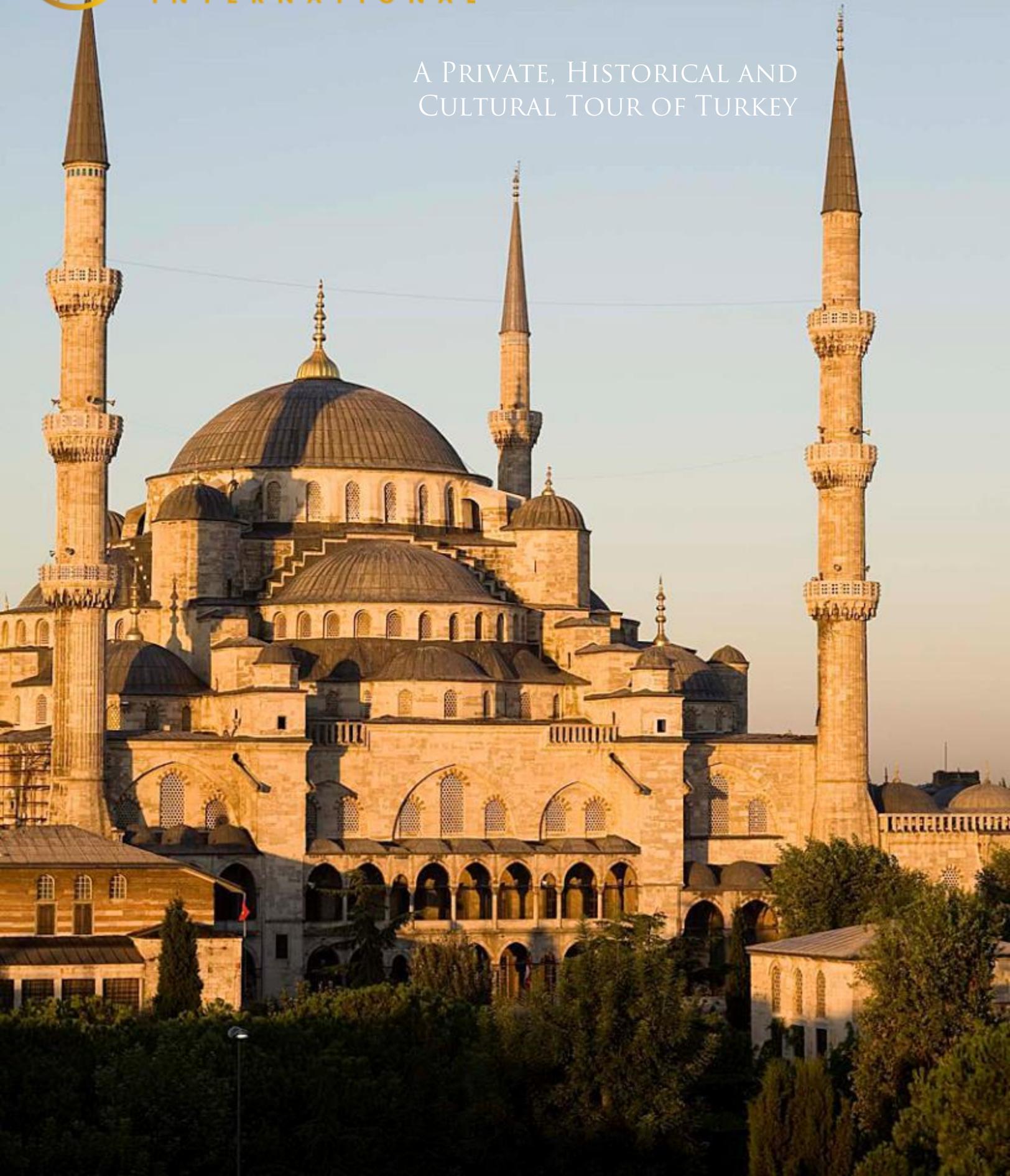




EXETER  
INTERNATIONAL

A PRIVATE, HISTORICAL AND  
CULTURAL TOUR OF TURKEY



## CENTRAL ASIA, TURKEY & THE CAUCASUS



### ITINERARY AT A GLANCE:

DAY 1	ISTANBUL ARRIVAL
DAY 2	ISTANBUL
DAY 3	ISTANBUL
DAY 4	ISTANBUL – CAPPADOCIA
DAY 5	CAPPADOCIA
DAY 6	CAPPADOCIA – ISTANBUL
DAY 7	DEPARTURE

