



Expedition Guide

Mountain Driving

MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE with Alpine Rovers

ANY LAND ROVER, FROM THE FIRST humble Series One to the latest Range Rover comes with an in-built adventure button. The sad fact is that most of us just don't have the spare time, or the spare cash, to go wandering off into the great blue yonder with their trusty Solihull chariot for months, maybe even years. For most of us a couple of weeks of holiday allowance will have to suffice. Suddenly, an organised overland Land Rover holiday starts to make a lot of sense.

Your tour guide will make sure you don't miss any of the best bits the area you're traveling through has to offer. They'll also make sure you don't fall foul of local rules and regulations. And then there's always safety in numbers. For most, the thought of being stranded out all alone in the back of beyond with a broken down vehicle is what keeps them from venturing out. Let's face it, a fairly minor mechanical mishap can immobilise your Land Rover.

Alpine Rovers have been running organised overland holidays for many years. They believe that their trips are for everyone with a love for the great outdoors without the need to rough it like Ray Mears. They focus on the Italian and French Alps, and for good reason. To start with the Alps are not a million miles from old Blighty so it'll be a relaxed two day trip down through France to get there. And no other area in Europe offers a varied experience of stunning landscapes and historical sites from Roman ruins to bunkers from the last war.

Travellers of all ages from babes in car seats to retired couples spending their kids' inheritance can take part in a guided Alpine tour. Driving all manner of vehicles from

an ancient but restored Series 2a to a new Discovery can tackle the Alps with confidence.

One young guy drove all the way up through Italy in a Series 3 from his native island of Malta. A truly epic journey that involved at least three ferry crossings and endless hours of motoring in that slowest of overland vehicles, a 109" diesel. The high point of his adventure, quite literally, was knowing that he was most probably the first and only Maltese to drive his Land Rover up to a lofty 10,000 feet altitude. That's probably some kind of record.

There is no need to own a fully expedition prepared late model Defender to take it on an adventure such as this. Many prefer to travel in the older models. Alpine Rovers currently have two Series 3s and a S2A in their fleet and offer discounts for the Series Driver. There shouldn't be any nasty surprises of the "Oh, I think I'm stuck here" variety, unless you really, really want to get stuck. Likewise, whatever model of Land Rover, or even non-Land Rover you drive, it's always best to keep it as simple and as standard as possible. This remains true whether you're on a two-week holiday in the Alps or on a two-year round-the-world trip.

For some an organised tour will be the first taster of what an overland adventure is about. Seeing sights they never thought they'd see, driving roads they never thought even existed. The experience of nights under canvas, the evenings around the campfires, staring out into a starlit sky like they have never seen before in their lives. They will discover a whole new world. If people are later inspired to go out and explore, to have their very own adventure and to use that "adventure button" in their vehicle more often, then Alpine Rovers reckon they've done their job properly

Alpine Rovers • www.alpinerovers.com

MOUNTAIN DRIVING TIPS . . .

ALTITUDE

Driving at altitude can affect how your engine performs. Thinner air means less power and higher altitudes can increase the chance of vapour locks and overheating. Obviously descending long, steep tracks can put a lot of strain on your brakes, hubs and axles.

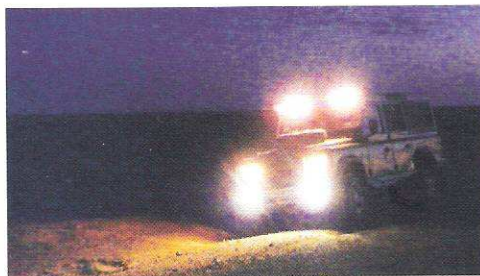


RIVER CROSSINGS

The current is far more important than the depth. If the current is too strong for you to walk across then it's not safe to drive across.

ALWAYS EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Vehicles turning or stopping suddenly without signals – or lights! Loose livestock around the next blind bend. No road around the next blind bend. Match your speed to possible hazards



DRIVING AT NIGHT

Far too dangerous off-road – don't do it. Apart from the first few metres in front, you can't see where you're going, won't have much sense of direction and your depth perception is poor. If you're trying to use a GPS screen you'll have little night vision.

