

SMALL GROUP TOURS

AROUND THE GLOBE 2024-2025



Blue Dot Travel
Go somewhere different

bluedottravel.com.au

WELCOME

TO BLUE DOT TRAVEL

Well, what an amazing 12 months we've experienced here at Blue Dot. We can't remember being busier! Travel is well and truly back. A big thank you to all our customers for their support. We are grateful for your business and highly appreciative of the many referrals we receive.

We are well-placed for a continued increase in demand for overseas travel to unique destinations. We've recently added staff in both tour-leading and administration capacities. We have also met with many new ground operators from various countries worldwide, and some exciting plans are in the pipeline. It's all systems go!

This brochure aims to provide readers with a snapshot of our plans for the balance of 2024 and all of 2025, and we even have a few initial thoughts for 2026. A table over the next few pages presents our program in summary. As travel is such a dynamic industry, we expect some tweaking to some tours here and there, but at least here, we present our plans as they stand now.

If any tours in this brochure are of interest, we suggest you hit the website to investigate them in detail or contact us sooner rather than later. Every tour for this year and next is listed under the relevant region on the website. The itineraries are easy to read and include all dates and costs.

Blue Dot's itineraries are handcrafted and tailored to our needs. Nothing we provide is off-the-shelf. We aim to take you somewhere different and immerse you in the local culture. Whether you are one of our loyal, frequent travellers or new to Blue Dot, enjoy the read. We hope it inspires you to travel with us.

Regards, Brett, Kate & the team.

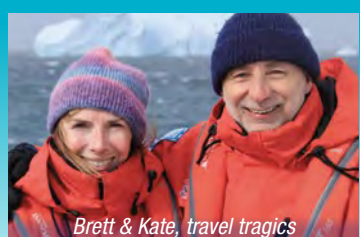


FAMILY TOURS & PRIVATE GROUPS

See page 15 for how we can tailor your next holiday to suit you.

MEET THE TEAM AT BLUE DOT TRAVEL

When we have 10 or more travellers on any international small group tour, we add a tour leader from Australia.



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Tourism is one of the most important and largest industries on the planet. It employs more people worldwide than any other, with millions of local families relying on tourism for their daily needs.

As tourism becomes a truly global industry, we recognise our obligation to operate our tours in a responsible and sustainable fashion. We view this not only as an environmental issue but as an economic and social one. Above all, we are committed to the well-being of the communities and the natural environment that we are there to experience. We also believe that by following these policies, we can provide a more rewarding and interesting experience to you, our clients.



KEY TO OUR PHILOSOPHY:

- Our small groups have less impact on the communities and environments we visit.
- Where possible, we believe in putting money directly into these communities by using locally owned and run accommodation, and eating locally produced food..
- Our preference is to use locally owned partners in our destinations and employ local guides and drivers.
- We endeavour to ensure that our practices help in the environmental conservation of the areas we visit.
- We review our itineraries to ensure that our included activities do not have a negative impact on animal welfare.
- We encourage our travellers to purchase from local suppliers and support social enterprises, local trade, arts and crafts.
- We advise our clients on how to respect the social, cultural and religious beliefs of local communities.



WHY TRAVEL WITH BLUE DOT?

- Our small-group format provides a more personal experience with customer numbers from 4 to 16, depending on the destination. The majority of our tours have an average of 12 travellers.
- We avoid mainstream destinations. Rather, we prefer to explore lesser-travelled places and regions where the cultural experience is far more rewarding and where crowds are fewer.
- Blue Dot caters for the mature-age traveller. We understand their needs and interests and fall into this category ourselves.
- Over two thirds of our customers have taken multiple tours with us. Plus, we have a very high level of referrals for which we are most grateful. This gives us immense satisfaction.
- An Australian tour leader travels with the group when we have 10 or more booked on any given tour. They will look after you and act as a go-between between travellers and in-country guides, to maximise your comfort and well-being.
- 13 years of experience provides a vast network of local ground operators and excellent guides.
- When all inclusions are considered, we represent good old-fashioned value-for-money. We are very proud of the fact that 96 percent of our travellers rate us as "good" or "very good" for overall value.
- Tipping is included on all international tours.
- Let us book your international flights with the group – or book them yourself – your call.
- Our Australian tour leaders are a wonderful bunch of caring folks who are passionate about travel. The tour leader's role is to facilitate your comfort and enjoyment and to step in for occasional problem-solving if required. (We all know that not everything goes as planned when travelling).



What an eclectic bunch we are. There is loads of travel experience amongst this group, all of whom are striving to ensure your travels go as smoothly as possible.



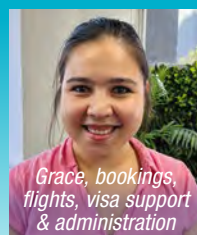
Steve, tour leader



Bill, tour leader



Jaymie, tour leader



Grace, bookings, flights, visa support & administration

Want a private group tour? Talk to us about one of the 70 itineraries we offer for your family, friends and special milestones.

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

AT A GLANCE OUR PLANNED TOURS

From September 2024 until December next year, we have over 30 tours planned so there is sure to be a destination or two that will inspire you to travel.

