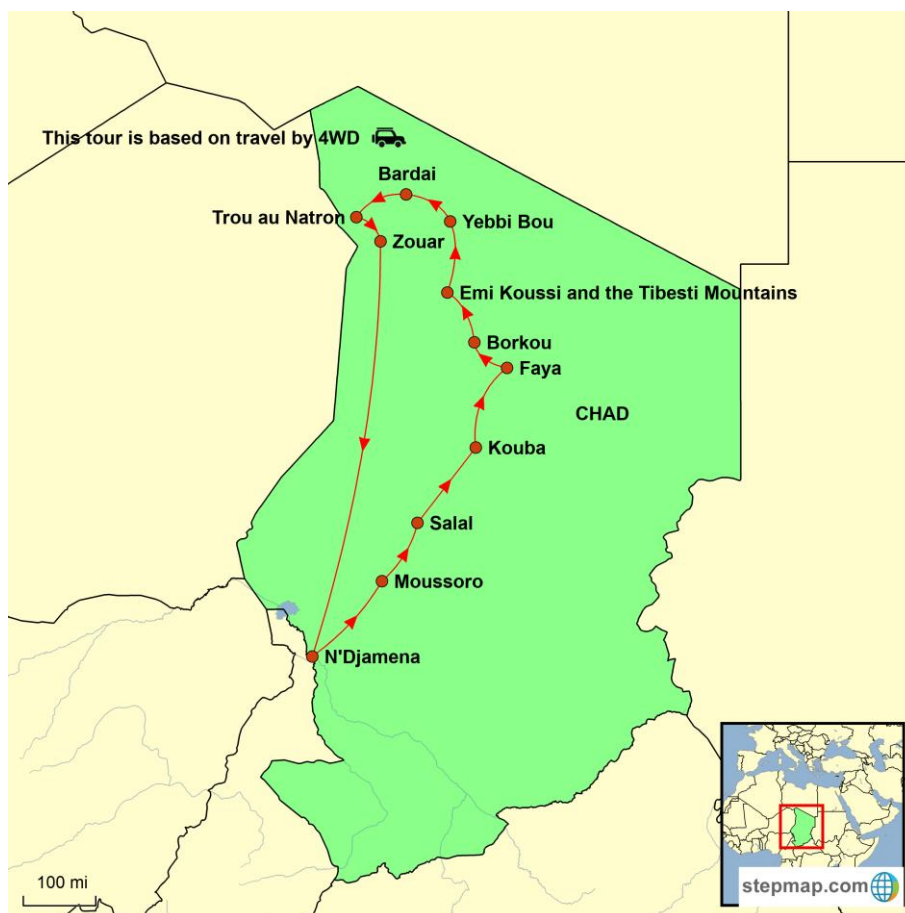
## Tour Highlights

- ✓ The most remote and least visited area of the Sahara – a true untamed environment
- ✓ Explore dramatic peaks - including the Sahara's highest mountain Emi Koussi
- ✓ The opportunity to view ancient rock carvings and paintings
- ✓ Experience otherworldly landscapes
- ✓ Meet Tubu villagers and nomads
- ✓ Descend to the bottom of a volcanic crater at Trou Au Natron
- ✓ Sandstone cathedrals of the Ennedi Massif
- ✓ Camp wild under the vast Saharan sky



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## Tour Map - Chad – Peaks of the Tibesti



### Tour Essentials

<b>Accommodation:</b>	Camping except in N'Djamena where you will stay in a comfortable hotel
<b>Included Meals:</b>	Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.
<b>Group Size:</b>	Maximum of 16
<b>Start Point:</b>	N'Djamena
<b>End Point:</b>	N'Djamena
<b>Transport:</b>	4WD
<b>Countries:</b>	Chad



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### Chad – Peaks of the Tibesti

