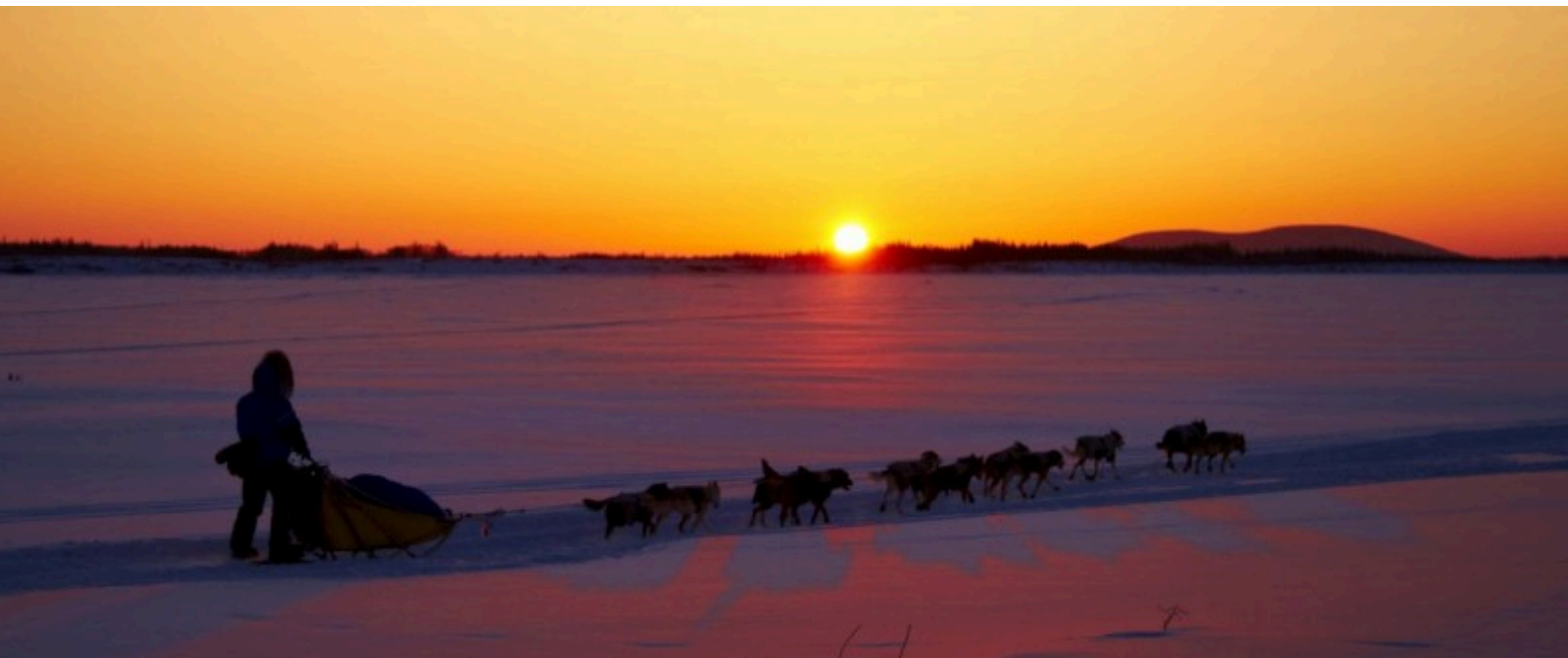




The Spirit of Alaska: Iditarod



HOLIDAY TYPE: Small Group

VISITING: Alaska

BROCHURE CODE: 5407

DURATION: 11 nights

In Brief

This eleven-night action-packed tour of Alaska centres on the world-famous Iditarod dog sledding race. Get in and amongst the action and experience dog sledding through the Alaskan Wilderness. Once the race starts, you'll enjoy experiences such as snowshoeing, glacier walks and Aurora hunts.

Our Opinion

“ The Iditarod is renowned as one of the hardest and most exciting dog sledding races in the world, so to see it up close and personal is a wonderfully unique experience. With a raft of winter adventures available in this amazing destination, this is a winter experience like no other. ”

Jono Archer

The Specifics

Holiday group size (approximate)

Approximately 2 - 16 people

Group Size

We always try to provide an approximation of the group size you can expect to be with for the duration of each of our holidays. It may be that you are joined by others for parts of your holiday (such as transfers and particular activities) but the above number reflects those you can normally expect to be with from beginning to end. If group size is something which is particularly important to you, please speak to our Travel Experts and they can suggest the best holidays for you.