If we have your email address, we can keep you in the loop with updates and any changes to our plans.

| 2024 Tours – September to December | Departs |
|--|---------|
| Morocco In-Detail, 22 days ALMOST FULL | Sep |
| Corsica, Sardinia & Malta, 27 days ALMOST FULL | Sep |
| Japan in Autumn, 21 days | Sep |
| Japan Northern Honshu (or as add-on to above), 14 days | Sep |
| Mekong Cruise: Vietnam & Cambodia, 27 days NEW TOUR | Oct |
| Algeria & Tunisia, 21 days | Oct |
| Bangladesh & Bhutan, 26 days NEW TOUR | Nov |
| Sri Lanka in Detail, 14 days | Nov |
| West Africa – Ghana, Togo, Benin & Senegal 23 days NEW TOUR | Nov |

| 2025 Tours – January to December | Departs |
|--|------------------------|
| The Desert Trails of Rajasthan, 22 days NEW TOUR | Feb |
| Crete, Cyprus & Rhodes, 22 days | Apr |
| Uruguay, Paraguay & Bolivia, 20 days | Apr |
| The Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia, 26 days (also in September) | May |
| The 5 Stans of Central Asia, 29 days UPDATED ITINERARY | Apr |
| Central America – Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras & Guatemala, 24 days NEW TOUR | May |
| The Best of Alaska, 15 days | Jun |
| Bulgaria & Romania, 14 days | Jun |
| The Kimberley Coast Expedition Cruise, 12 days | Jun |
| Uganda In-Depth with Tanzania Extension, 16 days | Jun |
| Mongolia In-Depth with Naadam Festival, 23 days | Jul |
| Madagascar's Best, 23 days | Jul |
| The Caucasus – Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia, 26 days | Sep |
| Corsica, Sardinia & Malta, 26 days | Sep |
| Sicily and The Aeolian Isles, 22 days | Sep |
| The Balkans – Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, 25 days | Sep |
| Nagaland & India's Hornbill Festival, 20 days | Nov |
| Galapagos Expedition Cruise, 10 days | Nov |
| Brazil's Best, 14 days | Nov |
| Cambodia & Thailand Family Adventure | School Holidays |
| Sri Lanka Family Adventure | |

Please note that all tours are subject to change. Visit our website for the latest, detailed itineraries. Please refer to our terms and conditions before making a decision to travel.



We're full of ideas for 2026.

While we will no doubt run some of our favourites, there are some new tours in the works;

- 5 star cruising down the Nile River
- Northern Spain's lesser travelled villages and towns
- Oman and Saudi Arabia
- Mexico In-Depth
- Scandinavia and Lapland
- Ethiopia for the Timkat Festival
- Svalbard and The Arctic expedition cruise

We're always happy to hear your ideas for potential tours.

Don't hesitate to put these forward to us. We owe thanks to some of our regular travellers for some existing tour ideas!



The Desert Trails of RAJASTHAN

NEW TOUR
DEPARTS FEB 2025

22 DAYS India is a study in contrasts: a historical backdrop for a modern-day industrial narrative, a traditional outlook co-existing with fresh, global lifestyles, and an ensemble of ethnic disparities creating a cohesive cultural identity.

On the western part of the country, the desert state of Rajasthan brims with heritage – beautiful palaces, historic forts, regal havelis, mansions, and a resplendent route to journey on.

The desert folk with lineages of royalty intermingled with rustic communities have long endured the adversities of the land. Their way of

life evolved in the arid environment – from the cuisine using the desert plant life to clothing helping them stand against dunes, from the folk music that sings of water and wells to the dance forms that mimic the desert wildlife, and from the masonry skills that carved intricate designs into local stones to yielding threads from animal hair.

Follow our Desert Trails of Rajasthan for an insight into what made ancient fiefdoms flourish and learn of their lost and lingering legacies! You'll meet wonderfully warm locals, visit villages, towns, cities with their bustling markets, forts and museums, plus you'll see a plethora of wildlife and go tiger spotting in national parks. This is India at her very best.



CRETE, CYPRUS & RHODES

DEPARTS APR 2025

22 DAYS The story of Cyprus' tumultuous past is told through its historic sites, Roman ruins, multifaceted museums, and dusty urban streets. This ease of accessibility is highlighted in Paphos, where one of the most important archaeological sites sprawls like an ancient theme park.

Experience modern Cyprus' intrinsically different Greek and Turkish societies with its fractured identity, passionate people and culture, and beautiful landscape and lifestyle. Crete's natural beauty is equalled only by the richness of its history. The island is the birthplace of the first advanced society on European soil, the Minoans, who ruled over much of the Aegean some 4,000 years ago.

You'll find vestiges of this mysterious civilisation all over Crete, including the famous "Palace of Knossos", the legend of the labyrinth of King Minos and the slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus to save the king's daughter, Ariadne.

At the crossroads of three continents, consecutive invaders have coveted and occupied Crete.

Rhodes is rightly celebrated for the splendour of its medieval architecture and evocative old town, and it is generally considered one of the most beautiful in the Greek Islands. The crusader Knights of St John (1309-1522) called Rhodes home after their expulsion from the Holy Land, and it is their legacy of massive castles and the old town that we enjoy today. Standing astride the harbour entrance is the Colossos of Rhodes, a bronze statue of Helios, the Sun-God, erected in 290 BC and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



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URUGUAY, PARAGUAY & BOLIVIA

DEPARTS
APR 2025



20 DAYS Wedged between Argentina and Brazil, the small nation of Uruguay is often overlooked by travellers on their tours of South America. This makes it the ideal place to experience everyday 'not made for tourists' moments. Whether strolling the cobbled streets

of UNESCO-listed Colonia or sipping maté in the cosmopolitan capital Montevideo, the laid-back culture welcomes travellers. Uruguay's boutique-style wine country is making its mark on the global map and must be enjoyed alongside delicious picada, a traditional snack.

