



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

A Journey through Ukraine

Tour Duration – 14 Days



Tour Rating

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

Tour Pace - Moderate

Tour Highlights

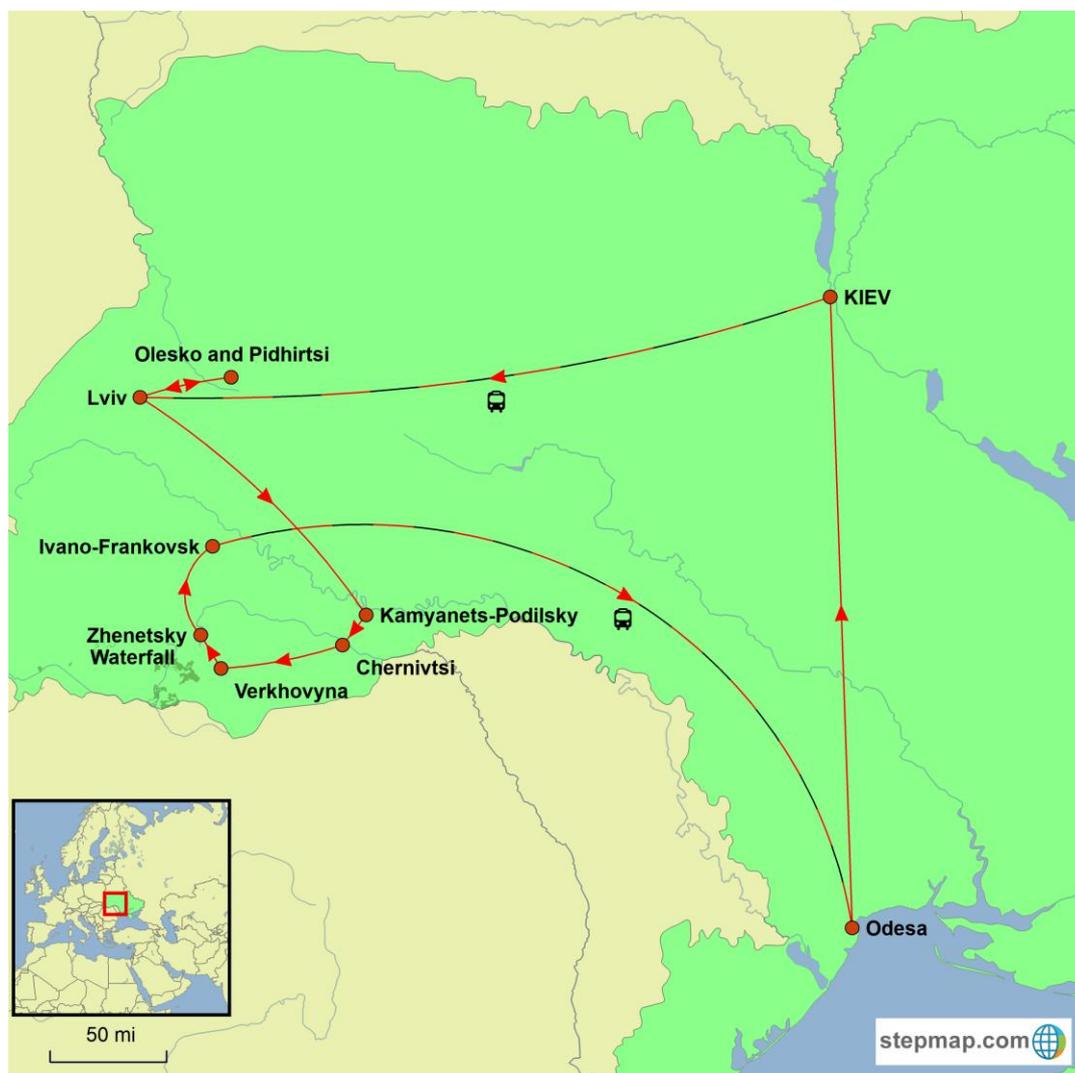
- ✓ Experience the old and new of Kiev
- ✓ Take in the medieval atmosphere of Lviv (UNESCO)
- ✓ Explore historic monasteries, churches and castles
- ✓ Appreciate the magnificent architecture of the Black Sea city of Odessa





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Tour Map - Ukraine - A Journey through Ukraine



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of comfortable hotels and overnight trains
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Kiev
End Point: Kiev
Transport: Private minibus, overnight sleeper trains
Countries: Ukraine



