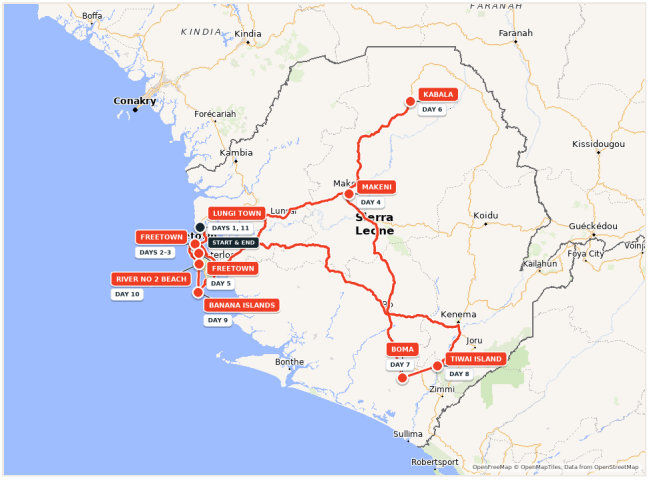
ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Sierra Leone Encounters

COUNTRY(IES)	Sierra Leone
TOUR TYPE	Small Group
TRANSPORT	A/C Minibus, speedboat, local ferry
GROUP SIZE	Min: 4 | Max: 18
DURATION	11 days
STARTS	Freetown, Sierra Leone
ENDS	Freetown, Sierra Leone
MEALS	Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 9, Dinners - 10

TOUR ROUTE MAP **11 Days**



ROUTE: **Lungi Town** (Start) → **Freetown** → **Makeni** → **Freetown** → **Kabala** → **Boma** → **Tiwai Island** → **Banana Islands** → **River No 2 Beach** → **Lungi Town** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Freetown, Sugar Loaf Hike and Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Makeni, Rogbonko Village, Kabala Heritage Trail, Tiwai and Banana Islands, Tokeh Beach, Bunce and Tasso Islands

Itinerary

DAY 1 — Arrive in Freetown. Transfer to city centre hotel by boat

Arrive at Lungi International Airport and begin the journey across the bay towards Freetown, gaining an early impression of Sierra Leone's coastal setting on the way. After reaching the city, settle into the hotel and enjoy free time to rest or become familiar with the surroundings independently. The simple arrival provides a gentle introduction to the capital while leaving the remainder of the day flexible after international travel.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Lungi International Airport**
  Arrive at Lungi International Airport, the main international gateway to Sierra Leone. Meet your local representative and complete arrival formalities before starting your journey into the country.
- **Drive from Lungi International Airport to Freetown City Hotel**
  Travel from Lungi International Airport to your hotel in Freetown, using a combination of road and boat transfer

across the Sierra Leone River. Enjoy your first views of the coastline and the capital along the way.

- **Free Time in Freetown**
  Spend the remainder of the day at leisure in Freetown. Settle into your hotel, rest after your flight, or take a gentle stroll to get a first feel for the city.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Hotel Barmoi (or similar)	Dinner	Extra day in Freetown - pre-tour, Single room supplement (SLSGSE)

DAY 2 Explore the sober history of Bunce Island before visiting the idyllic Tasso Island

Leave Freetown for Bunce Island and continue to Tasso Island before returning by ferry. The source focuses on historical reflection at Bunce and community and natural scenery at Tasso, but does not name specific buildings, activities or meals. The day should therefore remain centred on the island visits and water transport rather than adding unsupported tours or cultural demonstrations.

