



Frequently Asked Questions And Answers

VEHICLE and EQUIPMENT



How much preparation will my vehicle need ?



Don't worry if your vehicle is not fully equipped - the **UK Explorer weekends** are designed to help you determine what enhancements are actually needed. Standard vehicles will be able to undertake all of our UK expeditions, however it is advisable that your vehicle is fitted with basic underbody protection as a minimum (steering and differential guards for Land Rovers)

For the **Foreign Explorers** then a slightly higher level of preparation will be needed. As a minimum your vehicle will need underbody protection, proper recovery points front and rear, a CB radio for communication within the group, have been recently serviced and in good mechanical condition. Other items you may consider fitting are -

- Snorkel - advisable for engine protection against dust and water
- Recovery equipment – either strops and recovery points to a winch for self recovery
- Fridge - well, no one said travelling should be hard!
- Storage system - a boxed system is normally adequate.
- GPS - always useful for logging your track
- Dual battery and a split charge system

A good packing system will make or break a holiday. Think about how you will use the car beforehand and come up with an organised system that suits you. It may be based around a few big boxes with some smaller storage boxes so that anything you need is accessible, especially your brew kit and stove! There are loads of ideas and options available on the web to get you thinking about what might work for you. A quick flick through a 4x4 magazine or a wander around a Land Rover show will reveal a vast array of modifications you can make to your vehicle, 80% of which are not really necessary but fall into the luxury or “make it easier” bracket – but before either buying the whole shop or dismissing it stop and consider “would it work for me or does it make it easier”. For more information and options available then the companies listed on our **LINKS** section will help you get started in the right direction

A useful book is **Sahara Overland** by Chris Scott, whilst biased towards desert travel, it extensively covers all aspects of vehicle choice and preparation for any destination. Another extremely comprehensive book is the **Vehicle Dependant Expedition Guide** by Tom Sheppard ISBN 0-9532324-0-9.



We have a CB radio for communication. Do we need a licence or similar for it ?



No licence is required for CB radio, provided the unit has not been modified to transmit more than 4 watts power. For some countries some import restrictions apply. We don't use VHF or UHF radios, except in exceptional cases when we will advise you and provide information on these sets.



What tools, spares or specialist equipment do I need ?



The type and quantity of spares and tools will vary between expeditions - you will need less on the shorter trips than on the longer and the further from main dealers we go, the more you'll need to carry. A basic spares kit would be spare tyre, a set of hoses, belts, wheel bearings and UJ's, a basic tool kit along with spanner and socket set, i.e. enough to undertake daily basic maintenance. On the support vehicle we carry a comprehensive tool kit and a full puncture repair kit for tubed and tubeless tyres. It is worth approaching your local parts shop and ask if you can get your spares on a sale or return basis - provided you don't open the packets and keep everything in mint condition some parts suppliers will do this. We carry all specialist equipment such as compressors, sand trays or ladders, PMR radio's, satellite communications and vehicle recovery equipment. Although optional, you are recommended to carry your own basic recovery kit (tow rope, shackles and strop) and a compressor for re-inflating your tyres after sand driving.

Q What tyres are best, do I need 2 spares ?

A Good quality AT or AT/MT tyres are essential, we use both BF Goodrich AT and Cooper ST's and had no problems with either make. Aggressive mud tyres (dig too much) and remoulds (weakened carcasses) are not suitable. You generally don't need a second spare tyre as punctures are fixed easily, ripped side walls are sometimes unavoidable and do happen but we can usually find a local solution.

Q How much fuel range is needed ?

A For most of the expeditions, all you will need is an emergency 20L jerry can. For expeditions into Algeria and Libya you will have to extend your range for a minimum of 1000km of off road driving, either by jerry cans or additional tanks. A 300tdi Defender will typically do 7km/l average on an expedition, a Toyota Land Cruiser 5 km/l. More information is on each trip itinerary, but please call us if you have a petrol engine or LPG.

SAFETY

Q Is it safe ?