Chad offers opportunities for adventure on a grand scale, in a way that very few other places can match. The most remote and least visited country in the Sahara, Chad is home to dramatic landscapes and people that rarely see western visitors – an intoxicating combination. To complement your trip to the Ennedi Mountains, this longer trip visits what has long been described as the desert's final frontier – the forbidding Tibesti Mountains, pushed up against the northern border with Libya. Out of bounds for a long time, with a little care and a lot of planning it's now possible to visit this stunning region. Expect a tough journey – you will be crossing vast empty spaces on your journey from the capital to the north. Head into the breath-taking landscapes of the Tibesti, home to volcanic peaks and some of the most isolated settlements on earth. You will meet the Tubu people, a fiercely independent group and true adepts at living in such harsh conditions – exploring their settlements you see how they have managed to carve a life for themselves here. You also delve into prehistory, seeing ancient rock carvings and paintings among the stones. Crossing rocky plateaux, tackling vast fields of sand dunes and following the courses of long dried up riverbeds, the landscape here is diverse and constantly changing. With virtually no facilities outside of the capital you spend your nights camping, immersing yourselves completely in the desert experience. A ground-breaking trip for true Sahara enthusiasts.

### Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, however with an expedition such as this a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below may be used.

### Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. On this tour, your guide may be local or European but they will be based in the region. We may also use specialist guides local to their specific region. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

## Itinerary

### Day 1 – N'Djamena- Abeche

Arrive in N'Djamena and after clearing Customs and Immigration you will drive out of the city. The expedition travels firstly on an asphalt road via Bahr el Ghazal. Upon reaching the large village of Massaguet, you take an easterly route through an area of authentic Sahelian Africa with numerous villages and markets. After 2-2.5 hours of travelling you will stop and make camp for the night.

### Days 2 and 3 – Abeche

Continue towards Abeche passing the settlements of Ab Toyour, Bitkine, Mongo and Oum Hadjer through the beautiful and lively region of Guera, punctuated by its granite peaks. The village of Ab Toyour is dominated by the granite peak known as Vultures Mountain. You will spend some time admiring the beautiful landscapes, until arriving Abeche, the ancient capital of Chad and nowadays the capital of the Ouaddai region and one of the most important centres of the whole country. Overnights camping (BLD)

### Days 4, 5 and 6 – Bichagara – Borkou

Leaving Abeche, it's the end of the road or at least the end of the tarmac. Joining a dusty track, we travel north towards the villages of Biltine and Arada. En route we may encounter nomadic herders eking out a living among sand dunes and low-lying vegetation as the Sahel becomes increasingly desertified. At Kalait, on the



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southern borders of the Ennedi Massif, we arrive in a true desert region. Inhabited by Gaeda, Tama and Zagawa nomadic tribes, for centuries this region has been a crossroads for Saharan trade. We continue northwards along the jagged western edge of massif to the remarkable region of Bichigara and witness the Ennedi's eroded sandstone formations known as tassilli – an area of unrivalled beauty. Hidden among the other-worldly sandstone pillars, if you know where to look, are 3,000-year-old examples of rock art from the Bovidian period, depicting herdsmen and their cattle. We continue north to reach the oasis of Ouei, an important site where the Toubou clans water their herds. Overnights camping. (BLD)

#### **Days 7 and 8 – Borkou – Yarda – Kouroudi**

The Borkou region sees dunes and palm groves alternate seamlessly. A sandy track leads us to the plateau of Yarda and a small oasis surrounded by tassilli, and complete with a scattering of Toubou banco (mud) huts. Continuing through a landscape of canyons and dunes, surrounded by rock formations shaped by the Saharan winds, we arrive at the oasis of Orori. Here, there's time to observe the lifestyle of the Toubou nomads who have inhabited the area for centuries, and see some ancient rock art. Later, we reach the village of Kouroudi, surrounded by remarkable tassilli formations, and a memorable site to pitch camp. Overnights camping. (BLD)

