

LIMITED
TO 28 GUESTS

UPPER MEKONG & THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

INCLUDING PRIVATE MEKONG RIVER CRUISE
LAOS, THAILAND



TOP LEFT: SOP RUAK, GOLDEN TRIANGLE; MONKS; MEKONG EXPLORER; WAT HO PRABANG; KUANG SI FALLS; TEMPLE DETAIL, LUANG PRABANG

Join this adventure expedition cruise on the Upper Mekong River sailing through remote waters and stopping at local villages. Our 11 day cruise aboard Mekong Explorer commences in Vientiane, the laid back capital of Laos. We will pass through deep gorges to mystical Luang Prabang, the former Laotian royal capital, visit the Pak Ou Caves and pass idyllic villages and mountain scenery as we sail to the Golden Triangle on the border of Burma, Laos and Thailand. This true adventure tour is limited to 28 guests aboard our privately chartered Mekong River ship, Mekong Explorer. The mighty Mekong River flows through six countries and, until recently, has been unnavigable in its upper reaches. The Captain's Choice Tour is proud to offer a unique experience for travellers seeking to explore some truly remote destinations. This fully escorted tour includes all meals, beer, wine and soft drinks with dinner each evening (except dine-around nights) and all sightseeing.

TRAVEL DATES

11 October – 27 October 2012 (17 Days)

DAY 1: THURSDAY 11 OCTOBER

Depart UK

Depart UK on overnight flight to Vientiane.

DAY 2: FRIDAY 12 OCTOBER

Vientiane (Laos)

On arrival in Vientiane, the capital and largest city in Laos, we check into our luxury hotel, the Settha Palace, for a two night stay.

DAY 3: SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER

Vientiane

Landlocked and laid back, Laos is the forgotten country of South East Asia. Closed to the west for many years, Vientiane has a timeless feel.

Enjoy a free morning to relax and in the afternoon we embark on a halfday tour of Vientiane including the Lao National Museum housed in a colonial building, once the home of the French Governor. Inside we learn about Lao's ancient history and archaeology of the Mekong River with the numerous artefacts on display. Welcome Reception and Dinner this evening.



ARC DE TRIOMPHE,
VIENTIANE

DAY 4: SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER
Vientiane – Join Mekong Explorer

This morning we will visit the national symbol of Laos and the country's holiest site, the striking gold painted That Luang Temple built in 1556 and the picturesque Arc de Triomphe – the remains of French influence are still visible in the city.

After lunch in town we will travel by coach approximately two hours north to embark on our boutique river vessel the Mekong Explorer. Settle into your cabin and unpack for our 11 day cruise. Enjoy the spacious decks and lounge area to meet

fellow travellers and savour delicious Asian or European meals throughout our journey.

DAY 5: MONDAY 15 OCTOBER
Cruising the Mighty Mekong

This morning we begin the spectacular river cruise upstream into formerly inaccessible parts of the Mekong River.

Enjoy the comfort and service onboard. During the next few days of your river cruise you will experience exciting shore excursions and enjoy a programme filled with information in the form of presentations, talks or documentaries on topics such as; the French Mekong Expedition of the 1860s; the daily life of a Buddhist Novice; or the Plants and Fruits of the Mekong region. We visit



MEKONG EXPLORER

a small riverside community this afternoon that will allow you to get acquainted with the life of the local Lao Lum minority.

DAY 6: TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER
Pak Lay

As we travel north we will discover some of the most remarkable and impressive landscapes of this still untamed river. The landscape becomes more and more spectacular with hills covered in tropical vegetation, awe inspiring rock formations along the river banks and a fascinating array of fast currents and calm river parts. The power of the mighty Mekong will give our cruise the feeling of a real expedition. You will discover some of the last unknown regions of South East Asia including the small riverside community of Pak Lay, once known for possessing many colonial buildings.

We visit the local market with its many exotic offerings before we spend the night onboard close to the Thai-Laotian border.

DAY 7: WEDNESDAY 17 OCTOBER
Tha Deua

During breakfast onboard enjoy the beautiful view and watch local fishermen along the shore as we travel further on the mighty Mekong River. We will have the opportunity to meet the people of the small village of Hua Hip. Today you will also see the Mekong ferry crossing at Tha Deua, connecting Luang Prabang Province with the Sainyabuli Province.