ACTIVITIES

- **Travel from Ferry Freetown to Bunce Island**
  Board a boat in Freetown for the journey out to Bunce Island in the Sierra Leone River. Cruise past mangroves and small fishing communities as you head toward this historic site.
- **Explore Bunce Island**
  Explore Bunce Island, once a major British slave-trading fort on the West African coast. Walk among the ruins and reflect on the powerful history and human stories connected to this place.
- **Travel from Ferry Bunce Island to Tasso Island**
  Continue by boat from Bunce Island to nearby Tasso Island. Enjoy the peaceful river scenery and look out for birds and village life along the shoreline.
- **Explore Tasso Island**
  Spend time on tranquil Tasso Island, known for its relaxed atmosphere and natural beauty. Stroll along the beach, meet local residents, or simply unwind in the island setting.
- **Travel from Ferry Tasso Island to Freetown**
  Return by boat from Tasso Island to Freetown in the late afternoon. Watch the sun begin to drop over the water as you head back toward the city and your hotel.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hotel Barmoi (or similar)	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 3 Hike Sugar Loaf Mountain and visit Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary

The day begins with a scenic drive from Freetown into the surrounding highlands, reaching the trailhead of Sugar Loaf Mountain for an ascent through forested slopes and panoramic viewpoints over the peninsula. The hike offers a grounded sense of Sierra Leone’s natural beauty, where cool breezes and lush terrain frame the journey upward and back. Transitioning to the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary introduces a different facet of the region’s environment, highlighting conservation efforts and the protection of endangered wildlife. The visit provides meaningful insight into local ecosystems and community-led stewardship before returning to the city’s pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Freetown to Sugar Loaf Mountain Trailhead**
  Leave Freetown and drive into the hills above the city toward the Sugar Loaf Mountain trailhead. Pass small communities and forested slopes as you gain altitude.
- **Hike the Sugar Loaf Mountain**
  Hike up Sugar Loaf Mountain on forested paths that can be steep and muddy in places. Reach viewpoints near the summit for sweeping vistas over Freetown, the coastline, and the surrounding hills.
- **Drive from Sugar Loaf Mountain to Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary**
  After your hike, drive from the Sugar Loaf area to Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. Follow winding roads through the Western Area Forest Reserve into the rainforest.
- **Explore Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary**
  Visit Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, a leading conservation project that rescues and rehabilitates orphaned chimpanzees. Walk the forest trails, observe the chimps in their enclosures, and learn about efforts to protect this endangered species.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Tacugama Eco Lodge Chalets	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 4 Visit the Wara Wara Mountain in Kabala. Evening cotton weaving experience and cultural dance performance

travelling north from Makeni leads into Kabala’s mountain landscapes, where the Wara Wara range provides an expansive backdrop for exploring the region’s natural character. The visit offers a calm immersion in highland scenery before shifting to Kabala’s longstanding cotton weaving practices, demonstrating the skill and heritage behind local textiles. As the day unfolds, encounters with community folklore and cultural dance introduce the stories, rhythms, and artistry that shape life in this part of Sierra Leone. Together, these experiences present a cohesive portrait of Kabala’s connection to both its environment and its traditions.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Makeni to Kabala**
  Depart Makeni and drive north toward Kabala in the Wara Wara Mountains. Enjoy increasingly dramatic scenery

as rocky hills and forested slopes rise around the road.

- **Explore Wara Wara Mountains**
  Explore the Wara Wara Mountains around Kabala, where granite outcrops and green valleys create striking views. Walk short trails, breathe the cool mountain air, and take in the surrounding landscapes.
- **Explore Kabala Cotton Weaving Experience**
  Visit a local cotton weaver in Kabala to see how raw cotton is spun and woven into cloth by hand. Learn how this traditional skill supports families and preserves cultural heritage.
- **Kabala Folklore and Cultural Dance Performance**
  In the evening, enjoy a folklore and cultural dance performance in Kabala. Listen to drumming, watch dancers in colourful dress, and hear stories expressed through music and movement.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Weindays Guesthouse (or similar)	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 5 Explore Makeni before experiencing traditional village life in Rogbonko village