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A Journey through Ukraine

Even now, though the dissolution of the Soviet Union took place in 1991, Ukraine is still making history, notably through the Euromaidan Revolution of 2012-14 and the even more recent annexation of its territory in Crimea by an avaricious Russian neighbour. An immense country of beautiful cities, rich cultural sights and wild landscapes there's a lot of ground to cover. As well as private road transport, this journey allows active participation in the reality of being in Ukraine, taking overnight sleeper trains, exploring cities by tram and walking. As well as the cultured cities of Kiev and Odessa, time is spent among the Carpathians' rural mountain communities, allowing a glimpse back in time to when life was simpler but undoubtedly harder. In all, a fascinating fortnight.

Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, 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, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. 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.

On this tour for group size of 3 or more you will be accompanied by an English-speaking tour leader throughout, assisted where necessary by local English-speaking guides. If the group size is 1 or 2 then there will be no accompanying tour leader but you will still have the services of different local guides in each place.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Kiev

Arrive in Kiev and transfer to hotel accommodation. Depending upon flight arrival schedules there may be time to explore the city independently. Overnight Rus Hotel or similar.

Kiev

Kiev is one of the oldest cities in the region, founded back in the 5th century and becoming an important centre of Slavic culture. Falling under the rule of the Varangians sometime later it became the capital of Rus, benefitting from its position on the trade routes between Scandinavia and the Byzantine Empire and becoming infused with a wide variety of cultural influences which remain today. Over its time, Kiev has been sacked by the Mongols, incorporated within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and then absorbed into Russia and the Soviet Union. Straddling the banks of the Dnepr River, Kiev is Ukraine's most cosmopolitan city, and a real mix of old and new. With a historic old quarter, the city is packed full of monuments, the most famous being the Lavra cave monastery, a collection of underground chambers and spectacular churches dating back to the 11th century. Kiev is a city with an enormous amount of churches and cathedrals, with a particular style that looks almost Russian but is unique to Ukraine, and in many areas these dominate the skyline, reminding visitors of the intense respect that ordinary Ukrainians have for religion. But perhaps one of Kiev's greatest delights is simply walking around the city and seeing where you end up, discovering for yourself its corners, streets and cafes and immersing yourself in Ukrainian culture.



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Day 2 – Kiev

This morning we explore some of the key sights of Kiev, including the ancient onion-domed St Sophia Cathedral, the main boulevard of Kreschatyk, and the Golden Gates, the only remaining section of ancient Kiev's original fortifications. In the afternoon we visit the Pyrohovo Museum of Rural Life and Architecture, a restored village that contains excellent examples of traditional Ukrainian buildings in an open-air setting. Overnight Hotel Rus or similar. (B)

Day 3 – Kiev – Lviv

This morning we head to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kiev Pechersk Lavra cave monastery complex and its remarkable churches and underground tunnels. In the afternoon we visit Maidan Nezalezhnosti and learn about the Euromaidan Revolution of 2013-2014. Later we take dinner at a Crimean Tatar restaurant (payable locally) before heading to the railway station and boarding the overnight sleeper train to Lviv. (B)

Please note: *Train compartments are allocated on a twin share basis and are not single sex. If you would like to guarantee sole occupancy of a compartment, a supplement will apply. This is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.*

Please note: *Doors of train compartments can only be locked from the inside. Therefore, if you have solo occupancy and need to leave your compartment, you will not be able to lock the door, and your luggage/valuables may be at risk of theft. Tour guides cannot be responsible for passengers' belongings on this journey.*

Day 4 – Lviv

After an early arrival in Lviv there's a little time to freshen up before exploring the city. Lviv is renowned as one of the prettiest towns in Ukraine and its historic centre has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We take in some of its highlights, including the Opera House, the Dominican Church and Lviv High Castle, located at city's 413m highest point. The afternoon is free to relax or explore independently. Overnight George Hotel or similar (B)

Lviv

Lviv is a fantastically eclectic city with a wide variety of architectural styles combining to create a place with a split personality, but which somehow definitely works. Founded in the 13th century, Lviv is almost dripping with history, and walking around its wide boulevards and large squares you will see Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture among many other types. Its medieval atmosphere harks back to days when Lviv was at the forefront of regional events, and it was once a wealthy trading centre. Unlike many other cities in Ukraine, it mainly escaped the terrible destruction wrought by Nazi bombers in World War Two, and its charming streets make it one of the most exciting places in Ukraine to explore. Lviv has been named as the best place in Ukraine to live and wandering around its historic centre it is easy to see why.