MT PHOU SI, LUANG PRABANG; MEKONG EXPLORER DINING; KUANG SI FALLS

DAY 8: THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER Kuang Si Falls – Luang

Today a shore excursion will take you to the Kuang Si Falls, some of the most attractive waterfalls in Laos.

In the afternoon you will reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos.

Your exploration of Luang Prabang begins with a walk up Mt Phou Si, a 100m high hill, which offers a spectacular view over the Mekong as well as the Nam Khan River and the surrounding mountains.

In the evening enjoy strolling along the Mekong promenade or visit the colourful night market of the local Hmong minority.

DAY 9: FRIDAY 19 OCTOBER Luang Prabang

Enjoy breakfast onboard. Today we go ashore to see numerous temples and the neighbouring French colonial architecture of this UNESCO World Heritage town.

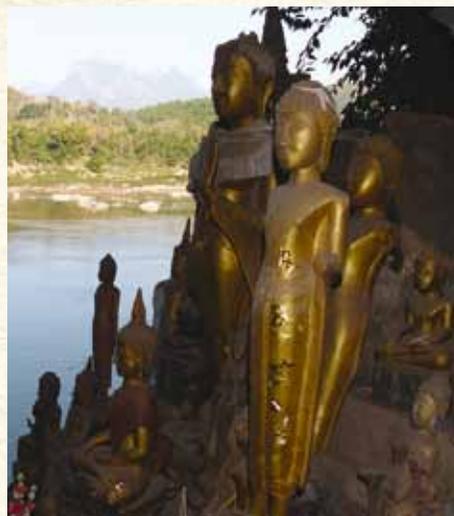
► *Enjoy a dine-around evening, choose*

a fine dining restaurant in town or along the Mekong River.

DAY 10: SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER Luang Prabang – Pak Ou Caves

► *Rise early to see the hundreds of monks walking to their temples and receiving alms from the faithful in the early morning light. Return to the ship for breakfast.*

Our journey continues north to a small



PAK OU CAVES

riverside village for a tour and to see their local distillery, before walking through the forest to the famous Pak Ou Caves, with thousands of small Buddha statues inside the caverns.

This evening we enjoy dinner in a beautiful riverside location.

DAY 11: SUNDAY 21 OCTOBER Pak Beng

After breakfast our voyage continues to a small village where we stop to hopefully see working elephants beside the river.

Later in the day we have a brief visit in the small market town of Pak Beng. We go ashore for coffee at a lodge overlooking the Mekong then visit the market with its array of small stalls and shops along the one main street.

DAY 12: MONDAY 22 OCTOBER Pak Tha

Today is a day to take it all in – relax on deck, in your comfortable cabin or in

the lounge and soak up the untouched scenery as we cruise among the green hills towards Pak Tha. The river traffic thins out as we proceed upstream and the diversity of the landscape is breathtaking, shifting to tropical hills in the background. Enjoy the tranquillity of northern Laos, a real retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

DAY 13: TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER Pak Tha – Huay Xai

This morning we join a long tail boat for a trip up the Nam Tha River to visit a remote Khmu village. We will be welcomed to the mayor's house and we visit the school to learn more about the way of life in this amazing region.

Upon reboarding the Mekong Explorer we will proceed to the Laotian-Thai border at Huay Xai (Laos) and Chiang Khong (Thailand).

This last evening onboard will be celebrated with a special dinner.

DAY 14: WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER
Golden Triangle (Thailand)

Disembark this morning in Chiang Khong and enjoy a full day excursion to the Golden Triangle. Sights today include the Hall of opium where we learn about this notorious crop; the Giant Buddha, overlooking the Mekong at Sop Ruak, and the smugglers' town of Mai Sai on the Thai/Burmese border, where thousands of stalls sell contraband.

We check in this afternoon for two nights at the sumptuous, five star Anantara Resort.

► *Dine-around dinner this evening at either of our hotel's fine restaurants.*

► *This afternoon tour Doi Tung Botanical Gardens in a beautiful hilltop setting within this infamous region, where the King and Queen of Thailand have encouraged modern crops to replace opium poppies.*

DAY 15: THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER
Chiang Saen

A leisurely day to enjoy the wonderful facilities of our resort and the town of Chiang Saen.