Set out from the forested outskirts of Freetown on a scenic three-hour journey to the Rogbonko Village Retreat, stopping along the way in Makeni with your guide to explore this bustling provincial town and enjoy lunch before driving the final hour via Magburaka. Rogbonko Mathaka, meaning “The Place in the Forest”, offers a profound off-grid experience: with no electricity, running water or mobile signal, you will genuinely disconnect and immerse yourself in the community. Meet the villagers, share their traditional food and experience their daily routines, and let your guide lead you on forest walks and farm tours for an insight into rural life. A particular highlight is the traditional basket weaving, whose techniques strongly resemble the sweetgrass baskets woven by the Gullah/Geechee people, a skill believed to have been preserved by enslaved West Africans, particularly those from Sierra Leone. In the late afternoon, a transfer returns you to Makeni. This holdings bridges modern northern Sierra Leone with the enduring customs of its surrounding communities.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary to Makeni**
  Depart the forested hills around Tacugama and drive inland toward Makeni. Watch the scenery shift from coastal rainforest to rolling countryside and small farming villages.
- **Explore Makeni City Tour**
  Explore Makeni on a short city tour, taking in its busy streets and local landmarks. Visit markets and commercial areas to see everyday life in this regional hub.
- **Drive from Makeni to Rogbonko Village**
  Leave Makeni and drive along rural roads toward Rogbonko Village. Pass farms and roadside settlements as you travel deeper into the countryside.
- **Explore Rogbonko Village Cultural Experience**
  Spend time in Rogbonko Village, meeting the community and learning about local traditions. Take part in simple

activities such as cooking demonstrations or craft making and hear stories from village elders.

- **Drive from Rogbonko Village to Makeni**
  In the late afternoon, drive back from Rogbonko Village to Makeni. Arrive at your hotel and relax after a full day of cultural experiences.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Wusum Hotel (or similar)	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 6 Join the Heritage Trail with a stop in Boma Village, learn about the legend of a local giant

Drive from Kabala to Boma Village and follow the Heritage Trail through the rural community. The source refers broadly to agriculture, craftsmanship and local customs but does not list specific demonstrations, homes or meetings, so these should not be invented. The activity is centred on walking through the village and learning about its heritage within the surrounding northern Sierra Leone landscape before the wider journey continues.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Kabala to Boma Village**
  Leave Kabala and drive toward the remote village of Boma along rural tracks. Travel through farmland and forest as you approach the Moa River area.
- **Explore Boma Village Heritage Trail**
  Visit Boma Village, known for its female chief and strong community traditions. Hear local legends, see the grave of the so-called giant, and visit the sacred Boma Cotton Tree that is believed to protect the village.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Boma Village Community Guesthouse	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 7 Hike to a mystical village, encounter local legends. Cruise to Tiwai Island for pygmy hippo & chimpanzee spotting

This segment unfolds through a gradual transition from village pathways to one of Sierra Leone’s richest natural reserves, beginning with a walk from Boma Village to Nainiahun and a visit to the Kote Wulehun Heritage Site, where local history and community identity are rooted in the landscape. The journey continues toward the Moa River, where the ferry crossing marks a shift from rural life to the deep rainforest environment of Tiwai Island. Here, a wildlife boat safari introduces the island’s protected ecosystems, revealing riverine scenery and diverse species along the forest edges. A guided rainforest walk further immerses travellers in a habitat known for its primates and birdlife, offering an unhurried exploration of one of the country’s most significant conservation areas.

ACTIVITIES

- **Walk from Boma Village to Nainiahun Village**
  Set out on foot from Boma Village along bush paths toward Nainiahun. Walk past rice fields, cocoa groves, and small farms while experiencing the rhythm of rural life.
- **Explore Kote Wulehun Heritage Site**
  Visit Kote Wulehun, an area of large rock formations linked to stories of invisibility and refuge during tribal conflicts. Remove your shoes as requested and listen to elders share myths and spiritual traditions connected to the site.
- **Walk from Nainiahun Village to Moa River Bank**
  After your visit, continue walking from Nainiahun toward the banks of the Moa River. Follow narrow paths under palm trees and through smallholdings until you reach the water.
- **Travel from Ferry Moa River Bank to Tiwai Island**
  Board a boat at the Moa River bank for the short crossing to Tiwai Island. Glide along calm channels toward the forested island in one of Sierra Leone's key wildlife areas.
- **Wildlife Boat Safari on Tiwai Island**
  Join a boat safari around Tiwai Island to search for pygmy hippos, monkeys, and birdlife along the riverbanks. Enjoy the changing colours of the forest and sky as you travel.
- **Rainforest Walk – Tiwai Island Primates and Birds**
  Explore Tiwai Island on guided rainforest walks, looking for primates and other wildlife in the trees. Learn about the island's fragile ecosystem and the conservation work taking place here.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Tiwai Island	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 8 Travel from Kent Beach to Banana Island. Explore the island and spend time relaxing on the beach