Even further off the "gringo trail", at the heart of the continent, is the landlocked country of Paraguay. The capital, Asuncion, is the ideal place to learn about the history and culture of the region, and it has many museums and galleries. Yet, just beyond the city, you may feel like you have stepped back in time, visiting artisans' workshops set against a rural backdrop. It is a country of contrasts, and one that your circle

of contacts are unlikely to have visited, given it is well and truly off the tourist trail.

Celebrated for its colourful history, fascinating customs, and jaw-dropping landscapes, it's easy to see why Bolivia and travel are a match made in heaven. Over 60 per cent of Bolivia's population is of indigenous descent, with a further 30 per cent from mixed indigenous and European origins, making it the most indigenous country on the continent. There are wonderful Incan ruins to be explored, yet the Spanish colonisation can still be strongly felt: the "white city" of

Sucre is a UNESCO-listed site. The phenomenal Salt Flats are a photographer's dream and a must-do experience in Bolivia. So, too, is the monumental Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable body of water at 3,800 metres above sea level, reflecting the Andes ranges.

If you're looking for the things South America is known for – ancient Incan ruins, colonial architecture, UNESCO-listed sites, and epic landscapes – in the places lesser travelled, this is the trip for you.



THE 5 STANS of Central Asia

2 DEPARTURES
PLANNED
APR 2025

29 DAYS Central Asia, or "The Stans" as the region is known to Westerners, is a vast land-locked region of Asia, ideal for travellers who want to experience one of the world's last great frontier lands. In Stalin's time, the area was known as Turkestan. Soon after Independence, these former Soviet Central Asian Republics, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan & Tajikistan were defined as Central Asia.

Our updated itinerary now covers all five countries. The Silk Road gave rise to unprecedented trade. Still, its brilliance and unique place in human history resulted from the interchange of ideas, innovations and philosophies amongst the very different peoples that used it. Our travels will encompass many historic places and other "story-book" destinations. Wonderful monuments, some restored, some not; museums full of ancient artifacts; colourful bazaars, all combined with stunning landscapes, make this

UPDATED
ITINERARY



a memorable experience. Uzbekistan has three standout historical places of interest – Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. All three are very special in their own way, and no trip to Uzbekistan is

complete without seeing their mosques, colourful markets and city squares.

Turkmenistan is a wonderful mix of old and new. The ancient ruins of Merv & Nisa contrast the glistening streets of the ultra-modern capital Ashgabat.

The countryside of Kyrgyzstan is like a postcard at every turn. Snowcapped mountains with bright green fields in the foreground, yurts dotting the countryside, lakes, rivers and picturesque townships.

Kazakhstan is the world's ninth-biggest country and the most developed in the region. The capital, Almaty, retains a distinctly Russian feel and is a wonderful city to stroll and explore.

Tajikistan sits at the "roof of the world", high in the Pamir Mountain range. Its fascinating historical landscape is shaped by various civilisations that have left their mark, including Greek, Buddhist, Hindu, Zoroastrian and Islamic.

With pockets of our itinerary rarely visited by tourists, you'll find warm and interested local people all along the way. Prepare your camera and your curiosity for this fascinating journey through history.



The Caucasus – AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA & ARMENIA

DEPARTS
MAY & SEP
2025



TOUR REPEATS IN SEPT 2025
ASK ABOUT OUR 14-DAY ADD-ON TO BULGARIA & ROMANIA

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- The region's natural beauty – mountains, valleys, rivers & lakes
- Medieval villages where the way of life has not changed for decades
- Warm and friendly people
- UNESCO-listed sites throughout the region – monasteries, towns and monuments.
- Ancient, medieval & modern history
- Wonderful food and wine.



26 DAYS The Caucasus is a unique travel destination at the crossroads of Asia and Eastern Europe, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Few tourists visit this fascinating region, but those who do are struck by its beauty, culture and history. On this trip, you'll pass snow-capped mountains, glaciers and gorges, dine with local families, and explore rock-hewn villages, mosques and UNESCO World Heritage-listed monasteries and churches.

Azerbaijan is a country boasting a history that dates to prehistoric times and evidence of stone-age settlements. From the dynamic capital city of Baku to charming villages filled with stone buildings and cobblestone streets to the ancient city of Sheki, it is a country of contrasts. Azerbaijan was an important part of the Great Silk Route, and nowadays, its economy is based on the abundance of oil and gas reserves. It is home to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed rock art site Gobustan and is the birthplace of the ancient Zoroastrian religion.

Georgia has an ancient culture and a unique alphabet found nowhere else. Over the centuries, all her neighbours have coveted her land. Turks, Persians, Mongols, Arabia and the Russians have invaded, and periodical civil war has also left its mark. But nowadays, it is a peaceful

country that is becoming known for its quality wines and spectacular scenery. The capital, Tbilisi, has a modern European vibe, with cosy cafes, art galleries and theatres. Yet, leaving the city may feel like travelling in medieval times, amongst palaces, castles, fortresses, and rock-hewn villages. The UNESCO World Heritage-listed



ancient capital Mtskheta sits at the confluence of the Aragvi River, and its 11th-century Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is where Christ's robe was buried.

Admire the views of snow-capped mountains, gorges and glaciers as we travel through the country and the higher Caucasus Mountain range, reaching heights of over 5,000 metres. Travellers have overlooked this fascinating region for too long. Now is the time to visit, as it emerges as a destination for adventurous travellers.



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BULGARIA & ROMANIA

DEPARTS
JUN 2025

Bulgaria packs a lot of interest for travellers. It boasts 9 UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites. Caught up in both WWI and WWII and formerly part of the Eastern Block States, Bulgaria is relatively fast-growing compared to some of its neighbours and joined the European Union in 2007. You'll love the capital, Sofia, a mix of old and cool.