#### **Days 9, 10 and 11 – Emi Koussi – Enneri Miski – Bini Erde – Tarso Tieroko – Yebbi Bou**

We continue to immense volcanic plateau of Emi Koussi, driving around the western edge of the volcano, the highest mountain in the Sahara at 3415m, and spend time exploring the area. Following the course of the Enneri Miski wadi, we are surrounded by tassilli rock formations. Here too, rock paintings and engravings reveal prehistoric habitation. To the west, the peaks of the majestic Tarso Tieroko are a constant backdrop. Where appropriate, we leave our vehicles and explore on foot. At Birni Erde we visit a small village built by Teda people near an important water source. Pressing on through the mountains, our route traverses gorges and stony hills. We drive towards Yebbi Bou, a typical Toubou village where a nearby a deep canyon is home to one of the region's most picturesque palm groves. Overnights camping. (BLD)

#### **The Tubu**

The Tubu live in Chad and Niger, in some of the most inhospitable parts of the Sahara desert, and on this trip you will meet many Tubu villagers and nomads. With dark skin but almost European features, their origins are rather a mystery to researchers, with the current best guess being that they descend from a mixture of Berbers and Bantu Africans. The Tubu are made up of two main groups, the Teda of the Tibesti and the Daza further south, and within that are comprised of numerous clans. There are around 200,000 Tubu today. Up until relatively recently they had had little contact with outsiders and even now are rather wary of strangers – this particularly manifests itself in an aversion to photography and we ask that you follow your tour leader's guidelines on this to avoid any problems.

#### **Emi Koussi and the Tibesti Mountains**

The Tibesti are a group of volcanic mountains – no longer active – on Chad's northern border with Libya. They are home to the highest peaks in the Sahara, with Emi Koussi taking the title at 3415m high. Different from the more gentle Ennedi Mountains to the south east, the Tibesti are characterised by jagged peaks and seem rather unforgiving in comparison. The Tibesti are home to numerous cave paintings dating back 3-5000 years, showing that this area has been populated for some time. This is possibly the most remote and inaccessible part of the Sahara, but is home to the Teda group of Tubu people, who live in small villages and the main towns Zouar, Bardai and Aozou. It is also rumoured that they are home to a small population of African wild dogs.

#### **Days 12 and 13 – Zumri - Bardai**

Skirting across the gorges of Yebbigué, the track alternates between hard and rocky, and long stretches following green enneri (wadis) of acacias and tamarisks. We skirt Tarso Voon and Tarso Toon, two imposing volcanic structures. In the Enneri Zoumri valley we encounter green oases. Bardai, the main town of the



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Tibesti region, is situated at 1000m on a striking mountainous escarpment. This oasis town is only now emerging from many years of conflict and once more starting to take its place as an important trading post. Although small, just 1,500 inhabitants, Bardai is the only settlement for hundreds of kilometres. Overnights are spent camping. (BLD)

#### **Days 14 and 15 – Bardai - Trou au Natron**

Travelling beyond the dramatic Oudinger Gorges, we reach a height of 2200m. Here, the extinct volcanic crater of Trou au Natron appears. A white crust of sodium salts covers the crater floor, an area used as salt pasture for grazing animals by Tubu herders. Carefully, we descend into the the crater on foot, picking our way down precipitous, rocky paths. Overnight camping. (BLD)

#### **Day 16 – Zouar**

The rough track ascending the plateau of Enneri Tao is hard going. However, distant views to the dune sea of the Erg of Bilma, on the edge of the Ténéré desert, and north to the Aiguilles de Sissé chain of rocky pinnacles, make the rough ride more than worth it. Our route continues towards the oasis of Zouar. Overnight camping. (BLD)

#### **Days 17, 18 and 19 – Zouar – Marmar - Faya-Largeau**

Zouar is home of the Derde, the spiritual and traditional leader of the Tibesti's Toubou Teda people. We have time to explore the village and its busy market, before loading up and traversing surrounding rocky buttresses to enter the region of Marmar. Here, among a sea of desert dunes, occasional rocky inselbergs erupt through the sand – a remarkable landscape. After exploring we return to the Borkou region and the oasis town of Faya-Largeau, whose lush palm groves and fertile fields are hugely important to the local economy. Overnights camping. (BLD)

#### **Faya Largeau**

Faya Largeau is situated on one of the routes which connected, in the past, the rich Fezzan 'cities' to the empires of Kanem and Bornou. It was conquered by French people at the beginning of this century. There is a deep contrast between the Saharan character of its buildings, its colourful market and the poignant relics of the war with Libya.

