

What Does It Take to be a Group Tour Leader?

Do you love travel and meeting people?

If so, you might make a great group leader. The role of group tour leader is exciting and challenging. You meet hundreds of different people, from all walks of life, you have amazing stories and experiences to share and you get the chance to visit many places that you might otherwise never have known about.

What are the key roles of a group leader?

Trip preparation

Reading and planning the itinerary. Most of our trips are group departures of a set itinerary that our clients have selected. Before the trip you confirm all bookings for the trip and get to know our traveller details (this one has a food allergy, this couple are on their honeymoon, this guy has a medical condition). Preparation at the start makes sure that everything during the trip runs as smoothly as possible.

The trip

Our trips are generally small group adventures with 12 – 16 travellers. The travellers may come from all over the world and most have never met before. They may arrive a few days prior to the start of the trip. Usually the first contact with you will be at a group meeting at 6pm on day one. The welcome meeting gives you the chance to introduce everyone to each other, share a little about the journey ahead and sets the scene for the whole trip.

From this point the leader is responsible for the duration of the tour. This includes ensuring travellers have an amazing holiday, getting them from location to location safely and as scheduled. Leaders keep notes in a trip report about every aspect of the trip and how it ran. They also have a trip fund and maintain a record of daily expenditure against items that are generally pre-agreed.

During the trip we include some organised activities, while having other times for the passengers to spend as they wish. Leaders are expected to spend time with the group even when there are no structured activities. It may mean that you take people to places or help them organise things to do. Leaders should eat meals with the group as much as possible and have daily meetings to provide ongoing communication about the itinerary. You will find that trips run much more easily the more time that you spend with the group.

Group dynamics are one of the most challenging and rewarding areas of leading. At times it might mean you are the sole entertainer of the group, or counsellor for a passenger with a problem. Leaders teach travellers how to be more independent, advise them on suitable cultural behaviour and how to treat other travellers, while also being bearers of infinite wisdom regarding matters both important and trivial. You will also meet and develop good relationships with local operators and local people you meet along the way.

Words of warning!

Do not take the position of a group leader lightly!

- You are not on holiday - your passengers are. It is your role to make sure their holiday is as enjoyable, safe and runs as smoothly as possible.
- You will no longer be an independent traveller - our itineraries are largely fixed. During your first year or so you may just run the same two or three trips over and over again.
- Your passengers may get sick, suffer culture shock, become emotional, or complain a lot. You may not get along with particular passengers or even the whole group. You are still expected to do a great job and provide excellent service to all of your passengers.
- You are on the go most of the time - every few weeks you will have a new group of passengers to meet and befriend and then farewell.
- Apart from training trips, leaders run trips alone - we do not have couples working as a team. If your partner is also recruited as a Group Leader your schedules and weeks off may not coincide at all. Partners cannot join you on your trips.
- PEAK DMC does not sponsor visas.
- While we make every effort to support you in whatever (reasonable) way we can, you will find yourself in situations where only limited support is possible. You need to be confident in your decision-making skills and ability to think on your feet - and be prepared to deal with the consequences.
- A final note: this job is all about people. Honestly ask yourself how comfortable you are working/living/sharing with people of different races, ages, gender, religions, ethnicities, backgrounds etc.