Romania has a large population for a small country – around the same as our own at 23 million. It is surrounded by Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine, and Moldova, and a small stretch of the Black Sea prevents it from being landlocked. Much of its landscape is picturesque, with the Carpathian Mountains occupying the centre of the country.

There is much to see and do in this mainly Christian Orthodox country. The region of Transylvania is well known for its castles, churches and beautiful forested mountains. Around 30% of the country's workers are employed in agriculture. The quality of their wines has increased dramatically over the years, so much so they are selling it all over Europe! The cities in the Transylvania region will surprise you with their cosmopolitan feel and beauty.

14 DAYS This wonderful tour offers medieval history, fabulous food and wine, picturesque countryside, and Dracula! Bulgaria is a great mix of cultural influences and traditions. Greek, Roman and Turkish existence is clearly evident. It is a relatively small country with a population of just 7 million. For a small country, however,



The Best of ALASKA

DEPARTS
JUN 2025

15 DAYS Alaska is a nature lover's utopia – ice-capped mountains, ancient forests, pristine lakes and rivers full of fish. Separated from the US mainland by Canada's British Columbia – Alaska also happens to be the most sparsely populated state of the US...which makes it even more desirable for those who love the great outdoors. The modern history of the region is fascinating. Various indigenous tribes roamed the region for thousands of years before the Russians established a settlement. The US government purchased Alaska from the Russian government in 1867 for 2¢ an acre – about \$7 million! It became an official US territory in 1912 and an official state – the US's 49th State – in 1959. In the late 1960s, oil was discovered, and an oil boom soon followed. Pipelines, refineries, roads, townships, and other infrastructure soon followed. Today, agriculture, fishing, and tourism make up the primary industries.

Alaska's capital city, Anchorage, has a population of around 300,000, 10 times that of the nearest cities, Fairbanks and Juneau. The region is incredibly sparse, with vast wilderness and some small towns dotting the state. There's an abundance of wildlife to be spotted in Alaska. It's most famous for the brown and black bears found in healthy numbers. You are almost guaranteed to see the bears depending on the regions you visit. Caribou, moose and bison are also commonly spotted. The rivers are filled with trout and salmon. Watching bears feed during the spawning period is the classic Alaskan postcard. There are hundreds of bird species to be found – including the iconic national emblem – the American Bald Eagle, which is no longer on the endangered species list. Orca and various species of whales can also be spotted off the Alaskan Coast and Bering Sea.

This moderately active tour takes in national parks, wildlife, history, trekking, local culture, and much more. Alaska is generally regarded as one of the most scenic places on the planet. Come see it for yourself.





CENTRAL AMERICA

Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras & Guatemala

DEPARTS MAY 2025 NEW TOUR

24 DAYS Four countries...similar but different. Nicaragua is the largest of the Central American countries in terms of land size. It was colonised on the Pacific coast by the Spanish and on the Atlantic coast by the British. Add an African-Caribbean influence with indigenous peoples and you have a fabulous melting pot of cultures. The Contra War of the 1980s caused widespread poverty and casualties; however, more recently, there has been modest economic growth. Now is a good time to visit, given tourism is in its infancy, and you can experience the genuine culture.

By contrast, El Salvador is Central America's smallest country by land size and the only country in the region without a coastline on the Atlantic/Caribbean side. It has a high population density, with around 7 million inhabitants living in a size less than half of Tasmania. It is a very mountainous country and part of the Pacific Rim of Fire, subject to earthquakes. Spanish explorers became the first European visitors and changed the lives of indigenous Pipil Indians forever in the mid-1500s. Coffee, corn, beans and rice form its main agricultural produce. Honduras is a predominantly Roman Catholic country also ruled by Spain from the 16th Century. After Independence in the 1830, it was briefly annexed to Mexico, and by the 1900, it was ruled – ever so corruptly – by the military generals of the army. The country welcomed the US army during the contra war of its neighbours



during the 1980s and was spared most of the turbulence that others experienced. It remains a poor country with bananas as its major produce and export.

Guatemala has a rich cultural heritage unlike other countries in the region. Its population is over 65% indigenous Maya Indians. There is evidence of mankind from around 10,000 BCE; however, the country is well known for being the heart of the Mayan culture, which existed from around 1,600 years ago. It, too, was conquered by the Spanish and annexed to Mexico in the early 1800s. Since the end of the civil war, which lasted for 36 years, up to 1996, Guatemala has remained



relatively stable in a political sense and has enjoyed moderate economic growth. From ancient temples to charming colonial towns, volcanic peaks to sleepy beaches Central America is filled with history, culture and natural wonders. Come and explore it with us, along the lesser travelled path.



THE KIMBERLEY COAST Expedition Cruise

DEPARTS JUN 2025



12 DAYS Australia's Kimberley Coast offers a world-class, unforgettable adventure. Blue Dot has partnered with Coral Expeditions to provide a small ship adventure of a lifetime. For 30 years, Coral Expeditions has been refining this classic Australian adventure. With a maximum of 72 guests, Coral has fostered a relaxed, convivial atmosphere on board, offering daily excursions and adventures designed to be experienced alongside like-minded travellers. Coral's Australian-flagged expedition ships have been specially designed for the Kimberley and feature wraparound decks, private balconies, and comfortable outdoor dining spaces. Coral's chefs, inspired by the destination, prepare cuisine from fresh regional produce. On board, the wine cellars hold a curated selection of wines and unique beers from Australia and New Zealand. Dinner and drinks can be enjoyed alfresco in the evening, every night bringing the promise of a glorious Kimberley sunset.