GOLDEN TRIANGLE

► *This morning you may wish to participate in a Thai cooking class; take an elephant ride (additional cost); or tour Doi Tung Botanical Gardens in a beautiful hilltop setting within this infamous region, where the King and Queen of Thailand have encouraged modern crops to replace opium poppies.*

We come together for our Farewell Dinner this evening.

DAY 16: FRIDAY 26 OCTOBER
Depart Chiang Saen

Enjoy a relaxing morning and lunch in our hotel before transferring to Chiang Rai for our flight home, via Bangkok.

DAY 17: SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER
Arrive UK

We arrive in UK this morning.

JOIN US ABOARD THE
MEKONG EXPLORER

The Captain's Choice Tour has exclusively chartered the Mekong Explorer for this fascinating journey of discovery.

Completed in 2009 this purpose built teak ship offers 16 cabins in three different categories over two decks. All air-conditioned cabins have twin beds and private ensuite. The Classic Cabins measure approximately 12.5sqm while the Junior Suites measure approximately 15.5sqm, all with wide sliding panoramic windows and a French balcony providing a fantastic view of the surrounding landscapes. In addition there are two Suites measuring approximately 21sqm with a private balcony. The river ship has a large sun deck and a Restaurant/Bar area on the upper deck. A selection of Asian and European food will be provided throughout the cruise. Complimentary wine, beer/lao and soft drinks will be provided throughout dinners. Please enquire for full deck plan.



TOUR COST

Based on twin share (Classic Cabin on ship), per person, from London.

Prices from other UK regional airports are available on request.

ECONOMY CLASS.....	£8,670
BUSINESS CLASS.....	£10,050
FIRST CLASS.....	£11,780

Regional flights are in Economy Class.

LAND & CRUISE ONLY

(Join Vientiane after dinner on Day 2, depart Chiang Saen after lunch Day 16)..... £7,555

SUPPLEMENTS (Add to Main Tour cost)

JUNIOR SUITE ON SHIP (per person, twin share)	£1,785
SUITE ON SHIP (per person, twin share)	£2,375
SINGLE ROOM (Hotels, Classic Cabin on ship)	£2,160
SINGLE ROOM (Hotels, Junior Suite on ship)	£3,945
SINGLE ROOM (Hotels, Suite on ship)	£5,130

Single rooms at these prices may be limited.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

It is our intention to set out clearly and simply the responsibilities which we at The Captain's Choice Tour have to you and which you, in turn, have to us when a contract is made between us. A contract will exist as soon as we issue a confirmation invoice in response to your booking and subsequent deposit paid to us. On our part, we have obligations to provide you with the tour you have booked on the terms clearly stated below and within this brochure. All holidays featured are operated by The Captain's Choice Tour, a trading division of Australian Pacific Touring (UK) Ltd with whom your contract is made, a member of ABTA (member no. V9080).

BOOKING YOUR HOLIDAY Bookings can be secured with a deposit of £1000 per person within 7 days from booking (£1500 per person single). If you are booking within 60 days of departure then full payment is required. Your booking is taken to be confirmed and accepted in respect of all persons travelling when we issue a confirmation invoice. All correspondence and communications will be sent to the address of the first person listed in the booking file unless you specify otherwise. Balance of all payments is required at least 60 days prior to departure from your country of origin. Children are not recommended to participate in an escorted tour and must be accompanied by an adult. NB: some cabins on selected cruise tours require a 25% deposit. This will be advised at time of booking. If the deposit and/or balance is not paid in time, we shall cancel your travel arrangements. If the balance is not paid in time, we shall retain your deposit. All monies you pay to the travel agent are held by him on our behalf at all times.

YOUR HOLIDAY PRICE We reserve the right to alter the prices of any of the holidays shown in our brochure. You will be advised of the current price of the holiday that you wish to book before your contract is confirmed. Changes in transportation costs, including the cost of fuel, dues, taxes or fees chargeable for services such as landing taxes or embarkation or disembarkation fees at ports and airports and exchange rates mean that the price of your travel arrangements may change after you have booked. However, there will be no change within 30 days of your departure. We will absorb and you will not be charged for any increase equivalent to 2% of the price of your travel arrangements, which excludes any amendment charges. You will be charged for the amount over and above that. If this means that you have to pay an increase of more than 10% of the price of your travel arrangements, you will have the option of accepting a change to another holiday if we are able to offer one (if this is of equivalent or higher quality you will not have to pay more but if it is of lower quality you will be refunded the difference in price), or cancelling and receiving a full refund of all monies paid, except for any amendment charges. Should you decide to cancel for this reason, you must exercise your right to do so within 14 days from the issue date printed on your final invoice. Should the price of your holiday go down due to the changes mentioned above, by more than 2% of your holiday cost, then any refund due will be paid to you. However, please note that travel arrangements are not always purchased in local currency and some apparent changes have no impact on the price of your travel due to contractual and other protection in place.