Drive towards Kent Beach and continue by ferry to Banana Island, where a guided heritage and village walk introduces the island’s history and everyday community life. Afterwards, enjoy free time in the quiet coastal surroundings. You may choose to explore further on your own, spend time near the beach or simply relax after the crossing while taking in the island’s distinctive atmosphere.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Tiwai Island to Kent Beach**
  Leave Tiwai Island and travel back toward the Freetown Peninsula, combining boat and road transfers. Continue on to Kent Beach on the Atlantic coast.
- **Travel from Ferry Kent Beach to Banana Island**
  From Kent Beach, board a small boat for the crossing to Banana Island. Enjoy wide ocean views and look back toward the mainland as the island comes into sight.
- **Visit Banana Island Heritage and Village Walk**
  Explore Banana Island on a gentle walk through the main settlement and along coastal paths. Learn about its

Krio heritage, historic remains, and the mix of island traditions that shape daily life.

- **Free Time in Banana Island**
  Relax on Banana Island with time to swim, read, or simply enjoy the beach and surrounding nature. Unwind at Bafa Resort and listen to the sounds of the ocean.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Tents at Bafa Resort	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 9 Leave Banana Island, time to relax at River No. 2

Travel by ferry from Banana Island to Kent Beach and continue by road to River No. 2 Beach. After the morning transfer, the remainder of the day is free beside the coast. The open time allows you to slow the pace and enjoy the beach setting independently after travelling from the island.

ACTIVITIES

- **Travel from Ferry Banana Island to Kent Beach**
  Depart Banana Island by boat and return across the water to Kent Beach. Enjoy a last look back at the island as you approach the mainland.
- **Drive from Kent Beach to River No. 2 Beach**
  From Kent Beach, drive along the peninsula coast road to River No. 2 Beach. Pass small villages and stretches of palm-lined shoreline on the way.
- **Free Time in River No. 2 Beach**
  Spend time at River No. 2 Beach, one of Sierra Leone's most attractive stretches of sand. Swim, walk along the shore, or relax at your lodge with views of the ocean and river mouth.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Estuary Resort (or similar)	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 10 Full day exploration of Freetown and evening cooking class

Leave River No. 2 Beach and head into Freetown for a day covering the city’s historical, political and cultural landmarks. Visits around Old Fourah Bay College, museums, markets and civic buildings provide context to the capital’s past and present, while time in local areas adds a more everyday perspective. A traditional lunch and cooking session complete the day with an introduction to Sierra Leonean food and preparation methods.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from River No. 2 Beach to Freetown**
  Leave River No. 2 Beach and drive back into Freetown. Climb gradually from the coast into the busy streets of the capital.