A Generally the chance of getting caught up in an attack is extremely unlikely. Travel in the Sahara is reasonably safe from wars and terrorism, - the threat of al-Qaeda action in the Sahara as a whole is real but certainly no worse than elsewhere in the world including the UK mainland. Local political problems are generally fairly minor and don't tend to include anyone apart from the locals. We do however make use of the UK Foreign Office Travel Advisory Service and have contacts elsewhere within the security sector as well as "on the ground" information from local sources. If the security situation should deteriorate to a level that would stop us traveling in safety there or the FCO advise against travel to a particular region or country we would either cancel the expedition or offer different itinerary.

Apart from a few lawless areas of the desert in Northern Mali, Niger and Chad, there is much less threat of robbery and violence than in Britain. It is prudent to keep your vehicle locked at all times and anything attached to it secured against theft but muggings and street crime are virtually unheard of.

Q Medical kits / First aid – what do you carry, what should we bring ?

A All our staff are trained first aiders, having attended both standard and specialist expedition first aid and trauma courses. We carry an extremely comprehensive first aid kit which we will use to treat any serious conditions or injuries. For minor cuts and scrapes we advise all expedition members to provide their own basic supply of plasters, aspirin and the like, along with a European Health Insurance Card - available from UK Post Offices. We also insist that all our expedition members provide their own comprehensive medical insurance, which covers repatriation in case of an emergency.

Q What injections do I need ? What about malaria ?

A For injections generally none but we do suggest Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid vaccinations for North Africa but confirm your needs with your doctor. Malaria is also not considered a risk in the countries we normally visit, however this situation does change and its worth confirming this with a Travel Clinic. Further information is given on the trip itineraries and please don't hesitate to contact us for more information.

MY EXPEDITION

Q What's the maximum group size ?

A All non UK OneLife Adventure expeditions are limited to 12 adult guests or 6 vehicles and the support vehicle. We carry any additional local guides in our vehicle. Part of your expedition is opportunity to meet new friends, spend time in

conversation and also enjoy the solitude and silence of the desert. If you're at the back of a 15 or 20 vehicle convoy sitting in a dust cloud all day its not going to be much fun and there will be little opportunity to see or learn anything new. By having small group sizes, our expeditions offer more variety and can be altered to take into account group interests, run at a generally slower pace giving you more time to appreciate the environment that you're exploring.

Q Do you repeat the same routes all the time ?

A No, we alter the routes and overall program we offer every year, for example we offer Iceland on even years and Romania on odd years. We also vary the route we use for an expedition each year – about 20% of each expedition will be reconnaissance, either by exploring pistes or areas we noted on previous trips or from satellite maps or information found during our annual trip research. By varying our routes every year, we don't become jaded with the same old places and it makes it more interesting for us – and if we aren't excited why should you be! It also fits with the OneLife ethos of going that bit further off the beaten track, to find the inside line on a country and its people and to look over the next hill and round the next bend and see what's there. This is what makes OneLife different, why so many guest travel with us again and again.

Q Do I need to be an expert navigator ?

A No, you can get as involved as you want! If you simply want to follow, that's fine but we'd suggest you bring a basic map of the country with you, we're happy to mark the route on this so you can impress everyone back home! A emergency compass is useful (remember to get out of the vehicle if you need to use it). To get the most out of your expedition though, we recommend bringing a GPS that is suitable for waypoint navigation as we can give you waypoint files and tracks, allowing you to explore a little away from the support vehicle.

Q I don't want to camp all the time !

A That's OK. Whilst we spend as much time as possible out in the wild, if possible we try and spend every 3rd or 4th night in a commercial campsite, provided its clean, so you can get a hot shower and a meal out! One of the advantages of using a campsite is they are often close to civilisation so it's possible to upgrade to a hotel and spend the night in a proper bed if you want. Most campsites have basic rooms whilst local hotels can range from budget to luxury. Some of our expeditions use local hotels as part of the included accommodation, please discuss this with us at time of booking. The Pyrenees campsites are of a high standard, usually with a pool, restaurant and bar.