FLIGHT INCLUSIVE PRICE The flights inclusive cost quoted in this brochure act as a suggested price for the published holiday. Changing airfares, fuel surcharges, and government taxes as well as changing airline flight schedules mean flight inclusive prices will be confirmed at time of booking. Some airlines insist on full flight payment, in this case an additional deposit will be requested at time of booking.

BROCHURE VALIDITY The itineraries and fares shown in this brochure are effective from September 2011 to December 2012. Please check at time of your enquiry or booking to ensure you are aware of any changes to your itinerary. This supersedes any previous brochure.

IF YOU DECIDE TO CHANGE YOUR BOOKING Should you wish to change your tour arrangements in any way after we have accepted your booking, we shall endeavour to meet your wishes, but a handling fee of £25 per person will be charged to cover administration costs. You may have to pay any additional costs incurred (such as the cost of a replacement visa, re-ticketing costs of scheduled transport etc.).

IF YOU CANCEL YOUR BOOKING If, after we have accepted your booking, you find it necessary to cancel or if you do not pay the balance when it becomes due, the deposits paid will be forfeited. A cancellation can only be accepted in writing from the person who made the booking. The cancellation will be effective from the date on which it is received at our offices. Cancellations received after full payment has been made will incur higher charges, to offset expenses and losses:

More than 120 days prior to departure.....Deposits forfeited
119 – 61 days prior to departure.....50% of tour price
60 days or less prior to departure.....100% of tour price

If tour has commenced, 100% of full tour price. There is no refund for unused services or if portions of the land arrangements are missed. Cancellation fees also apply to additional accommodation reserved prior to and after the tour. These cancellation fees are in addition to any fees that may be levied by your travel agent. All being subject to a minimum charge of deposit paid. If the reason for your cancellation falls within the terms of your insurance cover, you may be able to claim a refund of your cancellation charges from the insurance company.

AMENDMENTS OR CANCELLATION BY THE CAPTAIN'S CHOICE TOUR It is unlikely that we will have to make any changes to your tour, but it must be remembered that we plan the arrangements many months in advance, and sometimes, changes may be needed and we reserve the right to make them whenever it is necessary. Most of these changes are minor. Unless the change significantly alters the holiday, compensation will not be payable. As is normally the case with group tours, a minimum number of bookings is required in order for a tour to be financially viable and to have a pleasant group atmosphere. In the event that adequate numbers cannot be achieved, it may be necessary for The Captain's Choice Tour to cancel a scheduled departure and to offer the nearest possible alternative (or, of course, a full refund of the money paid). The date on which the decision is made about whether a

tour will operate is no later than eight weeks before the scheduled departure date.

Please note that carriers such as airlines used in the brochure may be subject to change. Such a change is deemed to be a minor change. Other examples of minor changes include alteration of your outward/return flights by less than 12 hours, changes to aircraft type, change of accommodation to another of the same standard. In accordance with EU Regulation 2111/2005, we are required to advise you of the actual carrier operating your flight/ connecting flight/transfer. We do this by listing carriers to be used or likely to be used as follows: British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Ethiopian Airlines, Iberia, Kenya Airlines, Korean Air, Lufthansa and Thai Airways. Any changes to the actual airline after you have received your tickets will be notified to you as soon as possible and in all cases at check-in or at the boarding gate. Such a change is deemed to be a minor change. Other examples of minor changes include alteration of your outward/return flights by less than 12 hours, changes to aircraft type, change of accommodation to another of the same standard.