- **Explore Old Fourah Bay College**
  Visit Old Fourah Bay College, one of the oldest Western-style universities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Walk through parts of the historic campus and hear about its role in regional education.
- **Visit Cotton Tree and Peace and Cultural Monument**
  Stop at the famous Cotton Tree in central Freetown, a long-standing symbol of freedom for freed slaves who settled here. Visit the nearby Peace and Cultural Monument to learn about Sierra Leone's journey toward reconciliation.
- **Explore Sierra Leone National Museum**
  Explore the Sierra Leone National Museum to see collections of masks, carvings, and historical artefacts. Gain an overview of the country's cultures and key events in its history.
- **Explore Peace Museum in Freetown**
  Visit the Peace Museum in Freetown, dedicated to documenting the civil war and the work of the Special Court. Learn how communities have worked to rebuild and promote justice and dialogue.
- **Explore Gate Way to the King's Yard**
  See the Gate Way to the King's Yard, linked to the arrival and processing of liberated Africans in Freetown. Hear how this site connects to the city's founding and the stories of those who passed through it.
- **Explore Big Market in Freetown**
  Walk through Big Market, a lively trading centre in downtown Freetown. Browse stalls selling textiles, handicrafts, spices, and everyday goods while experiencing the city's energy.
- **Lunch at Way Li Restaurant in Freetown**
  Enjoy lunch at Way Li Restaurant, known for serving classic Sierra Leonean dishes and flavours. Sample local recipes and learn how ingredients such as cassava, rice, and fresh fish are prepared.
- **Explore State House in Freetown**
  See the exterior of State House, the official residence and office of the president of Sierra Leone. Learn about its historical role in the country's political life as you view the building from outside.
- **Explore Parliament Building in Freetown**
  Visit the Parliament Building in Freetown, an important symbol of the country's democratic institutions. Step inside selected public areas, when permitted, to hear how laws are debated and passed.
- **Cooking Class at Treat Food Concept**
  Take part in a hands-on cooking class at Treat Food Concept with a local chef. Prepare a selection of Sierra Leonean dishes and then sit down together to enjoy the meal you have created.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hotel Barmoi (or similar)	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 11 — Transfer back to Lungi Airport for departure

Spend the first part of the day at leisure in Freetown before beginning the transfer to Lungi International Airport. The journey away from the city passes through the wider coastal region on the way to the terminal. With no

organised sightseeing included, the focus remains on making the departure connection smoothly after your final hours in Sierra Leone's capital.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Freetown**
  Spend the remainder of the day at leisure in Freetown. Settle into your hotel, rest after your flight, or take a gentle stroll to get a first feel for the city.
- **Drive from Freetown City Hotel to Lungi International Airport**
  Travel from your Freetown hotel back to Lungi International Airport using the sea coach and road transfer. Take in final views of the city and coastline as you cross the Sierra Leone River.
- **Depart from Lungi International Airport**
  Check in at Lungi International Airport for your onward flight. Say farewell to Sierra Leone after an itinerary filled with wildlife, history, and cultural encounters.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Extra day in Freetown - post-tour

INCLUDED

- 3 nights in Freetown, 1 night in Makeni & 1 night in Tokeh hotels
- 1 night at Tacugama Eco-Lodge
- 1 night in Kabala guest-house
- 1 night camping in Boma Village (all equipment provided)
- 1 night on Banana Island & 1 night on Tiwai Island
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service (on tour days)
- Services of a local tour leader throughout
- All sightseeing tours as per itinerary
- Entrance fees for visits included in the itinerary
- All meals (starting with dinner on day 1, ending with breakfast on day 11)
- Sierra Leone Entry Visa & Airport Security Fee

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Yellow Fever Certificate (Mandatory for entry to Sierra Leone)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for tour leader & driver
- Any other items not mentioned above

Tour Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or

activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements , full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Freetown - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Freetown - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Important Notes

1 **Booking & Payment**

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please contact us if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

2 **Financial Security**

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

3 Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

4 Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

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5 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

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6 Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current official government travel advice for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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7 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can’t fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon’s efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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8 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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9 Accommodation

Our tours in Sierra Leone feature a mix of accommodations, ranging from 3-star hotels in Freetown, to local guest houses, eco-lodges and pre-erected tents in other parts of the country.
As an emerging tourism destination, not all accommodations are able to provide the same level of comfort and facliities as hotels in Europe or North America and services such as wifi may not always be available. When outside

of Freetown you may experience occasional power outages and poor internet connectivity.

Freetown, Makeni & Tokeh:

In these locations we use comfortable 2 to 3-star accommodations with private facilities. Due to the more remote location of Makeni, you should expect a lower level of accommodation here.