Tailor-made holiday group sizes will vary for all activities as will the group size for any additional activities you book.

Minimum and maximum age

If a specific minimum age applies to this holiday, it can be found in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page.

Unless otherwise stated in the in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page, the minimum age for participation in an Artisan holiday is typically 8 years old (there may be younger children in some destinations who have booked with other companies). If an adult-only environment is important to you, then please contact our Travel Experts and they will advise on the best dates and destinations for you. If you are looking for a holiday designed specifically for families then please see our sister company www.activitiesabroad.com

Itinerary amendments

The order of activities listed in this agenda is provided for guidance only, your final and detailed itinerary will be provided either with your final travel documents (which are uploaded into your online account around a week prior to departure) or upon arrival.

Guides & Safety

When partaking in any activity, it is imperative that everyone in your group listens very closely to the instructions provided by the guide and that they are abided by at all times. Our guides are experts in their field and no one knows the environment better than these highly knowledgeable and experienced providers.

Prior to starting any activity, please make it clear to your guide if there is any element of the safety briefing you are unsure of or would like to clarify before you set off.

Our guides will always take local conditions into account when considering whether an activity can go ahead. This is, in part, why your itinerary is subject to change at short notice. This rarely happens, however, if it does, we will always endeavour to reschedule the activity for later in your holiday. If this is not possible then the cost of the activity will be refunded to you when you return home.

Our guides' word on activities is always final and your safety is their principal concern at all times; please respect their decisions. By following their instructions, your safety and enjoyment during each activity will be greatly enhanced.

NB: In order to participate in our holidays, all guests must be able to understand instructions given in English. These instructions may be delivered verbally or in writing and will include vital safety information and ongoing instruction during activities.

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant at the time of booking your holiday or you discover you are pregnant prior to your departure, firstly – congratulations! Secondly – please tell us as soon as possible. This situation does frequently arise and we are able to advise you both from our own first-hand experience and from discussing this at length with our expert local partners who have experience in this area. The more notice you can give us the better, in order to suggest any adaptations to the itinerary you have booked which will reduce the risk to both mother and baby. Please contact our customer service team for more information. <https://www.artisantravel.co.uk/about-us/contact-us>

Experience and Fitness

Most of the activities we offer have been designed for beginners who have no prior experience and are of all age ranges and fitness levels. Our guides provide expert advice, tuition and instructions prior to any activity going ahead. Activities are designed to be enjoyed and not endured, but some, such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, do require a more basic level of fitness than, for example, riding on a snowmobile. If you have any questions, then please contact one of our Travel Experts who can provide first-hand advice.

The only holidays which are not as suitable for complete beginners are the multi-night safaris which involve several days in wilderness cabins travelling by either snowmobile or husky safari. Again, this all depends on the individual taking part, but some prior experience and understanding of these types of activities can be very helpful.

Financial Protection

We know that your holiday will be one of the most important investments you make in a year and we understand how important it is for you to know that you are financially protected and that your money is secure. Alongside our ATOL financial protection (ATOL 6865) you may book with confidence as we are a fully bonded member of ABTA (ABTA number Y6261). This means that you have the benefit of

ABTA's code of conduct and your money is fully protected regardless of whether we are arranging your flights for you or not. We also offer our clients our 'Peace of Mind Promise' to really put your mind at ease. Please see the following link for full details: <https://www.artisantravel.co.uk/about-us/financial-protection>

Responsible Travel

Responsible Travel is at the heart of our business and our approach is based on ensuring that our holidays are environmentally, socially and economically responsible. We work in some of the most pristine environments in the world and with suppliers who we class as friends; protecting and providing for both is central to our ethos. Full details of our Responsible Travel Policy can be found on our [website](#).

Tipping

At your discretion, you may wish to tip your guides at the end of your stay as a gesture of appreciation for their efforts during your holiday.

Medical History and Advice

We want our holidays to be accessible as they can be and will do our best to accommodate any special requests and requirements where possible. We have a wide range of holidays and destinations and so our travel experts will help find the best holiday for you.

In order to give us the best possible chance to do this we ask that if you or any member of your party has any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday or has any special requirements, that you tell us at the time of enquiry or booking. You must also promptly advise us if any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday develops after your booking has been confirmed. You may need to provide a doctor's note and proof of insurance in some cases as the health and safety of our clients is absolutely paramount.