#### **Days 20, 21– The Journey South to N'Djamena**

The journey south starts with a difficult crossing through almost 80km of dunes. Our drivers are very experienced. However, desert pistes are among the most taxing environments for people and vehicles. Having successfully crossed the dunes, we again enter the Bahr el Ghazal region. On the ground hereabouts, clusters of diatom fossils may be found, evidence for periods when Lake Chad stretched up to the southern reaches of the Tibesti. Continuing, we pass through the village of Kouba Oulanga, known for its acacia-filled wadi, and visit the village of Salal, made up of a few houses constructed from banco (mud) arranged around an abandoned French colonial fort. The track then follows the Bahr el Ghazal wadi – a riverbed that only very rarely sees flowing water. However, groundwater reserves here are close to the surface, resulting in lush stands of acacia and doum palms. We take the road for the regional capital of Massakory, crossing savannah where herds of zebu cattle and sheep graze. At this point we find a silky-smooth asphalt road for the first time in many days. Overnights camping until arrival in N'Djamena. Overnight in Mercure Hotel or similar. (BLD)

#### **N'Djamena**

Chad's capital sits on the Chari River, opposite the Cameroonian town of Kousseri on the western bank. It's a relatively recent creation, having been founded in 1900 by the French and originally named Fort Lamy after an officer who had recently been killed 'pacifying' the region. It's quite a spread out city, with wide boulevards which are unfortunately now mainly devoid of the trees that they once sported, these having been chopped down to remove cover for rebel forces during the city's turbulent past. There are few specific



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sights in the city, but if you're arriving early or staying on after the tour you might want to have a wander through the central market, which is quite interesting.

### **Day 22- Depart**

After breakfast you can relax until you are transferred to the airport for your flights. (B)

## *Tour Inclusions/Exclusions*

### **Inclusions:**

Arrival and departure transfers  
Transport throughout  
All accommodation on a twin share basis  
Services of English speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

### **Excluded:**

International flights  
Travel Insurance  
Visa  
Drinks  
Items of a personal nature  
Tips (discretionary)

## *Important Information*

### **Foreign Government Travel Warnings**

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

At present the FCO advises against travel to all parts of the country except N'Djamena. It is likely travel warnings will remain in place for some time to come, and we are only able to accept a booking on the basis that you are aware this is the case and confirm that you are still happy to travel irrespective of the current FCO advice.

We work very closely with experienced local contacts and are fully confident that it is safe to operate tours in Chad. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

Furthermore, it is the clients' responsibility to ensure that they hold full travel insurance which includes medical repatriation. You should check the validity of your insurance with your provider, given the travel warnings in place. We can however, help you organise insurance which will continue to be valid.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.





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Non UK nationals should check with their own government, as the information and advice may differ to that provided by British authorities.

## Accommodation and Meals

### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

### Accommodation Rating

Whilst camping you should be aware that there are no facilities. We will spend our nights in wild camps chosen each night. There are no toilet facilities. You will be provided with a small amount of water each night to wash with (although on one or two occasions this may not be possible due to distance from wells).

We do not recommend Chad to anyone looking for a conventional holiday – comforts are few and far between and conditions are often challenging. It is not comparable to other countries in Africa that you may have travelled to, but the crew travelling with you will do their utmost to make this trip as comfortable as possible. However for those seeking a true adventure to one of the most remote parts of our world, Chad is hard to beat.

### Food & Drink

While on tour in Chad you will generally be served a mixture of European and African cuisine. Local conditions and availability dictate that food is fairly simple, so do not expect gourmet cooking. Breakfast typically consists of bread, jam, biscuits and coffee, while lunch is normally some type of salad. For the evening meal you can expect pasta, couscous, meat and vegetable stews, soup, rice and other such food, depending on what is available at the markets along the way.

You may also like to take some snacks with you to vary your diet – energy bars, dried fruit or sweets are generally appreciated.