## WHY EXETER INTERNATIONAL?

At Exeter International we have been creating memories and crafting our trademark extraordinary journeys to Central Europe, Russia, Scandinavia, and Central Asia for 23 years. Our specialty is to distill the best of the best in iconic places that are on so many people's travel must-do list.

We are not a call center of nameless, faceless people. We do not try to be everything to everyone. We are a small team of specialists. We are all committed to providing the best travel experiences to our destinations. Each member of our team has travelled extensively throughout our destinations, giving them insider knowledge lacking in many other tour operators.

Our Extraordinary Experiences are different, unusual, and often closed to the general public. We can offer special insider access that takes you beyond the typical tourist sites. We know how important it is to remain authentic and increasingly going beyond the well-known sites is what is important to our guests—discovering the little known museum or street market that adds to their experience. We do this through our local knowledge, cultivating our extensive contacts and regularly visiting each destination to enable us to share the most up-to-date insider information with you, our valued partner.

The most important part of your trip will be your guides. Guides come in many quality levels, especially in the region. We have worked with a core group of the best of the best for over 20 years. We know them like family and if they weren't the best, they wouldn't work for us. Simply stated, a guide can make or break your experience. You should have 100% confidence in who is introducing you to your guide and the level of guiding that you are going to get throughout the countries you will be visiting. The best does indeed cost more and we pay our guides at the very top of the market, with pride.

You'll also want to know what kind of vehicle your tour will include. We use luxury late-model vehicles, often Mercedes, Audi, BMW, or Volkswagen, depending on the size of the vehicle you need. You'll want to see things that may or may not be open to the public and go in early or after hours before the crowds whenever possible. We also make every effort to skip lines whenever possible. Avoiding long museum lines is one of our top priorities and we work hard to minimize the wait time to get into the most popular sights in each city, maximizing your time in each destination.

You'll want impeccable planning and someone to bounce ideas off of before your trip and speak English as well as you do while planning your trip so there are no cultural misunderstandings when you arrive. You'll also want someone to talk to if your trip is not perfect when you get home. These are all ways that we distinguish ourselves from all other companies.

A lot goes into our travel program design. We arrange the program so that it is flawless and effortless for our travelers from the time they set foot in the first city until they leave us. The expertise to set up an itinerary like this comes after years of investing in staff on both sides of the Atlantic, and this too is a value that is incorporated into our traveler's trips with us.

# DAY 1



## ISTANBUL ARRIVAL

Arrival into Istanbul where we will be met by your guide and driver. Your driver will be waiting for you just outside of Customs, after you pick up your luggage. Transfer to your hotel in the center of the city.

Istanbul, formerly known as Byzantium and Constantinople, played for centuries a major part in world politics, first as the capital of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, then as the capital of the Ottoman Empire, the most powerful Islamic empire in the world. Nowadays, Istanbul's Asian side is filled with Western-style sprawling suburbs, while its European side is a wonderland of mosques, magnificent palaces, and crowded bazaars.

### EXETER SERVICES

Arrival Transfer

### HOTEL

Petra Palace



## DAY 2

### ISTANBUL

This morning, after meeting with your guide, you will set out on an overview tour that covers the highlights, including the most historic section of Istanbul, called Sultanahmet. First, you will visit the Hippodrome, which was once the central focus of Constantinople. Built by the Romans, only fragments are left of what was once a grand stadium that held 100,000 spectators for public meeting and important events, including chariot races. Here in the Hippodrome, you will also see the Egyptian Obelisk, the Serpentine Column and the Column of Constantine.