During the day, Coral's open-sided Xplorer tender boats will take guests on excursions to the Kimberley's magnificent cliffs and waterfalls while providing shelter from the West Australian sun. Every day is a new adventure, from spotting native wildlife & birdlife in their natural habitat to finding a magical secluded beach for sunset canapés & sundowners.

We'll experience the thrill of riding the Horizontal Falls in inflatable Zodiac tender vessels and witness King George River and 80m tall twin King George waterfalls. We'll encounter Indigenous rock art galleries and



cruise the Prince Regent River to the 'hanging garden' King Cascade waterfall. We will get up close to Montgomery Reef and discover the tidal reef's diverse marine life. In the evening, mingle with other guests, enjoy daily educational presentations by Coral's lecturers, participate in stargazing sessions after dark, or find a quiet corner on deck and take in the incredible beauty of the Kimberley Coast. This expedition begins in Broome and ends in Darwin.



Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

UGANDA IN-DEPTH

with
Tanzania
Extension

DEPARTS
JUN 2025



16 DAYS If you like close encounters with wildlife, friendly people and stunning scenery, Uganda might be the best place to visit in Africa. Churchill was right... Uganda is the pearl of Africa! It offers the complete African wildlife experience with the bonus of the gorillas. 10 national parks cover a significant percentage of the countryside. In the Northeast, you can spot the big cats, the savannah animals and an amazing variety of birdlife. To the West, you'll see a plethora of elephants, hippos and chimps. But the stand-out wildlife experience is a close encounter with the magnificent mountain gorillas. Sadly, only about 900 of these majestic primates are left in the wild, but you are highly likely to see them in their natural habitat on this tour.



There is more to Uganda, however, than wildlife. With stunning scenery of jungles and grasslands, much of the country is on a plateau ascending to over 5,100 metres on Mount Stanley – the 3rd highest peak in Africa. Uganda shares Lake Victoria – the largest tropical lake in the world – as its eastern border with Kenya and Tanzania. The West first took notice of Uganda in the early 70s when the dictator Idi Amin took power. Dubbed “the butcher of Uganda”, Amin was a military official who, after seizing power, was responsible for the expulsion and murder of hundreds of thousands of people. He died in exile in 2003; today, the country is at peace. Uganda is a predominantly Christian country, with 80% of the 30 million people of Christian faith. While the recent past of this struggling nation cannot be ignored, you will be greatly rewarded by visiting. Not just for the gorillas but also for the people, the magnificent scenery and the culture.

ASK ABOUT OUR
ADD-ON TO TANZANIA
VISIT MAGNIFICENT
SERENGETI NATIONAL
PARK AND NGORO
NGORO CRATER.



MONGOLIA IN-DEPTH

with Naadam Festival

DEPARTS
JUL 2025



23 DAYS A trip through the Land of the Sapphire Blue Sky is something very unique. If you're looking for a five-star, cushy, comfortable type of holiday, then Mongolia is probably not for you. If you want to get off the beaten track, Mongolia is unmatched in its wild beauty and rawness.

In three weeks, you will get a wonderful taste of what this country offers. What you experience, hear, taste and see, will engage all of your senses. Mongolia is one of the least-developed, least-populated countries in the world. With only 3.3 million inhabitants, roughly half of the country's population is packed into the capital Ulaanbaatar. Outside of that, Mongolia's largest “cities” population remains in the tens of thousands, with a significant number still living a traditional lifestyle as nomadic herders. Horses and horse culture play a large role in daily and national life in Mongolia. It is traditionally said that “A Mongol without a horse is like a bird without the wings.” Mongolia has more than 3.5 million horses, an equine population that outnumbers the country's human population.



Mongolia's Naadam Festival features the “three manly sports” of wrestling, archery and horse racing – the three skills that Chingis Khan valued most for his Mongol warriors. The festival has been running for centuries and is one of the most pure and honest cultural celebrations anywhere in the world – and our trip is timed to be a part of this.

Mongolia is a land of extremes. On the road, it can take hours of driving before you pass a tiny ger community, a Mongolian on horseback, or even another vehicle. Yet in between, you are blessed with dramatic countryside views that will imprint indelibly on your memory.





MADAGASCAR'S BEST

23 DAYS Madagascar, 400 km off the East coast of Africa, is the world's fourth largest island, a fragment of Gondwanaland left behind when the ancient landmass split to form the continents of Africa, India and Australia; it stretches 1600 km from north to south and is 650 km across at its widest point. The most astonishing thing about the island is its flora and fauna, found nowhere else in the world. The island has been referred to as "nature's design laboratory" because of the many unique creatures and vegetation, some of quite a primitive nature.

**DEPARTS
JUL 2025**

The terrain varies from tropical rainforest to desert, from high stony plateaus to lush green islands with many unique geological and geographical formations. Madagascar has a range of unique animals and plants that have evolved here and, separated from the rest of the world. The most notable are the lemurs, of which nearly 30 species have been described. For the bird watcher, there are over 250 species, of which 106 are endemic, whilst for lovers of reptiles, most of the world's chameleons are found here. The flora has its peculiarities, the vegetation varying wildly by climatic region – thorny scrub in the southwest, tropical rainforest along the east coast, heath-land and moss forests on the central plateau and savannahs in the western lowlands. The two best-known examples of these unusual plants are the fan-shaped Ravinala, known as the Traveller's Palm, and the Baobab, which has ten different species. We will see many examples of these throughout, while in the tropical forests, we will see trees lush with ferns, fungi, mosses and orchids. Most of this unique flora and fauna, together with some now extinct species, were here when humans arrived 1500 to 2000 years ago.



