Dear Traveller,

This is our second update and includes information about a pre-trip Zoom meeting, your balance payment, our itinerary, vaccinations and health, spending money, keeping in touch with family and friends as well as some notes about visas and documentation and some tips from previous travellers.

**PRE-TRIP ZOOM MEETING**

There will be a Zoom meeting with your Tour Leader, Chris Blake and Mariska and Ralph from the UK office on **Thursday 14th September at 6.30pm**. This will be a great opportunity to talk over some aspects of the trip and for us to meet each other virtually! We will send you a link to the meeting and further details in due course. The meeting will be recorded for those that are unable to attend.

**BALANCE**

Your balance payment is due by 13th September (if you have already paid in full, thank you and please ignore the following!). You can pay this by making a bank transfer into our current account as detailed below. We will then declare your payment to Trust My Travel to ensure your financial protection is in place.

Account Name: Uncover the World Travel Ltd.

Our address: Leigh House, Varley Street, Pudsey, West Yorkshire, LS28 6AN

Bank Name: HSBC

Bank address: 90 Baker Street, London, W1U 6AX

Account No: 82527693

Sort code: 40-01-06

IBAN: GB93HBUK40010682527693

SWIFT: HBUKGB4105F

Alternatively you can pay by credit or debit card using the links in your payment & booking confirmation emails.

If you are not intending on travelling with us this year after all, please do let us know as soon as possible.

**ITINERARY UPDATE – Chimpanzees in Guinea/Sierra Leone**

We will no longer be journeying from Monrovia in Liberia to Bossou in Guinea and on to Cote d’Ivoire but instead take a more direct route between Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire. We originally added this to our itineraries for the opportunity to trek to see chimpanzees in the wild. The route there involves over 100km driving on terrible roads and also requires more time and money spent getting a double entry or an additional visa for Guinea as well as more time spent crossing a border, usually a very lengthy process in West Africa. All this would be worth it if we had received good feedback about the chimpanzee trek however, the majority of our previous travellers have not felt it was worth the journey as chimps are very rarely found and when they are, they are difficult to see in the forest.

We have however received positive reviews about the Tacugama Chimpanzee Reserve near Freetown in Liberia, in the Western Area Peninsula National Park. Caring for around 100 injured or orphaned chimpanzees, Tacugama is also actively engaged in community outreach, wildlife field research, environmental sustainability, conservation education and alternative livelihoods programs. The reserve’s mission is to use education and community conservation to eliminate the wildlife trade and safeguard the remaining natural habitats in Sierra Leone.

Tacugama has in incredible story, starting in 1988 with the rescue of a baby chimpanzee by Bala and Sharmila Amarasekaran, surviving the civil war and growing to become Sierra Leone’s primary conservation organisation, supported by international bodies such as the EU, WSPA (now World Animal Protection) and the Jane Goodall Institute.

So instead of this being an optional excursion, we will be including a tour of the reserve where you can see the resident rescued chimps, learn about the species and the individual characters and get some great photos.

Whilst not a ‘wild’ experience, we feel this will benefit you in removing a long, uncomfortable drive and the need to obtain an additional visa as well as benefitting Sierra Leone’s wildlife through our support and promotion of Tacugama and the reserve’s chimpanzees.

**VISAS**
Just a reminder that you will need to obtain your Ghana visa before the trip starts. But please be careful about when you apply. Different embassies provide different validity of visas and it is very important that your visa does not expire before we get there. So you cannot apply too early (not before 23rd October) if your embassy will only offer a 90 day validity (enter within 90 days).
We will also ask you to start the process of applying for the Cote d'Ivoire visa before the trip starts. There's nothing for you to do on this now though.

**DOCUMENTATION**
You will need to bring a lot of paperwork with you to help with border crossings and visa applications. This will include multiple passport copies, birth certificate copy, yellow fever certificates etc. We will go through all the specific requirements in a later message, but if you will be travelling away from home for a long time before the trip starts, please make sure you get a copy of your birth certificate before you leave.

**VACCINATIONS AND COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS**

Remember that it is recommended to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19, please see our previous update for more information about this. If you cannot get vaccinated for a medical reason, please let us know, as you will need to bring along a medical report stating why you cannot be vaccinated.

The **Yellow Fever vaccination** is considered to be valid for life. However this is not always accepted by some border officials. Some of you may have had the vaccine some time ago when it was deemed valid for 10 years and so it will show a validity of 10 years on your certificate. Border officials may take this as being out of date if you had the vaccine more than 10 years ago which could mean difficulties and delays at the border. [Nomad Travel Clinics](https://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/) can issue replacement certificates which state ‘life of person vaccinated’ and these cost £20. Please contact them directly for more details.

For other vaccinations and malaria prevention, you should speak to your doctor or a travel clinic for the most up to date advice. As we are not medical professionals, we have to be a bit careful about giving out specific medical information and advice. However, for convenience, I have copied the Vaccination and Health details from the Trans Africa Essential Information below.

VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

It is normal when travelling in Africa to require some vaccinations for your trip, depending on the areas that you are visiting. As we are not medically trained, we are unable to give detailed advice on vaccination requirements, so please use the information below as a guide only and obtain professional advice.  We have worked closely with **Nomad Travel Clinics** for many years and they offer Oasis travellers a **10% discount** on vaccinations, anti- malarial drugs, first aid items, clothing and equipment, just enter discount code OASIS1000 at [**Nomad Travel**](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/). Alternatively, you can check out the [**fit for travel website**](https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home) for more travel health information or consult a reputable travel clinic or your GP practice for information and advice. We suggest that you allow at least 8 weeks to get all your vaccinations.

**Yellow Fever** - Being vaccinated against Yellow Fever and having a valid certificate and a photocopy is deemed compulsory in nearly all the countries we visit in Africa, especially at certain borders and are needed if you are entering from an infected country. You can view a list of countries requiring a certificate through the [**World Health Organisation**](http://www.who.int/ith/ITH_country_list.pdf).

**Rabies** - Vaccinations are regularly advised for all countries that we travel through in Africa - especially if time and money are not a deterrent.

**Malaria** - In some of the areas we visit there is a risk of contracting malaria. You must be aware that whatever malaria prophylactics you are taking, they only offer partial protection. They must be coupled with your own physical efforts against being bitten - which is the best prevention. Malaria-carrying mosquitoes come out at sunset so from this time you should wear long sleeves and trousers. Exposed skin, especially ankles, should have insect repellent containing 'Deet' applied to them. Your crew will advise on where the worst affected areas are on the trip. There are a number of prophylactic malaria treatments on the market and requirements change.  It is also wise to take a sample of whichever prophylactic you choose, a few weeks before you leave. This way you may determine early on if you have any adverse reactions so you can change the regimen if necessary. Please consult a reputable travel clinic or GP for advice. For more information visit [**www.nomadtravel.co.uk**](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/) or [**www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk**](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/)

**Dengue**- Unlike the malaria mosquito, which bites at night, the dengue carrying mosquito bites during the day. Some areas we travel to do have occasional outbreaks and it is therefore advised that you take care not to be bitten during the day as well as at night.  There is no vaccine available.

**Other vaccinations**

Other vaccinations (as well as Rabies and Yellow Fever) you may be recommended to obtain include:

* Tetanus
* Poliomyelitis
* Typhoid
* Hepatitis A
* Hepatitis B
* Diptheria

**Health**- To join our trips you should be in good general health. Your travel insurance company must be told if you have any pre-existing medical condition / allergy or if you are on any regular medication, otherwise you may not be covered under your policy for these. Our crew will need to know of any medication or conditions you may have. Please send this information to us asap so that we can take account of it and pass it onto the crew. For general health advice log onto [**www.nathnac.org/travel/**](http://www.nathnac.org/travel/).

**MONEY**

You will find a currency guide that may be useful to you in a separate document. This is a guideline as to what currencies are best to change in each of the countries you travel to, based on the previous year’s Trans Africa expedition.  Also see below for some tips from our previous travellers.

We will send you a breakdown of how to pay your Local Payment in a future update. Your local payment is due in part US$ and part Euros to your tour leader at the start of the trip.

**KEEPING IN TOUCH**

It is possible to buy local Sim cards for your mobile phone very cheaply in various countries. Please just make sure that your phone is unlocked. Sim cards work on a top up basis and top up cards are readily available. Please be aware that Micro sims are difficult to obtain outside of big cities with posh phone shops and you’ll be even more unlikely to find a Nano sim. But regular sims are available everywhere!  WiFi is available in some of areas that we visit – but the efficiency or speed in connection is never a guarantee!! The prices of using the facilities can range considerably, from free WiFi to up to £4 pounds per hour.

Please prepare your family for the fact that you may have stretches of time where you will not be in contact – generally this means you are having fun!

**SOME TIPS FROM PREVIOUS TRAVELLERS**

Recent travellers on the Trans Africa have passed on the following information to help you plan your Africa adventure:

\* Euro cash is useful in some West Africa countries, as some places do not even change US$.

\* It was suggested that you budget for visas separately and keep visa money in a separate envelope to the rest of your cash.

\*Many travellers said that they underestimated their spending money (with drinks being a bigger expense than anticipated). In addition to the suggested spending money on our website and in the attached document, some travellers recommend allowing up to £500-£1000 more, depending on the length of your trip.

\*They recommend that you buy your DEET here in the UK as you can buy mosquito repellents in some places in West Africa but they are very expensive and do not really contain any DEET content.  You can restock in Namibia and South Africa if you need to.  In South Africa you will find a brand called ‘Peaceful Night’ which our crew find effective.

\*Some of our travellers have used a free standing mosquito net and found these to be effective and allowed them to sleep under the stars.   There are several nets available but the free standing ones can be put up anywhere and you do not need to rely on needing hooks or a tree to hang it off. Here is their personal favourite. They recommend shopping around for as prices vary: [**http://www.sansbug.com/**](http://www.sansbug.com/)

You do not need to bring a net if you do not wish to as our tents have in-built mosquito netting.

\*Previous travellers have said that they underestimated how cold it could get. During this trip you will encounter extremes in weather. A few of our previous Trans Africa expeditions have encountered snow in Morocco, rainy seasons along the way and extreme heat in some places.  The general advice here is to pack for all weathers!