In providing this information you are allowing us to work with our expert local partners to ensure that your whole party can enjoy the holiday. By letting us know in advance we can discreetly work with you to adapt any part of the holiday which may potentially be challenging. Being able to prepare for this in advance makes an incredible difference to what we can offer and minimises any impact on your party and the rest of the group.

Unfortunately, if you choose not to share this information with us in advance then it may limit some or all of the itinerary you have booked, and we cannot be held accountable for any additional costs or missed activities resulting from this.

Insurance

Insurance is not included in your holiday, but it is a pre-requisite to travelling with us. You will need to ensure that you have cover for all the activities that you will be participating in during your holiday.

It is extremely important that you take out a suitable travel insurance policy at the time of booking. Plans do sometimes change, and you will need this policy should you need to cancel your holiday.

If you are struggling to find a suitable policy then details of our preferred provider, who will cover you for all the activities we offer, can be found on our website by [clicking here](#). Please note that this policy is available to EU residents under the age of 75 only.

The UK Foreign Office Advice

Our clients' safety is at the centre of everything we do, and our operations team continually assesses and monitors the destinations we feature. We carry out thorough risk assessments and work closely with all of our suppliers to continually follow best practice. For up to date travel advice the UK government offers its [Travel Aware website](#) as well as the advice detailed below.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice

We receive all updates from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) with regards to travel advice and we always ensure that we follow this advice in our operations. The FCO issues travel advisories for countries based on a very wide range of factors. They may provide notification about things as simple as a football match and crowds, or they may go so far as to advise against all travel to a region. We ask all our clients to refer to the relevant [Travel Advice by Country](#) for the destinations they are visiting in order to make an informed decision on the safety of the destination based on the details provided. It also provides vital information regarding entry requirements, embassy information, local laws and customs as well as specific safety and health. Guests should take responsibility for keeping themselves up to date with this advice. Please also ensure that, if you are transiting through another country, you have read the advice and meet the entry requirements for that destination too.

The FCO travel advice is applicable to British Passport Holders. Most governments will issue their own travel advice for a region and, if you are not a UK resident then you can find some helpful links below:

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

Canadian Consular Affairs Bureau <http://voyage.gc.ca/>

The U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>

If the FCO deems that there is an unacceptable level of risk for UK citizens then, together with the government, they may issue an advisory against all travel to a region or country. If such an advisory is published, then we will act accordingly, and this may require the cancellation, curtailment or amendment of a holiday itinerary. These decisions are made on the basis of ensuring our clients' safety and will affect all clients on the holiday, regardless of their nationality.

If one of our local experts suggests an amendment due to a situation which develops locally then we may also take the decision to amend an itinerary appropriately.

If we have to cancel your holiday prior to departure you will be offered the option of an alternative trip (where any price difference will either be refunded to or covered by you) or a full refund of the monies paid.

If we have to curtail a holiday, then you will be refunded for any costs for the elements we have been unable to deliver, where we have been able to secure a refund from our suppliers. If we must reroute a holiday, then any basis for refund is determined on a case by case basis and dependent on whether the central holiday experience was provided or not.

Booking activities locally

Additional activities can be booked locally in almost all our destinations. However, as per our booking conditions, we cannot be held responsible for any injury or loss incurred through participation in activities which are booked at your destination outside of our holiday itinerary (see our 'Terms and Conditions' for further details).

When arranging any such activity please always ensure that safety is your primary concern.

In some of our destinations, you can borrow or hire equipment for use in your free time. You do so entirely at your own risk. You must ensure that you are properly prepared, have the necessary equipment and knowledge (maps, etc) and ensure that where applicable, you follow marked routes. We recommend discussing your plans with the local teams who will be able to advise on the most suitable options for you.

Always let the reception/guide know where you are planning to go and take a torch and mobile phone (with the hotel/guide's phone number stored). It is also a good idea to leave your contact number and the time you expect to return to the hotel should the hotel need to contact you.

Brexit information for British Passport holders

For the most up to date information on how the UK's departure from the EU may affect your holiday please [click here](#) to view our Brexit information for British Passport holders.

Alaska FAQs

When is the best time to visit Alaska?

The summer travel season runs from mid-May through to mid-September and is arguably the best time to see the full beauty of luscious Alaska: the glaciers, mountains and wildlife can be seen in all of their glory, as the green forests and striking alpine flowers are in bloom. However, the popular winter months of December to March can be equally exciting as the snow-covered landscape becomes home to exhilarating winter activities and the skies become filled with displays of the Northern Lights.