The first inhabitants were Malay Polynesians who crossed the Indian Ocean in large canoes from Indonesia and South East Asia. These early settlers, mixed with later arrivals, African, Arab, Indian, and Portuguese traders, and French colonials, formed the 18 current official tribes, collectively termed the Malagasy. For outdoor enthusiasts and those looking for something different – this trip is it!



CORSICA, SARDINIA, MALTA

**DEPARTS
SEP 2025**

26 DAYS
If year-round sunshine, 7,000 years of living

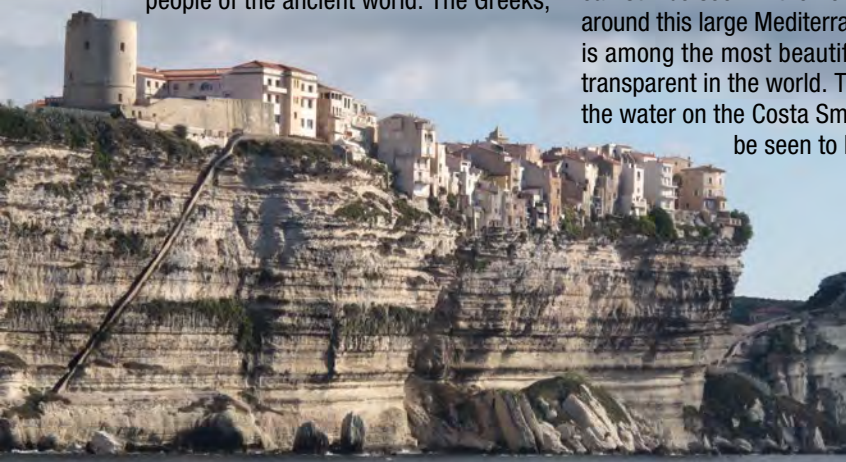
history and the famous Mediterranean cuisine are your thing, then this trip should be on your bucket list. Discover these three wonderful Mediterranean Islands, each with its own unique culture.

Laid-back, rustic Corsica is French-governed with a captivating landscape. Its capital, Ajaccio, is the birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte, and his ancestral home is today used as a museum. Like other Mediterranean islands, Corsica was visited, conquered and highly influenced by many people of the ancient world. The Greeks,

Romans, Byzantines, Phoenicians, Genovese and Northern Africans all left their mark. France invaded and occupied in the mid 1700s. Far less developed than many islands in the Mediterranean, travellers come for the weather, the food and the glorious scenery.

Sardinia remains part of Italy but has fiercely retained its proud culture and character. With landscapes of rugged mountains balanced by placid bays, Sardinian inland towns are known for their capers, olives and pecorino sardo and the coastal towns have a rich tradition of shellfish and seafood. In rural parts, stone-walled Neolithic fortresses called Nuraghes can still be seen in the fields. The sea around this large Mediterranean Island is among the most beautiful and transparent in the world. The colour of the water on the Costa Smeralda has to be seen to be believed!

The ex-British colony of Malta packs wonderful diversity into a small area. Comprising three small Islands – Malta, Gozo and Comino, which is uninhabited, it's a traveller's dream because you can take in everything within a small radius. Sample the architecture (both grand and quaint), a stunning fortified harbour, the rocky landscape, traditional hilltop towns, fishing villages, and an upbeat, lively capital city, all against the languid backdrop of the magnificent Mediterranean. You will love the pace, the sights, the people, the food and the culture of these very special islands. Come join us on this spectacular Mediterranean experience!



Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

SICILY & The Aeolian Isles

**DEPARTS
SEP 2025**

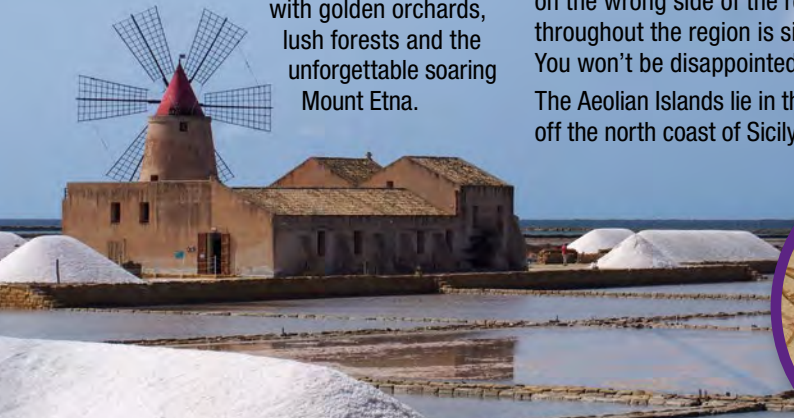
22 DAYS Sicily is billed as perhaps the world's first true cosmopolitan, multi-racial society. Asians, Africans, and Europeans have all ruled this island at various stages. Forget your impression left by The Godfather... Sicily is a friendly, vibrant, bustling island fringed with golden orchards, lush forests and the unforgettable soaring Mount Etna.

If you love history and quaint villages, you cannot help but fall in love with Sicily – the Mediterranean's largest island. The capital city – Palermo – could be considered wonderfully chaotic, with vespas on the streets heading in each direction on the wrong side of the road. The food throughout the region is simple but delicious. You won't be disappointed.