THE CAPTAIN'S CHOICE TOUR LIABILITY If the contract we have with you is not performed or is improperly performed by us or our suppliers we will pay you appropriate compensation if this has affected the enjoyment of your travel arrangements. However we will not be liable where any failure in the performance of the contract is due to: you; or a third party unconnected with the provision of the travel arrangements and where the failure is unforeseeable or unavoidable; or unusual and unforeseeable circumstances beyond our control, the consequences of which could not have been avoided even if all due care had been exercised; or an event which we or our suppliers, even with all due care, could not foresee or forestall. Our liability, except in cases involving death, injury or illness, shall be limited to a full refund of the holiday tariff plus a maximum of up to £2000 per person affected unless a lower limitation applies to your claim under sub-clauses of this clause. This maximum amount will only be payable where everything has gone wrong and you have not received any benefit at all from your holiday. Our liability will also be limited in accordance with and/or in an identical manner to

(a) The contractual terms of the companies that provide the transportation for your travel arrangements. These terms are incorporated into this contract; and

(b) Any relevant international convention, for example the Montreal Convention in respect of travel by air, the Athens Convention in respect of travel by sea, the Berne Convention in respect of travel by rail and the Paris Convention in respect of the provision of accommodation, which limit the amount of compensation that you can claim for death, injury, delay to passengers and loss, damage and delay to luggage. We are to be regarded as having all benefit of any limitation of compensation contained in these or any conventions. You can ask for copies of the transport companies' contractual terms, or the international conventions, from our offices. Under EU law (Regulation 261/2004), you have rights in some circumstances to refunds and/ or compensation from your airline in cases of denied boarding, cancellation or delay to flights. Full details of these rights will be publicised at EU airports and will also be available from airlines. However, reimbursement in such cases will not automatically entitle you to a refund of your holiday cost from us. Your right to a refund and/or compensation from us is set out in clause 7. If any payments to you are due from us, any payment made to you by the airline will be deducted from this amount. If your airline does not comply with these rules, you should complain to the Air Transport Users' Council on 020 7240 6061 www.auc.org.uk

EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY – IS THIS HOLIDAY RIGHT FOR YOU? All passengers will be required to complete a fitness/activity questionnaire at time of booking. If you, or any member of your party have a medical condition or disability which may affect your ability to fully participate in the holiday, we ask that you please tell us before you confirm your holiday booking, so we are able to advise as to the suitability of your chosen arrangements. Please note that many places visited on most of our tours are unsuitable for travellers requiring wheelchairs or walking frames because of the infrastructure of the destinations and/or the transport used. In any event, you must provide us with full details in writing at time of booking. If we reasonably feel we are unable to properly accommodate particular needs of the person concerned, we reserve the right to decline the booking after consultation with the Tour Doctor. No passenger will be permitted to embark or continue on the tour while their mental or physical condition is, in the opinion of any representative of the company, such as to render them incapable of caring for themselves, or whereby they become objectionable to other passengers, or they become a hazard to themselves or other passengers. The company will not be responsible for expenses resulting in such persons being precluded from completing the tour for any reason. A doctor will travel with the group for the duration of the tour. The doctor may or may not accompany pre and post tour options. The doctor is an independent registered medical practitioner who is available to provide immediate but limited medical attention to tour guests should the need arise. The doctor carries his or her own independent professional indemnity insurance and carries a limited amount of medical supplies. The Captain's Choice Tour is not responsible or liable for any advice or treatment that may be provided by the doctor, or any failure to fully diagnose or treat any medical injury or condition which may arise or be identified during the course of the tour.

ITINERARIES The information contained within this brochure is, to the best of our knowledge correct at the time of going to print.

IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT If a problem occurs during your tour then you should tell a representative so that steps can be taken to resolve the matter on the spot. If you remain dissatisfied, any complaint must be made in writing to us within 28 days. Maximum compensation will only be considered where everything has gone wrong and you have not received any benefit at all from your holiday. The arbitration scheme is arranged by ABTA and administered independently by IDRS, part of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. It provides for a simple and inexpensive method of arbitration on documents alone with restricted liability on you in respect of costs. Full details will be provided on request or can be obtained from the ABTA website. The Scheme does not apply to claims for an amount greater than £5,000 per person. Neither does it apply to claims which are

solely in respect of physical injury or illness or their consequences. The Scheme can however deal with compensation claims which include an element of minor injury or illness subject to a limit of £1,000 on the amount the arbitrator can award per person in respect of this element. The application for arbitration and Statement of Claim must be received by IDRS within nine months of the date of return from the holiday. Outside this time limit, arbitration under the Scheme may still be available if the company agrees, but the ABTA Code does not require such agreement. For injury and illness claims, you may like to use the ABTA / Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Mediation Procedure. This is a voluntary scheme and requires us to agree for mediation to go ahead. The aim is to help you resolve your dispute in a quick and cost effective way. Details on request or from www.abta.com.