Later you will pay a visit to the famous Hagia Sophia Church. Built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, this church influenced architecture for centuries. Its original design was created as a mirror of the heavens. Take your time exploring the vast galleries and beautiful mosaics. Given its age, the church is in remarkable condition and the interiors are full of important frescoes and mosaics depicting holy subjects.

Next, you will step into the Blue Mosque, one of the most important temples of worship in the world. It is named for the blue Iznik tile work that decorates its interior and its dome can be seen from all over the Sultanahmet district. It was built by Mehmet Aga, the imperial architect and was very controversial due to its six minarets, which many at that time believed was sacrilegious as it rivaled the architecture of Mecca itself!

Not far away, you will also visit the dramatic and beautiful Byzantine Underground Cistern, built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century as a secure water reservoir for the city. It is one of Istanbul's most unusual tourist attractions! It was laid out in 532 under the rule of Justinian.

You could spend the rest of the afternoon at the famous Covered Grand Bazaar of Istanbul, offering an almost endless selection of Turkish carpets, gold, jewelry and artworks offered in some 4,000 shops!

#### EXETER SERVICES

Vehicle, Driver & Guide (8 Hours)

#### HOTEL

Pera Palace

## DAY 3



## ISTANBUL

This morning, your guide will first take you into the extraordinary Imperial residence of 25 Ottoman Sultans, Topkapi Palace. You will see the Herem, the library, the treasure, with its royal jewelry and gem collection, and the imperial living quarters, all surrounded by serene gardens and fountains. Also in the Treasury is the 86-carat Spoonmaker's diamond and a Case-containing bones said to be from the hand of St. John the Baptist.

While visiting Topkapi, you will be able to step back into time as you explore 500 years of Ottoman history. The Topkapi palace complex will be regarded as a multi-ethnic construction with influences from Central Asia, Asia Minor, Persia and Mesopotamia. Within the historically short period of two centuries, the Ottomans rose from a small, feudal principality to become a major -the major- world power, yet at the same time they possessed a court tradition and culture of their own that was over a thousand years old. Undoubtedly Topkapi involved a synthesis of Byzantine elements but yet it can never be completely separated from its Ottoman roots.

### EXETER SERVICES

Vehicle, Driver & Guide (4 Hours)

### HOTEL

Pera Palace

## DAY 4



### ISTANBUL - CAPPADOCIA

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Cappadocia. (Cost of flight not included in the program).

Arrival into Cappadocia and transfer to the hotel. After some time to freshen up meet your guide to explore the beautiful region of Cappadocia, the land of the fairy chimneys. Cappadocia has an interesting and remarkable topography and a dream-like landscape, complete with beautiful villages and houses carved from soft volcanic ash, underground cities and frescoed churches. The so-called fairy chimneys and troglodyte dwellings will take you to another world and will guarantee an unforgettable impression. The monastic cave churches, some of which date back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century and which are decorated with beautiful frescoes are worth visiting.

You will also see Pigeon Valley, so named after the hundreds of little windows carved into the rocks to attract nesting pigeons. Today you will also visit the Uchisar Castle. The highest peak in the region and the most prominent land formation, the Uchisar Castle is a larger-than-life sculpture. A climb up the 120 steps to the summit of the fortress is a logical introduction to the rocky scapes of Cappadocia. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the Byzantine army took advantage of the natural elevation of three of the area's rock formations and used them as natural fortresses.

Uchisar, together with Ortahisar and a rock castle at Urgup (now in ruins), provided the means for an early warning system using mirrors and lights, sending messages among the fortresses and as far afield as Istanbul. Today the outer layers of Uchisar's rock have been washed away by erosion to reveal a honeycombed structure of tunnels and cavities, rising above the man-made facades of the modern semi-troglodyte village. Recently discovered was a secret tunnel leading to the riverbed, which provided an emergency water supply in the event of an attack.