Summertime brings life, colour and a sense of vitality to Alaska. With long daylight hours, Alaskans are

keen to get as much out of the summer as possible; this means the towns and villages are vibrant, exhilarating activities are in full flow and truly beautiful scenery just begs to be explored. All of the national and state parks are open in summer, fish are abundant and the bears start to come out of hibernation

In terms of wildlife, late June, July and early August are often regarded as the best months for bear viewing, as the salmon start to make a return to their rivers to spawn and the berries are in abundance throughout the state. Other animals, such as moose, caribou and hundreds of bird species can also be seen throughout the state.

Spring and summer also brings whales to Alaska. In southcentral Alaska, Kenai Fjords National Park is a favourite feeding ground and marine life is in abundance in these parts. Whales also head into Prince William Sound and occasionally up into Turnagain Arm, near Anchorage. Southeast Alaska is home to the famous 'Inside Passage', part of the whales' migratory route, where many different species can be spotted.

In the winter, the days start to draw in, the temperatures drop and the snow begins to fall. However, Alaskans aren't ones to hibernate and winter is often one of the most active parts of the year, as frozen lakes and vast plains of snow play host to winter activities, including snowmobiling, dog sledding, snowshoeing and winter flightseeing.

Winter is a wonderful time to visit Alaska, as the locals host all sorts of amazing festivals, celebrations and parties. The world famous Iditarod dog sledding race happens every March and with it comes a raft of winter fun and vibrancy. Furthermore, the skies are often filled with Northern Lights displays, which get more prevalent the further north you head.

What is the weather like in Alaska?

Weather in Alaska can be unpredictable, however, it is a common misconception that Alaska only experiences bad weather. This is far from the truth, as the state has a short, temperate summer climate (mid-June to mid-August) that often averages between 14-32° C with many visitors finding the weather to be better than expected.

Nevertheless, Alaska can also be wet and cloudy at any time of year, especially in the southern coastal regions, so it is important to pack well and prepare for the potential for rain. It is wise to remember, that without a bit of rain, Alaska would not be so unbelievably stunning and the sightseeing opportunities would be far less spectacular!

Wintertime is often not as cold as you would expect, however, it can see extreme temperatures (ranging from roughly -2 to -30°C) depending on which part of the state you are in. Huge amounts of snow and ice create beautiful frozen landscapes of lakes, mountains and tundra that are just as breathtaking as anything that summer has to offer.

As the weather is often unpredictable and highly changeable, it can have an impact on travel, particularly by air, which is why we have tried to accommodate weather window days into our itineraries, in order to make your travel as smooth as possible.

What is the best way to travel around Alaska?

Due to its sheer size and limited infrastructure, travelling around Alaska takes time. To enjoy all that Alaska has to offer, visitors need to explore and tour this wonderful state, which means that some 1 and 2 night stays are commonplace, as well as early morning travel and excursions – we promise that they are worth it!

Each trip that we have planned aims to showcase the very best of Alaska by visiting different areas and experiencing the beautiful, vast contrasts that are so apparent within this amazing destination.

The Alaska Railroad is one of the best ways to explore Alaska from the comfort of a beautiful railcar, which is why you will find that it is included in most of our itineraries. The line runs in a general north to south line, from Fairbanks, through Anchorage and down to Seward. The scenery along the way is astonishing and the rail travel is designed to complement this, with glass-domed railcars available, complete with cafés and viewing decks. Rail travel is a scenic excursion and is done at a gentle pace; these are not high-speed lines – the journey is all part of the experience.

Some of our summer itineraries include car hire and self drive sections. Driving in Alaska during summer is easy: there are no giant motorways, or rush-hour traffic jams; travel is more relaxed in this part of America. The roads are well-maintained, however road works can only be undertaken in the summer (due to the prohibitive winter conditions), so any self-driving should allow for a little extra time in case of maintenance work.

The road system opens up a level of independence far greater than the restrictions of rail and air travel: you can see more places and have complete freedom to stop where you like.

There are regular domestic air services between Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau and various other destinations. Many lodges also rely on small bush planes, or floatplanes that offer a unique and exciting way to view some of the most spectacular scenery on the planet. You will also find that there are many options to include scenic flights in our itineraries, as to gain a sense of the scale here, you really do need to see the wilderness from the air.

