

# EXODUS



**TRANS-ASIA OVERLAND**



# EXODUS EXPEDITIONS

Exodus is an expedition company. The journeys we offer, and the style in which we travel, are still a little strange to people who are used to the idea of a comfortable coach, a good hotel and a planned itinerary. There is nothing wrong with any of these, except that many people, even if they have never thought about it, want something different.

It all boils down, we believe, to your attitude to the unexpected, because searching for the unexpected is the essence of expedition travel. It is the mark of a successful package tour that the unexpected never happens. The mark of the overland expedition is that it never stops happening!

On an expedition, the 'events' are not programmed in, we have to go out and look for them. This is why we

use trucks, not coaches, and camp rather than staying in hotels. A coach, though comfortable, will only follow the main roads: our trucks, specially fitted out and certainly not uncomfortable, have a go-anywhere ability to cope with the worst of terrains. Away from the major towns in Asia and Africa hotels are scarce and of poor quality: camping enables us to be self-contained and go wherever the fancy takes us.

Not everyone is an expedition person, but we're hoping that you are: if you're interested not just in new places, but in new ways of life, and if you're looking for an exciting, off-the-beaten-track approach to travel, you may find that you're an Exodus person. In that case, welcome — to a journey into the unexpected!

## Expedition Leaders

Throughout your journey our expedition leader is responsible for your well-being and it is he alone who has the last word on all matters relating to the Expedition. Our Leaders are all experienced travellers, and many of them have been leading expeditions for several years.

It is firm policy only to use one vehicle per expedition, and never to have less than two Expedition Leaders per vehicle, at least one of whom is a fully competent mechanic.

## Vehicles

Our normal expedition vehicle is a Bedford truck equipped to our own specifications for travelling in difficult terrain. Apart from the extensive mechanical modifications that are necessary, we rebuild the bodies and fit extra water and fuel tanks to enable us to go far from the normal routes. The back of the vehicle is equipped with comfortable upholstered seats and personal luggage lockers. The canopy is specially designed to be weatherproof, but in normal weather conditions we travel with it rolled up, to allow best possible all-round vision.



## The most adventurous route to Europe

Not all of us can be the first to climb Mount Everest or to reach Timbuctu or Lhasa, but even though long-distance travel has become a simple matter, many of us still feel that we would welcome the opportunity to do something rather less simple—to explore. Exodus Expeditions is a company which exists to provide opportunities for exploration.

The journey across Asia is just such an opportunity—a long, hard, ever-changing route that takes us from our secure Western lifestyle through moments of fascination, frustration, hardship, wonder, even envy, to a face-to-face confrontation with the mysteries of deepest Asia.

It is one of the world's classic journeys, from which no one can ever return unchanged.

We at Exodus believe that the essence of Overland travel is contact—with terrain, peoples, cultures. This is why we use rugged, expedition-equipped vehicles instead of coaches that can only use the main roads. This too is why we choose to camp rather than stick to rigid, hotel-based itineraries, and why we are flexible about routes and timetables. Our aim is to take our expedition members to places where few other westerners have ever been, places where the word 'tourist' has no meaning, but where a traveller is always a guest in a strange land.

But even though an expedition aims to see more than a conventional trip ever can, this does not mean that expedition members miss out on any of the more conventional sights and experiences. You can still dance the night away in Istanbul, dine like a king in Esfahan, tan yourself, weather permitting, on a Turkish beach, and live in the height of luxury in one of Srinagar's Victorian houseboats. Souvenir-shopping, too, is definitely more successful on an expedition; you can buy local arts and crafts of a much higher quality and a much lower price than by shopping in places where thousands of other tourists have set the price before you.

Your fellow-travellers will be between 18 and 40, most of them in their twenties, with a pretty even balance between the sexes, and a selection from all walks of life. British and Australasians will predominate, with a number of adventurers from America and the continent of Europe.

And you? We hope that you will see yourself as a participant in a shared experience—a memorable and exciting experience, in which you will help, as an expedition member, to plan the daily stages and organize the everyday routines in consultation with the Expedition Leader. For, however much we, as professionals, do to help you, you can only get out of an expedition as much as you yourself put in.