Day 5 – Olesko and Pidhirtsi

Today we head east out of Lviv into the countryside to Olesko and Pidhirtsi to visit two palaces. The first at Olesko dates back to the 18th Century but was built on the site of a medieval fortress which was destroyed by Tatar in 15th Century. The second palace, Castle de la Fartin, located in Pidhirtsi is a chateau type residential castle fortress. Spend the day exploring these picturesque palaces before returning to Lviv. Overnight at George Hotel or similar (B)

Day 6 – Kamyanets-Podilsky – Chernivtsi

Today we drive to Kamyanets-Podilsky, an attractive town dramatically situated on a rocky island amid the Smotrych River. We visit the 11th century castle, one of Ukraine's most impressive fortresses, as well as the Old Quarter known for its colourful architecture. Later we drive to Chernivtsi for the night. Overnight Bukovyna Hotel or similar. (B)



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Day 7 – Chernivtsi – Carpathian Mountains

This morning we take a brief tour around Chernivtsi, once an elegant city but now delightfully ramshackle where its student population keeps things lively. Highlights include the City Hall Square and the State Chernivtsi University, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Afterwards we drive towards the Carpathian Mountains, stopping en route at Kolomyia to visit the Pysanka (Easter eggs) Museum, and at Nyzhni Verbizh to see the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. According to legend the church was built with the money collected by a 'Carpathian Robin Hood' in the 18th Century. In 1990 the structure was entirely covered in tin as funds did not exist to restore the original wooden tiles. Later we continue to Verkhovyna, a picturesque and very typical Carpathian village, a superb base for exploring the mountains and their communities. Overnight local hotel. (B)

The Carpathians

The Carpathian Mountains stretch across a wide part of Eastern Europe, encompassing parts of Romania, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Serbia. Rich in wildlife they are home to some of Europe's last remaining populations of large mammals, with bears, wolves and lynx to be found prowling through the forests. The birdlife here is equally spectacular, with raptors such as eagles a frequent sighting. This is one of the most pristine environments to be found on the continent and excellent walking country, with superb views to be had from every angle and the possibility of seeing wildlife adding further excitement. The mountains are also home to isolated rural communities of Hutsul people, who use the region for pasture for their flocks.

Day 8 – Carpathian Mountains

Today we explore this spectacular region. Staying in the village is like stepping back in time to a rural idyll far from the stress of urban life. Age-old traditions are still followed in this remote but beautiful corner of Ukraine. We visit the Museum of Roman Kumlyk, for its ethnological collection, and nearby workshops which both showcase a way of life that has long since disappeared elsewhere in Europe. Overnight at the local hotel. (B)

Please note: *Visiting the Museum of Roman Kumlyk requires a short 500m walk up the mountain, ascending approximately 75 metres.*

Hutsul people

The Hutsuls are a distinct ethnic group that live in Ukraine's mountains. Their origins are shrouded in mystery and they speak a unique language found nowhere else and unintelligible to the rest of the population – in many ways they can be considered as following the most traditional lifestyle in Ukraine. Hutsul culture is centred on forestry and livestock, and is represented through their craftsmanship; weaving, pottery and woodworking are typical manifestations of Hutsul crafts. The Hutsul place importance on social customs including dancing and like their language many Hutsul musical instruments are also unique.

Day 9 – Carpathian Mountains – Ivano-Frankivsk - Odessa

This morning we leave the hotel and visit Tatariv village and the nearby waterfall of Zhenetsky. Afterwards we continue Mykulychyn where it's possible to taste one of the best draught beers in Ukraine. On arrival in Ivano-Frankivsk we head to the railway station and board the overnight sleeper train to Odessa. (B)

Please note: *The walk to the waterfall is a fairly flat 6km round trip along a forest road that follows the river.*

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Day 10 – Odessa

Upon arrival we explore the historic city, located on the Black Sea, for centuries an important trading centre. Highlights include the legendary Potemkin Steps, the formal entrance to the city from the sea, made famous by Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 silent epic, *The Battleship Potemkin*, as well as the Opera House, considered one of the most beautiful in Europe. The afternoon is free to explore the city independently. Overnight Alexandrovskiy Hotel or similar. (B)

Please note: *Today a packed breakfast is taken when leaving the train*

Odessa

Odessa was an incredibly important city in both pre-revolutionary and Soviet Russia, with its access to the Black Sea and beyond. Dating back to the 3rd century, it was only captured by Russia in 1789 – prior to that it had fallen under Crimean Tatar control. Its status as a free port meant that immense wealth passed through it, with the result that it underwent a huge and rather elegant period of construction back in the early 19th century. Its historical architecture has a style more Mediterranean than Russian, having been heavily influenced by French and Italian styles. Some buildings are built in a mixture of different styles, including Art Nouveau, Renaissance and Classicist. Odessa is blessed with elegant palaces and graceful boulevards, making it a delightful place to stroll around and one of Ukraine's most pleasant cities.