Q Cash - how much will I need ?

A While cards can be relied upon on Europe (at least with a spare one in your pocket as well) cash is still king away from Europe. The Euro is the most accepted, easiest to change and generally attracts the best rates, although in most places it is possible to change Sterling and Dollars. In Morocco and Tunisia it is possible to use ATMs with a VISA or MasterCard but be aware of problems with the card issuers blocking the card due to "abnormal usage", a call in advance of departure may prevent them from doing this. Travellers cheques are not recommended as it can take half a day to cash them. In Libya and Algeria, cards are useless and ATM's are not available. All the trip itineraries have details of fuel costs which will be your major expenditure on the trip (apart from Algeria and Libya where fuel is still sensibly priced at €0.12 and €0.08 per litre!) Daily costs vary, but in North Africa its very cheap compared to Europe and you could get by comfortably on €10/15 per person per day for food.

Q What camping equipment do I need ?

A A basic set would consist of a roof or ground tent, 3 season sleeping bags and mats or camp beds, chairs, table, cooker, cutlery and utensils. Each trip itinerary will list clothing and any other specialist requirements. To minimise our impact on the often unique and fragile environment we travel through, all waste and refuse needs to be disposed of appropriately - so please bring a bin bags, toilet roll, a lighter and a trowel- further instructions will be given in country!

Q Is the expedition suitable for a family ?

A Why not take the kids on an overland expedition? We do! Traveling in North Africa with children is a unique and extremely rewarding experience. If your children are used to traveling and camping, there's no reason why they can't come into the Sahara. Our 4x4 Pyrenean Explorers are designed for families, which means although the conditions are similar to our other expeditions, driving days are shorter and there are more opportunities to explore on foot, relax in campsites, etc. Generally if an expedition coincides with the school holidays then it will be suitable for kids of all ages. If

you're unsure about how you will cope with your kids in a new environment (the kids will be fine it's the parents that get stressed!) please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Q Weather - just how hot is it ?

A In the desert during the winter months (Nov to March) expect warm days (30/35 deg C) and chilly nights but it can get below freezing just before dawn in the mountains so a warm jumper/fleece and a good 3 – 4 season sleeping bag keeps it comfortable. We carry down jackets and have been known to wear them in the middle of the Sahara! The summer months are hot, with day time temperatures often in the high 40's / low 50's and night time temps in the 30's. However, the almost total lack of humidity makes these extreme temperatures much bearable than a summers day on a Spanish beach. It's hot but not unbearable. Each trip itinerary has specific guidance on weather.

Q How long are the driving days ?

A In general we try and keep the driving days to less than 4 or 5 hours with an 9.00 start, an hour for lunch and camp about 17.00, although much depends on the route. We stop frequently during the day to explore, take photographs or simply admire the view. On Pyrenees expeditions we only drive for 4 hours so you can relax with the family and enjoy the quality campsites we use for this family orientated expedition. We occasionally may have a longer day on the tarmac at the beginning and end of a trip. Daily distances vary but typically it would be around 180 km on a North African expedition but on previous occasions in deep sand it could be just 20 km!

Q Water - How much ?

A For most of our expeditions we recommend 20 litres of drinking water and 20 litres spare (2 jerry cans) but for extended desert expeditions the water load can be significantly more due to the infrequency of wells in the area. Water can be carried in jerry cans or in an on-board tank, it is best either filtered or chemically disinfected/purified. Full details of how much you will be expected to carry will be available in the detailed expedition itinerary.

Q How hard is the driving ?