A final word—although it won't always be comfortable, it certainly isn't always tough. The only real qualification that you need is a sense of humour. During those three months you will learn a lot about the world. But you will almost certainly learn as much about yourself. And that, too, is the stamp of a real traveller.



## What to expect on your Exodus Expedition

We aim to provide as much as possible within the price of your Overland Expedition—for your convenience and ours. There are a few things, however, that have to come as extras, so we list here what is included and what is not.

### What is included

Transport in the expedition vehicle, all ferry fares, road tolls and taxes

Accommodation in hotels, at points en route where camping is not practicable, i.e. Kabul, Lahore, and Benares, and in the houseboats in Kashmir. Use of camping equipment at all other times, including tents with sewn-in groundsheets. In Europe we camp in well-equipped camp sites, while in Asia we try to choose the most scenic and convenient spots off the road.

Food: breakfast, a light lunch, and a cooked dinner are provided partly from supplies taken with us from England, and partly from supplies bought locally (bread, vegetables, fruit, etc.). Expedition members take it in turns to buy food from Exodus funds and prepare it on cooking equipment provided by us.

Entrance fees to Corbett National Park, and the services of the Game Warden and scouts.

Services of your Expedition Leader.

### What is not included

Hotel accommodation in towns other than those mentioned above.

If you wish to use hotels you may, of course, do so at your own expense provided this is convenient to the wishes of the group as a whole.

The cost of eating in restaurants. Whilst staying in towns people normally break up into small groups to go off sightseeing and it is more interesting and convenient to eat out in the local restaurants. However, food is always available for those who wish to prepare it on the truck.

Entrance fees to museums, historical sites etc.

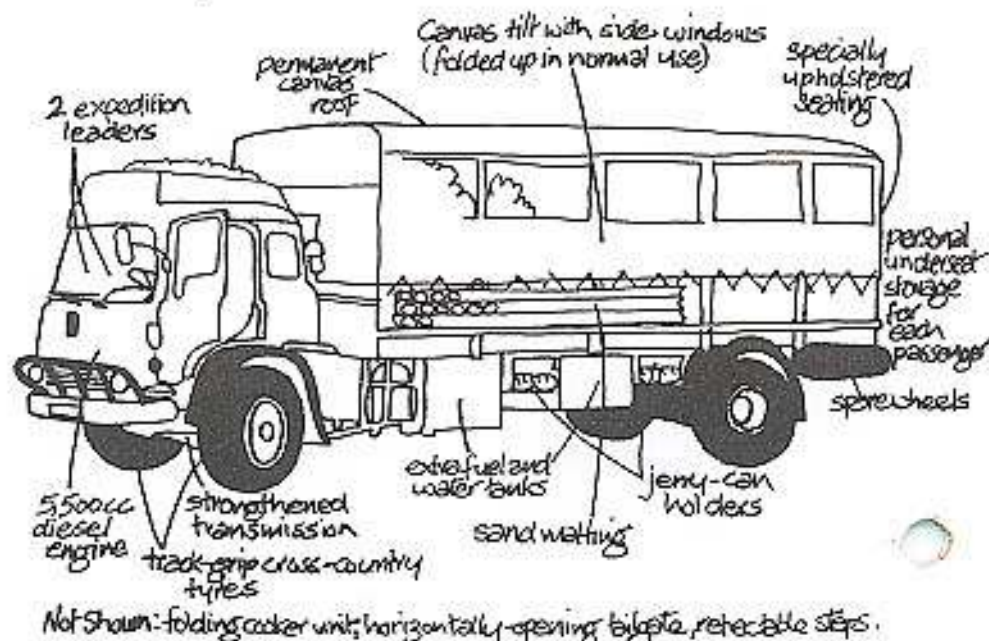
Sleeping bags, which we can hire to you on request.

Visas: The cost of these for British, American, and Canadian subjects is £3.20 and for Australian and New Zealanders it is £3.40.

Personal Spending Money: we recommend a minimum of £60 or A\$100.

Insurance: Please see the booking insert.

## Exodus Expedition vehicles



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### The Climate of Asia.

In Asia the weather is a great deal more extreme than we are used to in Britain. Freezing nights are very commonly followed by mid-day temperatures in the 100's. On summer departures temperatures will at all times be high. On autumn departures it will be generally mild, though rather cold in Turkey, and in spring it will be mild in Europe, becoming steadily hotter through Asia, and very hot in India.

