

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

Below is important information to help you prepare before you go on tour, and ensures you understand what is expected of you and your responsibility as either an adult traveler, a student traveler, or the parents of a student traveler.

Please take a moment and read through it all and get in touch with Us or your group leader if you have any questions

Passport and Visa

You as a traveler are fully responsible to make sure that your travel documents are in order and fit for travelling. You need to double check that your passport is valid for your destination. Normally a **minimum of six months** after your travel period is needed before the expiration date in your passport. Should you need to renew your passport, do so in time and start the process at least 4-6 months prior to departure. If your passport expires shortly after (4-6 months) your travel dates, you should double check and verify with authorities, but we recommend you to renew it.

To ensure compliance with visa requirements for your destination, please familiarize yourself with the necessary documentation. If you need assistance, feel free to contact us, and we'll guide you through the process and facilitate the visa application on your behalf.

Remember!

1. Prior to Tour

- Make sure you understand the local currency of your destination, it will prevent you from making mistakes when handling the new currency while on tour. You may want to create a quick conversion chart to be better prepared when making small impulse purchases on tour.
- We advise you to exchange some money into your destination currency before departure; just enough to keep you going the first day or two.
- We also advise you to make a packing check list. Make sure you do not forget any important items. You can also use your packing checklist when on tour, to ensure you do not leave anything behind at the hotels.
- It is always a good idea to learn some of the basic language for the destinations on tour. Polite phrases such as “excuse me,” “please,” and “thank you” will make a big difference in the way the locals will react to you.
- Minimize your luggage. Never bring more than you can carry yourself. Do not bring items unless you really need them on tour.
- Avoid bringing electrical devices (hair dryer, toothbrush etc.) as the voltage is different in in africa
- compared to the USA. Modern electronics such as tablets, smart phones and similar are chargeable on all voltage levels, but you will need an adapter for your plug.

- If you are not using your smartphone as an alarm clock, make sure you bring an alarm clock.

2. While on Tour

- Try to stay awake until at least 10pm on arrival day so that you get rid of your jetlag ASAP.
- Respect the group by being on time for all appointments and departures. Being late is both disrespectful to others and can cause you to miss your departure.
- Make sure you take care of your valuables. Keep your money in a safe place at all times, especially when in a crowded space such as public transport or elevators. Do not have mobile phones sticking out of your pockets and avoid having valuables visible when in public spaces with plenty of tourists.
- Carry small amounts of cash that will be enough for one day only.
- Make sure that you always keep an eye on your luggage. You are responsible for making sure it is being loaded onto the tour bus.
- Do not leave the group at any time, unless agreed upon and approved by your Group Leader. When traveling with the group, make sure that the Tour Manager and Group Leader know where you are if you need to go to the restrooms or similar. Make sure you notify the leaders upon your return.
- When traveling in a foreign country you are an ambassador for your school, city, and country. Behave responsibly. If you are not certain of the local manners, observe the locals.
- Be silent in hotels at night. Your group is not the only guest at the hotel and some guests might be sleeping early. Do not slam doors or shout in corridors.
- Keep your hotel room neat and clean and be respectful to hotel staff.
- When on the tour bus, do not litter or put dirty feet on the seats. Be friendly and respectful to your driver, his/her cooperation is crucial for a good tour.
- You may be held responsible for any damage to hotels and buses

STUDENT RULES

A tour abroad entails a lot of responsibility and good judgement by all travelers in the group. You will encounter differences in culture and habits. The following rules have been set out precisely to help manage these differences and to ensure a safe, pleasant, and relaxed tour for all members of the group.

Stay in subgroups

It is very important that your teacher and group leader is aware of your whereabouts throughout the tour. During your free time away from the main group you should always stay in small groups of minimum four students together, provided that you have the permission to leave the main group by your Group Leader. Be very clear about where you are going, your timings, with whom you are, and when you are expected to return. Make sure that you have the address and phone number of your hotel and your Tour Manager on you at all times. Use free Wi-Fi in public places to update your group leader in the event of any changes.

Use and possession of alcohol and narcotic substances

Under no circumstances shall any student under the age of 21 drink any alcohol while on tour. If you break this rule you will be sent back home at your own expense. Parents will be consulted prior to any actions to discuss the situation. Any student in possession of and/or using any type of narcotic substance will be sent home and the expense of this will be covered by parents.

Weapons

No weapons of any sort are allowed on tour. Weapons including, but not limited to, souvenir knives of any kind are all forbidden to be carried on tour.

Student curfew

Students must be in their hotel rooms by midnight. Exceptions for curfew timings may occur when the Group Leader and/or a scheduled activity necessitates staying out later.

Vehicles

It is strictly forbidden for students on tour to rent and/or use any type of motor driven vehicles.

Drones and flying objects

Travelers are not allowed to bring and/or use any type of drone or other remote controlled flying objects on tour.