In our opinion the best way to see Alaska is to combine at least two of these modes of transport in order to enjoy the variety on offer.

It is also important to note that some of the hotels and lodges that you will be staying at operate shuttle services that will pick you up from the train station, or harbour. These cannot be pre-booked and can only be arranged on the day of arrival. Any shuttles that are required will be clearly highlighted in your itinerary, with contact details provided within your travel documents.

What wildlife will I see in Alaska?

Wildlife is what Alaska is known for and some of the largest land mammals, including moose, caribou, muskox and bears (both brown and black) live throughout the state. Furthermore, Alaska is home to other species including lynx, wolves and wolverine, as well as numerous bald eagles and other exciting birdlife.

Alaska is also famed for its marine wildlife, which includes a variety of amazing species, such as killer whales, humpback whales, sea otters, porpoises and beluga whales.

Although wildlife-viewing opportunities are plentiful throughout all of our itineraries, it is important to

remember that Alaska is huge and animals typically avoid human contact, so sightings can never be guaranteed. However, in such a fertile and varied part of the world, your chances of seeing numerous species of animal are very high indeed.

Although there is more wildlife to see in the summer, as moose and bears head to feeding grounds after a long winter, the months of November to March can also provide visitors with great opportunities to spot wildlife.

Animal movement is less obscured by vegetation in the winter and therefore it is often easier to spot. Bald eagles can be seen in the skies and tracks of wolves, lynx and marten are easily spotted in the snow. If you are lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of some of these animals.

Will I see the Northern Lights?

The Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis as they are commonly referred to, occur when solar particles react with the earth's magnetic field and the natural gases within it. The streams of particles surge and bulge along bends in the earth's magnetic field and as they react with the natural gases, they create greenish-yellow, blue, white and red curtains of colour.

Due to their very nature, they are unpredictable and nobody knows exactly where or when they will appear. However, Alaska is famed for its Aurora, in particular from the city of Fairbanks northwards, which is centred in the Aurora Zone and relatively close to the Arctic Circle.

To see the Northern Lights, the sky must be clear and dark, which means that September through to March is the best time to spot them within Alaska, due to the very short daylight hours. The ideal time of night to hopefully catch sight of them is often regarded as between 11:30pm – 3:30am.

Away from the glow of city lights, your chances of spotting them will also increase, which is why our winter packages include Aurora viewing opportunities out in the Alaskan wilds.

Will I see the Midnight Sun?

During the spring and summer, Alaska has some of the longest daylight hours in the world. In Barrow, Alaska's northernmost community, which looks out onto the Arctic Ocean, the sun doesn't set for more than two and a half months (and equally the sun never rises at some points during winter!).

The official boundary of the Midnight Sun is the Arctic Circle, which marks the lowest latitude at which the sun remains above the horizon for a full 24 hours during the summer solstice (June 20th or 21st) and below the horizon for a full 24 hours during the winter solstice (December 21st or 22nd). Furthermore, thanks to Alaska's positioning during the summer months, even if the sun dips below the horizon, it doesn't stay down for long. This means that even if the sun sets, there is a bright twilight that often remains until the sun rises again, therefore never really getting dark.

The entire state enjoys long summer daylight hours, even in the southeast, with Juneau receiving more than 18 hours of daylight in June. The long days mean that you have even more time to stay out and explore and often the hardest part is reminding your body to get some rest!

What is the currency in Alaska?

Alaska is a state of America and so its currency is the United States Dollar (USD). Major credit and debit cards are widely accepted, however you are likely to incur bank charges when using these abroad, so it is advisable to travel with some cash.

How expensive is Alaska?

Due to its remote location, prices in Alaska are mainly higher than the rest of America. Furthermore, once you travel further away from the suburban centres prices increase, largely due to the costs of supply and transport.

We would recommend picking up some drinks and snacks for your travels from a local supermarket in one of the larger towns, as this can often be considerably cheaper than at the hotels' small shops and convenience stores along the way.

On average and without gratuities factored in, mid-range restaurant meals cost roughly \$30 per person, with a pint of beer costing roughly \$5 and a mid-range bottle of wine \$15. Soft drinks cost around \$2, water is roughly \$2.50 for a large bottle and a coffee is \$3-5. Lunch can range from around \$4-15, for a sandwich and sides and breakfast costs are similar to this.

What is the food like in Alaska?