Day 11 – Odessa

Today we visit the famous Privoz farmer's market, the largest in Odessa, which sells a wide variety of produce. We travel by tram and soak up the atmosphere, trying local food specialities and watching people going about their daily lives. In the afternoon we visit Shustov Cognac Winery Museum, visiting the cellars and tasting the brandy. Later we return to Odessa for the evening. Overnight Alexandrovskiy Hotel or similar. (BL)

Day 12 – Odessa

Spend this morning at leisure in Odessa. This afternoon we visit Odessa Catacombs and a cold war nuclear shelter. The day ends with a farewell dinner of traditional Odessa cuisine. Overnight Alexandrovskiy Hotel or similar (BD)

Day 13 - Odessa – Kiev

This morning we leave Odessa to begin the drive back to Kiev (approx. 6-7 hours with stopovers). En route we stop at Pobuzske Museum, the former location of the Strategic Missile Forces regiment. We arrive in Kiev early evening and check-in to the hotel for our last night in Ukraine. Overnight Rus Hotel or similar (B)

Day 14 – Departure

After breakfast at a suitable time you will be met and transferred to the airport for your departure (B)



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Tour inclusions/exclusions

Inclusions

Arrival and departure transfers
All accommodation
Services of English-speaking guides
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary
Overnight train journeys Kiev – Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk – Odessa on a twin share basis

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks

Important Information

Foreign Office 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.

Our tours to Ukraine do not visit any areas currently subject to UK FCO warnings. 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.

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

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.



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Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation. With a few exceptions you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary air-conditioning will be provided. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Single accommodation is not available on overnight train journeys; travellers will be allocated twin share accommodation. Please be advised that on overnight trains compartments are not divided by sex; single male and female passengers may be required to share the same compartment. If you are travelling alone and wish to guarantee a private compartment on the overnight trains for sole occupancy please contact us. An additional charge will apply.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

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, 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

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 £3-5
Dinner £6-9

Drink

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.

Water £0.30
Beer £1

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. A reasonable amount to tip a guide would be between \$10-20 per day between the groups. In restaurants tips of 10-15% are expected on top of the bill. Some restaurants include the service fee. When in a taxi tips are not normally required, but outstanding service can be rewarded within the same 10 – 15% or by rounding the amount up.



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Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: ATMs are wide spread but only the local currency only can be withdrawn. Some ATMs have a limit on the amount that can be withdrawn at one transaction

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: MasterCard, Maestro and VISA are usually accepted but American Express cards are rarely accepted in hotels and retail locations.

Local Currency: Hryvnia (UAH)

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US dollars or Euros

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as 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 an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight 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

Most nationals, including EU, UK and US citizens no longer require a visa to visit Ukraine for stays of less than 90 days.

Regulations do frequently change though, so we advise that you check the current requirements with your nearest embassy.

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.



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Vaccinations & Protection

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 and B, Polio and Typhoid.

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.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

It's possible to visit Ukraine at any time of year, but it's significantly warmer from June to September. The winter months can experience significant snowfall – although that's not necessarily an impediment to visiting it can limit your options to explore the mountains, and is accompanied by shorter days.

Clothing

Our general recommendation is to bring light clothing with a couple of fleeces or jumpers for cooler evenings. You should also bring a waterproof jacket for any days that it may rain. You should bring at least one long sleeved top and for women, a scarf to cover your head for any churches that you will visit.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must – you should not rely on being able to find it in Ukraine.

Insect repellent, including a bite spray will be useful to have. You should also bring a torch / flashlight.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended although sandals will be suitable for travelling in general.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable. We advise you to travel with a rucksack or soft bag rather than a suitcase.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 220V AC (50 Hz) and uses European two circular pin style plugs. A so-called Europlug or CEE7/16 should work with all outlets, both Soviet era and new ones.

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 14 November 2019