All meals are included while on our tour in Chad, apart from the first day, and the evening of the final day. Allow around €20 for an evening meal at the hotel in N'Djamena.

Water will be taken from wells along the way – it is not possible to take a supply of bottled water from N'Djamena. This is treated with a sterilising agent such as Micropur to render it safe to drink.

You might also like to take a bottle of alcohol for the evening – after leaving N'Djamena it is unlikely that you will be able to buy any.



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### **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, on an expedition such as this we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### **Budgeting for your Tour**

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### **Food in N'Djamena**

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £10  
Dinner £15

### **Drink in N'Djamena**

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £3-4  
Water £1-2

### **Tipping – Guide and Drivers**

Tipping is commonly recognised as a way of rewarding guides and drivers for good service. If you are happy with your guide and driver, please consider leaving a tip for them. We recommend that each member of the tour give a tip of around €50 minimum which will then be divided amongst the tour staff.

### **Foreign Exchange**

**ATM Availability:** There are some ATM machines in N'Djamena but we do not recommend relying on them. ATM machines will not be available anywhere else on this expedition.

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Very few places outside main cities will accept cards.

**Local Currency:** CFA

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Euros. It is possible to exchange US dollars but it is more difficult to do

**Where to Exchange:** It is a simple procedure to change money in banks in Chad, although you should only rely on being able to do this in N'Djamena. It is also often possible to change money at hotels. Your guide will be able to give further advice on this. For our scheduled group tour, there is very little to spend money on once you leave N'Djamena

### **Joining your Tour**

### **Flight Information**

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight





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information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

### Visa Information

Visitors from most countries, including UK, EU and US visitors require a visa for entering Chad. In addition to this, you will require an invitation letter, which we will provide for you. Please note that the embassy requires a copy of a Yellow Fever certificate to issue the visa – you must ensure that this is up to date before applying for the visa. You are also required to send the original copy of your travel insurance certificate. There is no Chadian Embassy in the UK, and applications must be made to the embassy in Paris or Belgium. There is however an embassy in the US.

Please remember to bring 2 photos for the immigration service.

Visa regulations can frequently change. Therefore, we recommend that you check with your nearest embassy for the most up to date details.

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Africa, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis.

Vaccination against yellow fever is a compulsory requirement for entry into Chad, and you must bring your certificate with you. This may or may not be checked when you enter the country, but we strongly advise that you do not risk being denied entry.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

Generally speaking, the best time to visit Chad is between October / November and March, when the temperature by day will be hot, but not uncomfortably so. Nights in the desert can be cool with temperatures sometimes dipping into single figures in Celsius. Chad's rainy season is from May to September and travel can be difficult during this time but as a rule we do not run our group tours at this time. At times it can also be very windy in the Saharan desert.

### Clothing

Chad is quite warm and so light clothes are generally a good idea. You should ensure that you bring warmer clothes for evenings in the north – it can get a lot cooler in the north once the sun goes down so a warm fleece is a good idea. Cotton fabric is best when travelling in the desert during the day. A light windproof/waterproof jacket is advisable. Please remember that Chad has a large Muslim population and conservative attitudes towards dress, and so women should bear this in mind and ensure that clothing is appropriate. Shorts and a t-shirt/ undershirt are not well accepted by the local people.

### Equipment

Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. As our tour in Chad involves camping, a torch (flashlight) is essential. You should also bring a towel, a water bottle and toilet paper. You may also wish to consider bringing anti-bacterial hand lotion. You should also bring a lighter / matches (for burning toilet paper). Refreshing tissues and wipes will be a welcome addition to your kit list. If you wear contact lenses, you may wish to consider bringing a pair of glasses and/or a headscarf – it can get very dusty while driving and cause irritation to the eyes. You will also need to bring a sleeping bag. We would recommend a warm sleeping bag, as well as a sleep sheet for any hot nights. You may also like to bring an inflatable pillow, as these are not provided. Sleeping mats however are provided.

### Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended, as well as a pair of sandals.

### Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 17kgs, and should have soft sides. One large holdall/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

### Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V/50 Hz and plugs have two round pins like most European countries.

### Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated on 24/09/2018