Alaska has a real mix of food styles that vary from city to village and region to region, and a great deal of influence comes from the traditional cooking of the state's native people, which utilises the vast array of natural ingredients that are available.

Wherever you go, Alaska's cold-water seafood is the centrepiece of their cuisine. With arguably the world's best wild salmon, as well as world-famous Alaskan King Crabs, halibut, cod and shrimp, the seafood on offer here is top quality. For a real Alaskan experience, why not try the interestingly named 'stinkeggs or stinkheads' –salmon roe and heads that have been wrapped in grass and preserved in the ground for weeks, offering a somewhat unique taste!

It's not all about seafood however, as the Alaskans are also famed for enjoying large game animals through their permitted hunting rights. Animals such as moose, caribou and elk are common place at restaurants and roadhouses up and down the state. Furthermore, during the summer, Alaska is abound with wonderful wild berries that make great snacks, or amazing desserts.

Most hotels and eateries in Alaska will offer a variety of food both native and global in style and food such as pizza, pasta, Thai and Chinese can be found in the larger towns and cities, with a variety of vegetarian options also on offer throughout.

What kind of plugs do I need in Alaska?

Alaska uses the North American two-pronged and also three-pronged plugs (Types A and B), so you

will need an adaptor if travelling from the UK.

What are room configurations like in Alaska?

Hotel rooms in Alaska typically have either two double size beds or one queen size bed in the room. Bed configurations vary from hotel to hotel and rooms with three or four beds are few. If three or four people are sharing a room (triple and/or quad room), the room generally has only two double beds.

Flight schedule changes and connecting transportation

On your documentation, we will confirm your flight schedule. Sometimes the flight number, routing and timings might change prior to your departure. If the change is classed as a significant change then we will contact you to discuss this. Please see our booking conditions for details.

Flight schedule changes can impact on your pre and post-holiday travel arrangements if these have been booked separately to your holiday. We strongly recommend that you do not book transport (such as trains or transfers), car parking or non-connecting flights to the departure point for your holiday until you have received your final confirmed travel times when your final travel documents are issued. We are not responsible for the effect of any schedule change on your pre or post travel arrangements. We strongly recommend that you do not purchase non-flexible or non-refundable tickets to avoid cancellation and penalty charges.

Booking your own flights - cancellation disclaimer

If you have chosen to book your own flights, then you will need to wait until we confirm to you that the holiday departure has met the minimum numbers required to run (if applicable to your chosen holiday). Once the holiday is guaranteed to run, you will be informed and you can then make your arrangements.

If transfers are included in your holiday, please ensure that any potential flights will be met by our standard transfers (speak to one of our Travel Experts for advice) otherwise private transfer supplements may be applicable. Once your flights are booked, please send us a copy of your detailed flight itinerary.

Please be aware that most tickets are non-refundable in the case of cancellation. For this reason, we strongly advise you check the rules of the ticket and check the limitations of your cancellation insurance before booking. We cannot be held liable, in the unlikely eventuality that we should be forced to cancel or amend your trip, for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made.

Special requests & in-flight meals

Due to the remote locations of our holidays, flight availability can be exceptionally limited. To ensure that you can travel on the seats that we have pre-allocated to a certain holiday, flight options might be restricted. Please discuss this with our Travel Sales Experts at the time of booking.

Generally, we are unable to assign specific seating on flights although we can make requests on your behalf. We cannot guarantee this and if a request is unable to be actioned then this is not classed as a breach of contract on our part.

If your booking allows for online check-in then you should do so as early as possible to ensure you are allocated seats next to your travelling companions. Details regarding this will be provided in your final travel documents which will be provided approximately one week prior to travel.

If you require special seats or assistance at the airport due to a medical condition, reduced mobility or disability, then please let us know at the time of booking (or as soon as possible prior to travel if the issue occurs after booking). You may be required to provide written confirmation of your fitness to travel from a doctor.

Domestic flights and those within Europe, may not provide meals or snacks onboard so it is always worth remembering this if you are due to land late in the evening when opportunities to buy food may be limited.

We always forward any dietary requirements to the airlines, but we cannot guarantee the availability of the chosen diet onboard. You may want to consider bringing your own food to guarantee there will be something you will be able to eat. This is the approach our staff with dietary requirements take when flying within Europe.

Terms and Conditions

Our full booking terms and conditions can be found on our website: <https://www.artisantravel.co.uk/booking-conditions>