The Aeolian Islands lie in the Tyrrhenian Sea off the north coast of Sicily and near Italy's

"foot". They comprise of a volcanic archipelago of 8 islands, with Mt Stromboli – on the island of Stromboli – being highly active over the years. A spectacular display of lava and fire is not uncommon at night. The largest of the islands is Lipari, which, in the middle of summer, attracts many tourists from the mainland.

On our tour, you will visit each of the main islands but stay in the one hotel for the 6 nights making it easy to get around. You'll leave with a clear understanding of the local culture and way of life.



THE BALKANS

**DEPARTS
SEP 2025**

Croatia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania

25 DAYS The Balkans is a sprawling peninsula derived from the Turkish language for 'a chain of wooded mountains'. Those mountains are the Balkans, where farming first reached Europe, way back in the Neolithic era. To the west is the Adriatic Sea, with the Mediterranean Sea to the south and the Black Sea to the east. It is perhaps easier to think of the Balkan States as "South-eastern Europe". Wholly or partially on the peninsula, the region comprises many fascinating countries. Our tour includes seven of them – Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia and Serbia. Their polyglot nature has

been forged in turn by the Greeks, Romans and Slavs, and even fell part of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th Century. A genuine cultural crossroads, the Balkan region was where Orthodoxy met Christianity, and Christianity met Islam. While many of these names have been synonymous with political turmoil in modern history (Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, sparking the First World War), the current reality is a collection of countries and cultures now relishing their own identities and enjoying a resurgence of interaction with the outside world. The region is rich in pre-history and history, with Neanderthal relics found in many areas and towns still with dramatic mediaeval fortifications in place. While typically characterised by peaceful mountainous terrain, many Balkan destinations feature pristine coastlines and seascapes, affording dazzling variety as you travel seamlessly from one country to another. Many places we visit have not yet become popular with tourists, but this will change. Are you ready for this journey of surprise and delight?



THE CAUCASUS



DEPARTS
MAY & SEPT 2025
SEE MORE PAGE 7

Azerbaijan, Georgia & Armenia

NAGALAND

DEPARTS
NOV 2025

& India's Hornbill Festival

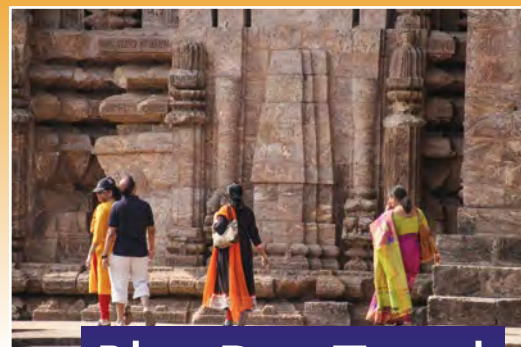
20 DAYS Nagaland is one of the least explored regions of India. It's rustic and raw, English is barely spoken, and accommodation can be basic at times, but if you want to experience unique culture first-hand, few places on earth match this region of India. At the Hornbill Festival in India's remote Northeast, sixteen local tribes converge to showcase their culture and traditions. The colours, the sounds, the music and dance, the region's natural beauty and the food will blow your mind.

On this tour you will see much of the surrounding countryside, villages and towns where people have had limited contact with Europeans. You'll taste their food, enjoy their music, see their amazing wares and come away with an experience that will stick with you for the rest of your life. Orissa's region is one of India's most beautiful states to explore. It has a distinctive cultural heritage and is known for its architectural marvels and its unique art. The UNESCO-listed Sun Temple at Konark is one of the

most impressive man-made monuments in the world, with its exquisitely preserved sculptures, including some eyebrow-raising erotica. The ancient rock-cut caves and ornate temples of Bhubaneswar, the state capital, hark back to an era when the kingdom stretched from the Ganges delta to the mouth of the River Godavari. The Jagannath



Temple at Puri is the site of one of the world's most spectacular devotional processions, and Puri's golden beaches are known for the sand art that can only be found here. At Raghurajpur village we will discover Patachitra, a local art of painting stories from mythology – large scrolls used to adorn the walls of palatial homes. This is India as you may not have imagined, but certainly must experience.



Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

GALAPAGOS

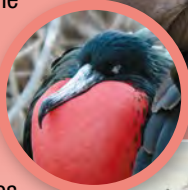
DEPARTS
NOV 2025

Expedition Cruise



10 DAYS Few destinations are more iconic than the Galapagos Islands, which loosely translated means “giant turtles”. Blue Dot has managed to secure a limited number of cabins with the best-equipped adventure cruise operator in the region – Lindblad National Geographic. Sailing on National Geographic Endeavour II, this 10-day once-in-a-lifetime expedition cruise will show you the very best of this magical archipelago.

You'll see all kinds of wildlife, including giant tortoises, blue-footed boobies, playful penguins, Darwin's finches, charismatic sea lions, and a whole lot more. You'll walk amongst the wildlife unfazed by your presence. Marvel at the huge colonies of sea iguanas and witness the plethora of nesting seabirds. Take an adventure by sea kayak, paddleboard, glass bottom boat or zodiac. Snorkel in the Galapagos Marine Reserve with the friendly sea lions, turtles, and plenty of colourful fish and keep an eye out for penguins who'll zoom by at what seems like a thousand miles an hour. If you have ever contemplated visiting these islands, this is the opportunity!



ADD-ON 14 DAYS
IN BRAZIL FOR A
TRULY MEMORABLE
ADVENTURE

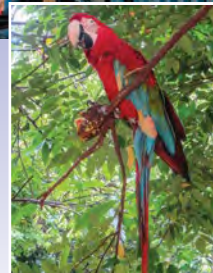
BRAZIL'S BEST

(or Ecuador or Peru)

DEPARTS
NOV 2025

14 DAYS Along with this fabulous Galapagos expedition, we offer a two-week pre-tour to some of Brazil's best highlights. Brazil is the 5th largest country in the world by area and population, covering almost half of the South American continent. It is bigger than Australia and home to over 200 million people.