### Passports and Visas.

Your passport must be valid for the whole duration of your trip, and have at least six clear pages. If you wish to obtain your visas through us, we can do this at a small extra charge.

### Medical Precautions.

Each expedition carries a comprehensive first-aid kit, but most people like to take some of their own medications with them, depending on their needs.

You must be vaccinated against Cholera, Smallpox and Typhoid at least, and have the appropriate International Certificates. Fuller advice on vaccinations is contained in our Final Details Dossier.

### What you need to bring.

Comprehensive advice can be found in the Pre-Departure Dossier. There are two or three essentials which we should mention here, the most important being a sleeping bag. On summer departures any normal quality bag will suffice, but on spring and autumn departures you must have a good quality down or feather-filled bag, as the temperatures at night often fall below freezing. We can hire you one of our own bags, which are among the best you can buy.

It is also essential to have a good anorak or parka to keep out wind and cold, and those going trekking must have suitable boots or shoes.

### Travel Insurance.

All expedition members must be insured against any medical expenses incurred during the trip, and should also take out cancellation and personal accident insurance as well. We normally arrange this cover for you, as indicated on the booking insert.

## Setting out

From the moment our plane touches down at the airport of Kathmandu, we are in another world. Far from the comforts and security of the Western way of life that we know so well, we find ourselves in new surroundings, a strange environment of pagoda-like temples, painted gargoyles, praying monks and laughing children. Even nowadays there seems little of the twentieth century in Kathmandu, and nowhere do we miss it less.

Here in Kathmandu our party assembles. First contacts are made between strangers whom expedition life may turn into lifelong friends; first contacts are made with Expedition Leaders, equipment and the rugged vehicles that are to carry us half-way across the world.

After a few days in Kathmandu to acclimatize after the long flight, or to rest after the trek, we prepare to leave the beautiful world of Nepal. Food is bought and the vehicle loaded, and our expedition leader explains to us the basic routines of expedition life. Finally we make our way through the terraced foothills of the valley of Kathmandu and commence our journey along the narrow and tortuous Raj Path. It is a spectacular beginning to our long journey, and as we descend into the jungles, leaving behind us the magnificent vistas of the Himalayas, the exciting prospect of India is just ahead of us.

On an expedition many decisions have to depend on the climatic conditions, and the first of these will be whether we enter India via Pokhara, in the western part of Nepal, or whether we follow the Raj Path south-east to Buddh Cava, where the Lord Buddha is said to have received his enlightenment.

## Across the plains of India



In any event, our first major halt is Benares, the city of Hindu pilgrimage where many come to die and to have their ashes scattered over the holy waters. From a small boat we can watch the moving spectacle of the pilgrims praying and washing themselves in the river which for many of them marks the end not only of a pilgrimage, but of life itself.

Now, still following the Ganges, we forge westwards to Khajuraho, where we see one of the most bizarre of all monuments, the Hindu temples whose intricate carvings include a comprehensive catalogue of the most intimate erotic details.

On now to Delhi, the capital of India, where ancient and modern are juxtaposed at the very nerve-centre of the subcontinent. The tall modern buildings and wide boulevards of the new city give little hint of the narrow, winding lanes and crowded habitations of the old quarter. The Red Fort, symbol of Moghul might, and the Juma Masjid, the world's largest mosque, remind us of what India was, while the scorching hordes of people tell of a new nation struggling for survival and a place in the modern world.

Though Delhi is in some ways a disturbing experience, the magnificence of its monuments amply makes up for the element of culture shock. Nearby, at Agra, stands one of the world's Seven Wonders, and certainly one of its most beautiful buildings, the Taj Mahal. Close by again, the deserted city of Fatepur Sikri, built as the Moghul capital, then abandoned for lack of water. Its very emptiness takes us back to an age of elegance and luxury.

But India is not all cities and monuments, and our next excursion is of a very different kind, taking us into the jungles of Nainital. The Corbett National park has the finest concentration of game in the whole of India, and to try to see some of the tiger and other wildlife in the reserve we hire guides and trackers for a couple of days' safari. Now, as for thousands of years past, the best means of travel is by elephant.