A At times the driving will be easy, at times it will probably be challenging but it will never be boring! All our expeditions are proper off road adventures and we only use tarmac when we have to. Conditions will range from steep mountain tracks, dune crossings, sandy pistes, flat gravel plains to rock crawling. All our European, Moroccan and Tunisian expeditions are suitable for novice off road drivers (don't worry, we'll be on hand to give you advice and help) whilst other expeditions deeper into the Sahara, such as Libya and Algeria are more suited to those with previous desert experience (or novice drivers who want a real challenge!) If you have never driven off road before and you're unsure of how you will cope, we would recommend doing a short off road driving course first, such as Land Rover Experience and undertaking one of our UK Explorers, preferably with your vehicle laden and in expedition trim. We also offer 1:1 expedition driver training at advanced and intermediate levels.

Q What will there be in the way of laundry facilities if any? Will there be washing machines anywhere or will it just be handwashing ?

A Some campsites offer limited washing facilities but generally we do not stay long enough to use them. We tend to handwash and dry in the vehicle during the day

INSURANCE

Q Car Insurance - Is it just a case of speaking to our insurer to check whether we are covered to drive in our destination ?

A Yes, your own vehicle insurer will be able to advise on extensions of cover and green card arrangements. If they do not offer Green Cards for the destination then you will be able to purchase basic 3 party insurance for that country when crossing the border. We use the NFU and as far as we are aware, NFU are the only UK insurer who offer a Green card that covers Morocco and Tunisia free of charge.

Q Travel Insurance - I haven't bothered with travel insurance for ages but I'm conscious that we need to make sure we are covered for the expedition, what medical cover you suggest ?

A Travel insurance is very important due to the remote places we travel in and the increased risk compared to a normal holiday. We use WorldWide Travel Insurance and have provided you with a link here. Medical cover and repatriation is key and we suggest you have sufficient medical cover including provision for emergency medical repatriation if needed, of at least 2.5 million pounds. In addition, personal accident, loss, third party liability and legal costs are also desirable. The policy needs to cover you while driving a vehicle abroad and for any adventure activities you intend to undertake. **Please note that this is not normally covered by your motor vehicle insurance.**

Q Are there any travel insurance companies that you can recommend that give the right sort of cover for the driving and type of expedition we are doing ?

A Take a look at WorldWide Travel Insurance in our LINKS page, they offer cover for holidays involving driving off road, but always get written confirmation that they understand the nature of your holiday and that it meets your specific needs and attitude to risk. Generally travel policies do cover driving or carriage in off road vehicles. However we suggest you always state in writing to the insurer the nature of the expedition when you take the policy out. Remember its cover for you, not for the car.

Q Will the travel insurance also get the vehicle home as well as us if we are injured and can't drive it or do I have to look at some kind of breakdown cover for the car for that ?

A Car recovery is not covered in travel insurance policies. You would need separate recovery policies, such as that available from Worldwide Insurance at the link above, but in common with all breakdown cover this will not be of use outside Europe. By making sure your vehicle is fully serviced and in good running order before you embark on one of our expeditions, the chances of a major breakdown are minimized. Essentially, if you are worried about something pre-departure then its probably worth getting it investigated and rectified before you leave. If something catastrophic does happen that can not be fixed by the groups resources, we will get you and your vehicle to safety and a local garage, help obtain parts (if necessary, organise shipment from the UK) or assist you in repatriating your vehicle to mainland Europe / UK if it can't be fixed. We recommend that you take out European Breakdown cover as it's often possible to get a vehicle to Europe and then repatriate it to your home country via the breakdown cover.

Q Are we doing any activities other than the driving that I need to make sure are covered on the policy ?

A No

Q We have the car and all the modifications insured on the car insurance policy but we are not sure what to do about the roof tent we have just bought and all the kit that will be inside the car ?

A This is the hardest part to insure, specialist cover is ridiculously expensive so we rely on house contents insurance to about 1500 GBP + some limited cover on the travel insurance and the vehicle insurance with specified extras, again the NFU have proved reliable here as well. Vehicle insurers may not consider roof tents as fixed to the vehicle and hence not covered, unless stated, at time of taking the policy out. It is worth specifying the extras on the vehicle with your insurer.

Anything else ?



Please contact us -
call Paul 07776 140626