#### EXETER SERVICES

Transfers, Half-Day Car, Driver & Guide (Cappadocia)

#### HOTEL

Argos



DAY 5

## CAPPADOCIA

This morning your guide will meet you to take you on a full day of touring in the Goreme Valley, including the five churches and the Kaymakli Underground City. The Goreme Valley was formed by a huge volcanic eruption, which covered a vast area with soft volcanic rock, known as tufa. Subsequently, a layer of harder rock was laid down, and differential erosion formed a strange, unearthly landscape with steep gullies, and peaks often likened to "fairy chimneys".

Over the centuries, the inhabitants have carved into the soft tufa to create dwellings for themselves, in the sides of cliffs, in "fairy chimneys" and large rock outcrops, and even, such as in Kaymakli, underground cities, up to seven levels deep and stretching for miles under the ground. The isolation and solitude of central Cappadocia was an ideal environment for those who wished to get closer to God, and under the Byzantine Empire many monasteries and nunneries were carved out of the rock. As well as these a large number of churches were created, and their interior walls covered with murals.

Continue to the village of Avanos- famous for its pottery. Your return drive will include a visit to Zelve and the Red Valley. The architecture of Zelve is in deep red stone, versus the white stone of Goreme. The central ridge that runs through the valley, used to be the natural divide between the Christian and Muslim communities.

### EXETER SERVICES

Vehicle, Driver & Guide (8 Hours)

### HOTEL

Argos

## DAY 6



## CAPPADOCIA - ISTANBUL

If you do not mind getting up before sunrise, you will be able to take a hot air balloon ride - are one of the most popular activities in the Goreme valley. Typically these rides last around an hour and a half and literally go wherever the wind may blow in the valley. The balloon carriages hold around ten people with the pilot following the air currents and floating along the valleys, often below the ridge line and close to the famous natural phenomena – the chimney rocks.

Later, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to Istanbul. Cost of flight not included. This afternoon your guide will take you to visit the 17<sup>th</sup> century Spice Market also called the Egyptian Bazaar, because in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century it was built with money paid as duty on Egyptian import goods. From medieval times, spices were an important and expensive part of Oriental cooking and they gradually became the bazaar's main focus, taking advantage of Istanbul's strategic position on the main trade route between the East and Europe.

Following the market experience, continue on to the Galata district where the Genoese, Venetians and the Jewish Society of Old Constantinople used to live. Next, your guide will take you to Eminou to board your private boat. The best way to take in some of the most interesting sights in Turkey is to take this private boat cruise up the Bosphorus. You will depart from Eminonu and sail up the Bosphorus toward the Black Sea, allowing you to see all the interesting structures along this historic waterway.

This is one of the most unforgettable excursions between two continents, Europe & Asia. The cruise takes you along the latest palaces of Ottomans, The Dolmabahce Palace and Beylerbeyi, as well as 19th and 20th century, beautiful wooden kiosks, mansions and modern villas, which form the elegant section of the city. Enjoy the scenery.

### EXETER SERVICES

Transfers, Vehicle, Driver & Guide (4 Hours)

### HOTEL

Pera Palace



DAY 7



## ISTANBUL-ONWARD

Your driver will meet you in your hotel lobby for your transfer to the airport.

**EXETER SERVICES**

Transfer

# WHAT IS INCLUDED



**Price: From \$4,450 per person, double occupancy, based on two guests traveling together**

## **Accommodations**

### **Istanbul**

One Deluxe Room for Four (4) nights at the Pera Palace; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

### **Cappadocia**

One Deluxe Cave Room for Two (2) nights at the Argos; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

## **Meals**

No meals included, other than breakfast as described above. Your final documents will include our top recommendations. *Your guides will recommend restaurants that fit your exact needs daily.*

## **Services**

Private vehicle, driver and guide at your service as described. The timing for each day is noted in your program.