CONSUMER PAYMENT PROTECTION The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 require us to provide security for the monies that you pay for the package holidays booked from this brochure and for your repatriation in the event of our insolvency. We provide this security by way of an ATOL (number 6781) administered by the Civil Aviation Authority and a bond held by ABTA. If you book arrangements other than a package holiday from this brochure, the financial protection referred to above does not apply. When you buy ATOL protected air holiday packages from The Captain's Choice Tour you will receive a Confirmation Invoice from us (or via our authorised agent through which you booked) confirming your arrangements and your protection under our Air Travel Organiser's Licence number (6781). In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking. For further information, visit the ATOL website at www.atol.org.uk. The price of our air holiday packages includes the amount of £1 per person as part of the ATOL Protection Contribution (APC) we pay to the CAA. This charge is included in our advertised prices (and will be shown separately on your confirmation invoice).

PASSPORTS/VISAS/TRAVEL DOCUMENTS A full passport is required. In the case of British citizens, this means a 10-year British Passport. Your specific passport and visa requirements, and other immigration requirements re your responsibility and you should confirm these with the relevant Embassies and/or consulates. We do not accept any responsibility if you cannot travel because you have not complied with any passport, visa or immigration requirements. Please enquire for details on how we can assist. Please ensure you carefully read your confirmation invoice, tickets and all other documents we send to you as soon as you receive them, and contact us, if any information appears to be incorrect. We regret that we cannot accept any liability if we are not notified of any inaccuracy in any document within 14 days of sending it to you. While we will do our best to rectify any changes made outside this time, it is your responsibility for any additional costs which may be involved, except in the case of an error made by The Captain's Choice Tour and where there is reason for you not contacting us within the specified time.

FORCE MAJEURE Compensation will not be payable if we are forced to cancel or change your travel arrangements in any way for reasons of war, threat of war, riot, civil strife, industrial dispute, terrorist activity, natural or nuclear disaster, fire, adverse weather conditions or other circumstances amounting to force majeure. World weather is becoming more erratic and unpredictable and we cannot be held responsible for disruption to your holiday due to bad or unusual weather conditions.

DATA PROTECTION Please be assured that we have measures in place to protect the personal booking information held by us. However, in order to make your booking and ensure that your travel arrangements run smoothly, we need to use the information you provide and pass on to the operator or other relevant suppliers. The information may also be provided to public authorities such as customs or immigration if required by them, or as required by law. As your holiday with us may be outside the European Economic Area, controls on data protection may not be as strong as the legal requirements in this country. We will only pass your information on to persons responsible for your travel arrangements. This applies to any sensitive information that you give to us such as details of any disabilities or dietary/ religious requirements. (If we cannot pass this information to the relevant suppliers, whether in the EEA or not, we will be unable to provide your booking. In making this booking, you consent to this information being passed on to the relevant persons.)

UNUSED SERVICES No refunds can be given for unused or partially used services during the tour programme.

GROUP TOUR It may be possible to make individual alterations to the itinerary away from the group (e.g. leave/return to the UK earlier/later) however these changes may be subject to an amendment fee.

PHOTO CREDITS Photographs or videos of the tour may be taken which may be used for promotional purposes. Completion of your registration/ booking form and acceptance documents indicates your acceptance and release for this material to be used for promotional or resale purposes. If you submit photographs to be included on the group's DVD of images we reserve the right to publish them in future promotional material.

INSURANCE Passengers are recommended to ensure that they have arranged for comprehensive travel insurance themselves, as this is not included.

TOUR COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE Passport and visa charges, vaccinations and on-tour suggested medications, items of a purely personal nature (laundry bills, bar bills, phone calls, etc), meals, tours and transport away from the group tour, excess luggage, beverages (alcoholic or otherwise except where specified), travel insurance, excursions not included in tours plus any other items not mentioned in this brochure.