Takugama, Kabala, Boma Village, Tiwai & Banana Islands:

In these more remote parts of the country, there are fewer accommodation options, though the accommodations we've chosen to include we believe will add to your overall experience. In Tacugama you will stay in basic but comfortable eco-lodge chalets which are located within the jungle surrounding the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary. In Kabala you will stay a local guesthouse, rooms here are clean and comfortable but basic. As part of the Heritage Trail, we have included 1 night close to Boma Village and 1 night on Tiwai Island where you will stay in tents or huts (tents, sleeping bags and sleeping mats are provided whilst camping). Finally, on Banana Island you will stay at the Bafa Resort which offers pre-erected tents which straddle the edge of the forest and shore line. These tents offer basic accommodation in a truly magical location.
On Tiwai and Banana Island, toilet and shower facilities are communal. In Boma Village, due to the nature of this stay, toilet facilities are basic and will be either shared community toilets or 'bush' toilets.

Please check the Accommodation tab on the tour page or download these Tour Notes for details of the normal hotels used. On our group tours, these hotels may change from time to time for other properties of a similar standard. If you would like to guarantee a particular hotel, please request a tailor-made tour.

Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms/cabins with air conditioning. All couples will be given a private double room/cabin. Triple cabins are not available on Nile cruise boats.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

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10 Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Saturdays between November and April (we generally do not operate tours between May and October as the rainy season can make travelling in more remote parts of the country difficult). All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 4 travellers and a maximum of 12. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

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11 Entrance Fees

The price of this tour includes the cost of entrance fees to visits included in the tour itinerary. Should you wish to visit any monument that is not included in the standard tour itinerary, the entry ticket for this is not included.

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12 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There’s no point in us providing

great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our Sierra Leone small-group departures to have a maximum of 12 travellers.

Specialist escorted tours and workshops may have different group sizes - please download the Tour Notes for details.

In Sierra Leone we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides to run your tour and escort you during all of the sightseeing.

Guiding in other languages may also available on private departures (eg. German, Italian, Spanish) - please contact us for details and quotations.

At Encounters Travel we only use local Sierra Leonean guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

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13 Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies, including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and health precautions vary depending on your travel history and health conditions. It's crucial to consult your doctor or a travel clinic for the most up-to-date information on vaccinations and health advice for Sierra Leone. Ensure your routine vaccinations are up to date, including those for occupational risks, lifestyle, and any underlying health conditions.

In addition, consider the following vaccinations for Sierra Leone:

Yellow Fever: A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for entry into Sierra Leone.
Other recommended vaccinations: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Polio, Diphtheria, Hepatitis B, Rabies.
Malaria is present in Sierra Leone and anti-malarial medications are recommended.

For the latest travel health information, consult your doctor or refer to reliable sources like the CDC or WHO websites.

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14 International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't normally include international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Nearly all our Sierra Leone tours start and finish in Freetown. You can fly into Freetowns Lungi International Airport (FNA).

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Travel Zoo / Groupon Flight Inclusive Packages:

Encounters Travel occasionally offer flight inclusive packages - In this case, your international flights will be included as per the package you have purchased. Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint. When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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15 Money - Sierra Leone

The local currency in Sierra Leone is the Leone (SLL). The Leone can fluctuate in value against the British Pound and the US dollar. You don't need to obtain Leones before your trip, as exchange facilities are available at the airport, banks, and some hotels. It's helpful to have small denomination notes and coins on hand for tips, restrooms, and small purchases. ATMs are available in major towns, and some shops accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may add fees – it's wise to confirm before paying. Traveler's cheques are not recommended due to limited acceptance and potential high fees. You may find that some stores, particularly in Freetown will also accept USD.

While in Sierra Leone, you'll need money for drinks, snacks, souvenirs, tipping and personal expenses like laundry. These are generally paid for in Leones.

Personal spending needs vary, but as a guideline, we suggest budgeting at least USD 10-15 per person per day. If you plan on shopping or purchasing alcoholic drinks, you may want to allow more.

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16 Passports and Visas - Sierra Leone

Visa:

The vast majority of travellers visiting Sierra Leone will require a visa and for most nationalities (including United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, European, British) we will arrange the visa for you free of charge prior to arrival. To facilitate this, our sales team will request a copy of your passport which will be used to issue your arrival visa.