Exeter International's local offices are available for your assistance 24 hours per day while you are traveling. Our local staff may also assist you with restaurant reservations and purchasing of additional theater and museum tickets at your request.

## **Transportation**

Transportation is included as noted. Unless otherwise noted, all transfer service is with a driver only, not a guide. In general, drivers have limited English-speaking skills. Timing for each day is noted in your program.

## **Guides**

Hand chosen for their knowledge on local history, art & architecture. Guides are at your disposal as noted in your itinerary.

## **Tickets**

All entrance tickets as described in the program.

## Exeter International Travel Information

### BAGGAGE

The vehicles reserved for your itinerary can accommodate up to two medium-sized suitcases per person. If you intend to travel with additional luggage, please advise your travel consultant so appropriate arrangements may be made. In general, we schedule a sedan for parties of two, a minivan for parties of three to four and a minibus for parties of five or more.

### SIGHTSEEING

Sightseeing arrangements have been made with your special interests in mind. Your drivers and guides are at your disposal as indicated in the itinerary. Within those time and mileage guidelines, you are free to modify your program as you please. Should you require additional time or mileage, the costs will be quoted on request and may be paid for locally in the local currency or U.S. Dollars.

Every effort has been made to confirm that scheduled sightseeing venues will be open at the time you plan to visit them. However, individual estates, museums, gardens and other points of interest can change their hours of operation at short notice. In the event that a particular attraction is closed on the day or time of your visit, your guide will offer alternative arrangements or rearrange your sightseeing to accommodate these unexpected events.

### OPTIONAL EXPENSES

Charges for extra meals, transport, sightseeing services or other optional additions to your established itinerary are your responsibility and must be paid locally in the local currency.

### GRATUITIES

Gratuities are not included in your tour price. Gratuities are at your own discretion. We recommend \$15-\$20 per person, per day for your guide and \$5 - \$10 per person, per day for your driver. For your airport or station transfer, a gratuity of \$5 - \$10 is customary, based on service. Dollars, Euros and any local currency are all accepted.

### DINING WITH YOUR GUIDE

On days when dinner and lunch costs have not been included in your itinerary (or in your tour cost), you may, at your discretion, choose to invite your guide to dine with your party. You are under no obligation to do so but, if you do extend such an invitation, the guide is your guest and you will be responsible for the cost of his/her meal.

## Booking Conditions

### PAYMENTS

Exeter International must receive a deposit of 25% of the total program cost before reservations for your independent travel program can be initiated. The balance of payment is due 60 days prior to departure. *No reservations are made on your behalf until this deposit has been received.* Availability and pricing is subject to change until this deposit is received. **All deposits are nonrefundable.**

### CANCELLATION

Written cancellations received less than 60 days prior to departure are subject to the following forfeit of tour cost

- 59-14 days prior to departure, 50% of total tour cost
- 14 or less days prior to departure, 100% of tour cost

## REFUNDS

We regret that refunds cannot be issued for arrangements confirmed on your itinerary but unused once your tour has begun.

## INSURANCE

Exeter International strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance to protect your investment. You will find insurance costs noted on your invoice and insurance coverage information in your original booking packet.

## PRICES AND ARRANGEMENTS

Once an itinerary is finalized and final payment has been made, a \$100 revision fee will be charged if the itinerary is changed.

The tour price includes planning, handling and operational charges. Rates are quoted in US Dollars on the current rate of exchange and tariff as of 2019. Exeter International reserves the right to increase tour prices to cover increased costs, tariffs and taxes, and to reflect fluctuations in foreign exchange markets. Devaluation of a foreign currency will be weighed against any tariff increases imposed. Exeter International does not breakdown costs involved in any Small Group or Individual Travel Program.

*All arrangements are subject to availability and modification if necessary.  
Prices are subject to change if necessary until paid in full.*

### **Exeter International**

[www.Exeterinternational.com](http://www.Exeterinternational.com)

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