Visiting family and friends

Should you wish to visit friends and/or family while on tour, you must have written permission from your parent and/or legal guardian prior to tour departure date. Your Group Leader must be informed, provide his/her consent to the visit, and receive a copy of such written permission prior to the tour departure date.

When on tour, be respectful and mindful of your fellow travelers. Always think about your own safety and wellbeing on tour. Please remember that what is OK for you, might not be OK for others, so please consider the group and your roommates and respect them by using good judgement and common sense. At all times, YOU are responsible for being on time and for your own belongings including luggage and valuables.

SAFETY ON TOUR

Safety on tour is a top priority for Explore culture

We are committed to providing safe environments for all those who embark on a exploreculture adventure. Our dedication to safety on tour ensures that it is a key driver of any decisions that are made throughout the tour planning phase as well as during your tour.

Traveling to new places, seeing new countries, and exploring different cultures is often a big leap outside your comfort zone. While there will always be situations outside of our control, we want you to relax and enjoy your travels as much as possible. Knowing that your health and safety at all times has been duly considered is just one way that we can ensure you have the best possible experience while on tour.

General Group Safety

While on tour, it is each individual travelers' responsibility to always act responsibly and follow any given instructions from your Group Leader, Tour Manager, and Guides throughout the tour.

Traffic safety

As a pedestrian, avoid jay-walking, wait for the green light, and always pay attention to traffic coming from both directions. Be aware that there may be vehicles and bikes on a different side of the road to what you are used to in your home country. Make sure you look both ways carefully before crossing roads. Always use pedestrian crossings and traffic light crossings.

Swim and water safety

If there are swimming opportunities or swimming pools at your hotel, never go swimming without having informed your Group Leader first. Never go alone and always follow restrictions and regulations. Stay as a group and avoid diving.

Fire and hotel safety

Locate fire and emergency exits closest to your room. Discuss with your roommates which route you will take in case of fire. Read the fire safety instructions in your room. At night, always keep your door locked from the inside.

Medical related

In case you are taking medicine (prescription or otherwise), please make sure your Group Leader and another adult on tour is aware of your procedures and what to do in an emergency situation. All medicines you bring on tour should be kept in their original packaging with prescription instructions labelled. For severe allergies, please make sure you have informed both your Group Leader and explore

culture in advance so we can help you you avoid any meals that can put you in danger. We also have medical emergency contacts on standby in case of any emergencies.

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Use of substances

Unless agreed and signed for from a parent, guardian, or Group Leader, any form of substance such as alcohol or other intoxicating substances are completely forbidden on tour. If an alcohol waiver is signed by parents for students that fall within the legal drinking age, it is then permissible to have small amounts (a glass of wine or beer) to accompany meals, but any excessive drinking is strictly forbidden.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

Explore culture continually considers current travel safety recommendations which are advised by regional, and local government bodies, and by organizations such as the Ghana Tourism Association (GTA). These help us understand and define what are considered safe areas for group travel so they can be followed and adhered to. In the case of heightened threats (such as terror, weather, civil unrest, or any other safety threat that could compromise group safety), Explore Culture and all explore culture employees and groups will avoid the compromised areas that are deemed unsafe. In the event of an emergency situation while on tour, the group must follow all of the instructions given by the Tour Manager. If the group is not all together, separated group members should immediately rejoin the main group or follow instructions given previously regarding the group congregation point. In the case of an armed attack, all travelers must adopt the "Run, hide, tell routine":

Run – don't hide under a table or play dead. Run out of the building. Don't try to negotiate.

Hide – if you can't get out of the building, barricade yourself behind a steel door, stay quiet, and turn your phone on silent.

Tell – phone the police as soon as you can, give exact locations, what kind of weapon the terrorist might have had, and if there are any casualties.

Contingency Planning and rerouting

Contingency planning ensures that proper and immediate follow-up steps are set out by Lingo Tours in response to the rise of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance.

Although each emergency or unanticipated situation that may arise is different, should a serious incident occur in the immediate area or near the area of the tour route, explore culture adopts the following procedure:

Assemble group all together – If an emergency situation arises during a structured free time period, all travelers are to congregate in the designated safe point/safe area to which they have been previously communicated.

Remove the group from the affected area – All travelers will be removed from the affected areas and the tour rerouted to a safe destination.

Reconnect with original itinerary – As soon as deemed safe, the original tour itinerary will be linked back into and the tour will continue as originally scheduled.

Any extra costs inflicted by the emergency situation or disturbance event will be covered by explore culture – this includes accommodation, transportation, as well any meals that would have otherwise been included in the itinerary.

Supplier Safety

Explore culture conducts audits with all our suppliers to ensure they are meeting appropriate health and safety standards. All our suppliers are safety certified, meeting Ghanaian standards, and following all Ghana safety regulations. Fire safety checks are also carried out at each hotel that is included on the tour.

Our safety audit is comprised of the following:

Hotel fire safety

Hotel and restaurant food safety and hygiene

Hotel and facility swimming safety

Transportation traffic safety