Lungi Airport Security Pass:

The Lungi Airport Security Pass, officially called the "Securipass," is a mandatory fee for all passengers arriving at and departing from Freetown International Airport (FNA) in Lungi, Sierra Leone. We have included the cost of your arrival security pass in the price of your tour and proof of this will be sent to you prior to departure (your airport rep

will also have a copy of this). When departing from Lungi Airport it is also necessary to pay for a second Securipass which can be paid in USD cash at $25 per person (or can be prepaid online at - Securipass). For ease, we recommend paying in cash upon departure.

Please note that passports must be valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond your intended travel dates.

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17 Time

Sierra Leone operates on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). There are no daylight saving time adjustments in Sierra Leone, so the time remains consistent throughout the year.

It's worth noting that while your devices may automatically adjust to the local time, it's always a good idea to double-check and ensure your watch and devices are set to GMT to avoid any confusion with meeting times or tour schedules.

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18 Tipping

Tipping in Sierra Leone is not compulsory, but it is a common practice to show appreciation for good service. While service charges are sometimes included in hotel and restaurant bills, small tips are also welcomed by staff. When tipping, consider the quality of service and the local context. A typical tip for services like baggage handling or a small act of kindness could range from 10,000 to 30,000 Leones. Remember to tip discreetly and with a smile.

It is customary to tip local guides and drivers for where good services has been received. We suggest coordinating tips as a group at the end of your tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. USD 5-7 per person per day would be appropriate.

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19 Transfers

Our Sierra Leone tours include a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Freetowns Lungi airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers. Due to the location of Lungi Airport, part of your journey will include a ride onboard the sea-coach which links the airport to the city of Freetown.

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

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20 Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you’re really experiencing the country you’re travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. In Sierra Leone road journeys will be in minivans appropriate to the final group size. As we include a number of island visits on this tour (Banana Island, Tiwai Island, Bunce Island and Tasso Island) our itinerary will also feature a number of boat/ferry journeys. When visiting Banana Island and Tiwai Island, you will travel in smaller speedboats and whilst visiting Bunce and Tasso Islands, you'll travel onboard larger boats, which

may be shared with other passengers.

21 Voltage

Sierra Leone uses three-pin sockets (Type D and G) with a voltage of 230 volts. If your plugs are different, you'll need a travel adapter, readily available at most airports and travel shops. While standard European adapters (Type C) might fit, they can sometimes be loose in the sockets.

All hotel rooms have sockets for charging devices, though power outages in Sierra Leone are common, therefore we do recommend bringing along a battery pack for charging devices such as mobile phones.

If you have appliances designed for 110 volts (like those used in the US), you'll need both a plug adapter and a voltage converter to avoid damaging your devices.

22 What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks, or fabric holdalls are all suitable for your trip to Sierra Leone, however due to the number of accommodation changes, you may find using a rucksack easier to handle. A small daypack is also recommended for carrying essentials during the day. Your main luggage will usually be left at your accommodation, and porters are often available to assist with heavier bags.

Luggage Limits: There are no specific luggage limits for this tour. However, airlines typically have restrictions, usually between 20kg and 25kg for checked luggage and 5kg to 10kg for carry-on luggage. Confirm with your airline before departure.

Clothing: Sierra Leone has a tropical climate, so pack lightweight and breathable clothing. Evenings and higher altitudes can be cooler, so bring layers for varying temperatures. Formal attire is not necessary. Long sleeves and trousers offer protection from mosquitoes and are recommended for modesty, particularly for women. While shorts and T-shirts are acceptable in tourist areas, it's best to dress respectfully and avoid overly revealing clothing. When visiting villages or religious sites, ensure your shoulders and knees are covered. We also recommend bringing along a good pair of hiking boots/shoes.

Other items: A light sleeping sheet or liner can provide comfort, and a light sleeping bag might be needed for cooler nights. Essentials include a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, a small towel, a money belt, a small torch, a camera, chargers and battery packs.