On this small group tour, we'll take you to four regions of the most interesting destinations in the country, including Rio, Salvador, Recife and Manaus in the Amazon Jungle. Together, these eclectic gems will provide you with a wonderful cultural hit.



TALK TO US
ABOUT
ECUADOR OR
PERU OPTIONS

FAMILY TOURS



As parents of well-travelled children, we know what kids want on a holiday. And we know what mum, dad and the grandparents want too.

Our family trips are designed to introduce younger travellers to new cultures and local experiences, with plenty of pockets of relaxation along the way. The best part for the adults? Everything is taken care of for you. Hotels, transfers, guides, excursions and most meals have all been planned for you. You'll just have to pack & show up at the airport!

These tours are suitable for school-aged children from primary through to early teens. It's also a fantastic experience for grandparents to share with their children and grandkids. Join our scheduled departures, or customise a private family tour of your own. Pass this brochure along to your families.



PRIVATE GROUPS



Not everyone wants to go on a group tour – even if it's a small group.

That's why we offer our itineraries on a private group basis. So, if you have four or more people – family, friends or both – give us a call, and we'll help put together something very special. Over the years, we've managed numerous private tours for groups of friends and family. We have many wonderful destinations to choose from.

CAMBODIA & THAILAND

Family Adventure

DEPARTS
JUL 2025
SCHOOL
HOLIDAYS

12 DAYS With fascinating ancient history, abundant outdoor activities and warm, friendly people, Cambodia and Thailand are the perfect match for a travelling family. We help you get away from the well-travelled path and experience the true delights on offer. Your family will feel as though you've stepped into a movie as you explore World Heritage-listed Angkor Wat. Explore the Cambodian countryside by horseback and the wonderful Tonle Lake by boat.

There is more to Thailand than package holidays and we'll show you some hidden gems. Step into another world in Khao Sok National Park, wildlife spotting on jungle rafts and sleeping in a treehouse-style eco-lodge. We'll wrap it all up with some well-earned beach time on Thailand's spectacular South Coast, away from the tourist crowds. With just the right mix of adventure and relaxation, this is the ideal holiday the whole family will absolutely love.

NEW
TOUR



SRI LANKA

Family Adventure

DEPARTS
OCT 2025
SCHOOL
HOLIDAYS

14 DAYS Sri Lanka is the ideal place to introduce young travellers to a new culture while also being a relaxing trip for adults. It's a manageable flight and a small island, so your time is spent enjoying the wonderful sites instead of in transit.

There are so many reasons to visit Sri Lanka. Historical sites such as the ancient rock fortress Sigiriya are sure to impress, with their massive stone lion paws at the entrance. You'll love the rickety train journeys through spectacular mountain scenery. Get up close and personal with abundant wildlife, spotting elephants in their natural habitat and leopards, sloth bears, water buffalo and plenty of cheeky monkeys with a camping experience in Yala National Park. And just when the time is right, you'll hit the spectacular Southern coast to soak up some sun and relax along palm-fringed beaches. The people are warm and welcoming, the food is fabulous, and there are photos around every corner. It's no wonder that a few years back, Lonely Planet rated this wonderful country as the "hottest travel destination on the planet" and they didn't mean the temperature.



Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

COME TRAVEL WITH US

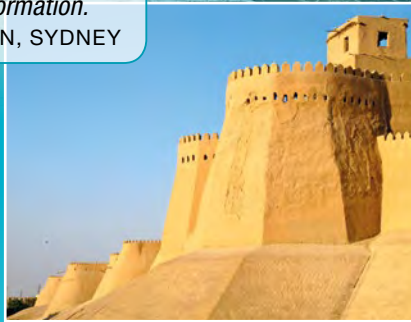
IN SMALL GROUPS,
TO UNIQUE DESTINATIONS

"Our recent Big Cats tour to India was a wonderful experience. Not only superb views of rare and elusive species but also great local guides, scenery, food, accommodation, and history. Highly recommended – particularly for nature lovers" JENNY, VIC

"This trip was superbly organised with the best hotels organised for us with a few exceptional ones when available. Great guides and excellent drivers. The tour leader Brett was totally on top of things for the entire 3 weeks. An indelible memory for me – far beyond my expectations" JEANETTE, SYDNEY

"Blue Dot is for those of us always seeking new horizons, new experiences and new people and places in what is now a shrinking world...I think I have just scraped in...as the years keep mounting but it is "like riding a bicycle!! it all comes back. The joy of being in a totally new environment, with new people who really are descended from ancient times and seeing their way of life is pure joy"
JACKIE, MELBOURNE

"The whole tour was awesome, and no complaints at all. Our guides were excellent with wonderful knowledge and information. Every part was a highlight" ROBYN, SYDNEY



Meet the Blue Dot Travel team on page 2



EMAIL, MAIL OR BOTH!

We like to keep in touch with our travellers on a regular basis without bombarding you. If we have both street address and email contact details, we can keep you in the loop about special deals, invite you to our information and trivia events plus alert you if tours are filling. If you'd like to update any of your details drop us an email to kate@bluedottravel.com.au

For complete itineraries
visit bluedottravel.com.au
enquiries@bluedottravel.com.au

Call us for an appointment
(02) 9906 5770. Suite 502, 107 Walker
Street, North Sydney NSW 2060.

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Blue Dot Travel

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