

COVID PROTOCOLS WE WILL FOLLOW DURING YOUR TOUR

Last updated: 9 February 2023

The protocols outlined below are based on information available to us as of the date of this writing, listed above. Official health and travel guidelines are bound to change in the coming weeks and months. We will adapt our expected protocols as appropriate as such new information becomes available. We want you to have the safest and most fun tour experience possible. We ask for your patience as we assess and adapt to the issuance of new guidelines. We will of course try to minimize the potential for COVID-related disruption to your tour, but we cannot control all circumstances.

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to travel (which includes a booster). Having a vaccinated and boosted group will greatly diminish but not eliminate the possibility of the group and individual participants having travel disrupted and being adversely affected by COVID-19. **We are requiring all of our staff guides to be vaccinated.** Note too that some travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination and/or booster for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time.

Please note too that currently for tours outside your home country (your country of domicile), we require that you have a Travel Insurance Policy with medical coverage (that does not exclude COVID-19) as well as emergency medical evacuation. (Most personal policies as well as government coverage such as Medicare do not provide coverage outside of your country of domicile. A Travel Insurance Policy lets us know that related expenses will be covered should you face a medical emergency while on tour.) Field Guides will request confirmation of your policy prior to departure. Please note that you can purchase your travel insurance policy before you book your flights, as you will be able to add the

price of your airfare at a later date and pay any supplemental premium at that time. However, we ask that you wait to book flights until we notify you that the tour is operational.

Please note as well that no one who is testing positive for COVID is allowed on a Field Guides tour. (See more details about this below.)

As of this writing we recommend the following **Pre-Tour Protocols** for all participants to minimize risk to you and the group at the beginning of the tour. And we expect to enforce at least the following **On-Tour Protocols** for all participants during the tour, adjusting these as necessary depending on the situation at the time of the tour's operation.

Pre-Tour Protocols

- **No one who has contracted COVID in the 14 days pre-tour should travel until a full 10 days after symptoms started or the date a positive test was taken if the person had no symptoms, and such a person must also test negative** (a home antigen self-test is sufficient) **after Day 10 before joining the group.** (The first part about travel is the CDC current recommendation, the second part about testing is a Field Guides requirement. See below for how to count days as well as our reasoning.)
- We strongly recommend that each participant have received a **current-season flu shot** at least two weeks or more prior to tour departure. This will help reduce the possibility of exhibiting COVID-like symptoms due to flu during the tour.
- We strongly suggest the following behavior during the 14 days before the start of your tour:
 - *Please practice **social distancing** and **mask wearing**.*
 - *Please **avoid** unnecessary gatherings outside of your household; also avoid indoor restaurant dining and extended periods in indoor public spaces.*

On-Tour Protocols

- Although guides will carefully screen for obvious COVID-19 symptoms, **it is your responsibility to advise the guide if you are experiencing any symptoms.** Typical COVID-19 symptoms include, but are not limited to, trouble breathing, high fever, congestion and sore throat, loss of smell or sense of taste, and a dry cough. If you exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, your guide will ask you to follow a protocol of testing and isolation following current CDC and Field Guides guidelines. Should you test negative immediately, you will be allowed to rejoin the group's activities.
- **Any participant testing positive during a tour will not be allowed to rejoin the tour (or to join a tour immediately following the current one if the person has booked back-to-back tours) until a full 10 days after symptoms started or the date a positive test was taken if the person had no symptoms. Additionally, the person must test negative (a home antigen self-test is sufficient) on Day 11 before joining the group.** (See below for how to count days as well as our reasoning.) In most cases, due to the realities of required isolation periods and the length of most of our tours, it is likely that your further participation in the group's activities will not be possible. (You may also be required to follow any local regulations in place at the time of the tour.)
- **Our guides have the final authority** on when and where clients will need to be social distancing and/or wearing masks, as well as when a COVID test might be required of one or more participants in order to meet CDC or local guidelines. You must follow the guide's directives. You should bring a personal supply of well-fitting and effective masks on the tour. You should also bring at least one box (two tests) of COVID antigen self-tests so that you may test yourself if necessary.
- When a mask is required, **we ask that participants wear a FDA- or NIOSH-approved N95 or KN95 mask** (easily found online—see below**). Other types of masks will be allowed, if they follow CDC guidelines, but masks with vents, buffs, bandanas, scarves, or other types of **less protective face wear are not acceptable** as their effectiveness is not reliable. If using a disposable mask type, then participants should bring at least **one mask for each day of the tour.** In general, **face masks and hand sanitizer** (with at least 60%

alcohol) are required tour gear for all participants. **Please be sure to carry a mask with you at all times while with the group.**

How to count days: This is how the CDC's online calculator works. **Day 0** will be counted as the day your symptoms started or the date your positive test was taken if you had no symptoms. **Travel is allowed on Day 11**, but for our purposes only if you **test negative** by then. Example: You test positive on May 31 (= Day 0), you may travel on June 11 if you test negative.

Our reasoning about testing — If you've recently been positive for COVID, why do you subsequently need to test negative after 10 days to join a group when the CDC does not require it? Because we are specifically working to protect our groups and our guides. No one will be able to confirm you are not infectious if you are still testing positive. And if you are still positive and potentially infectious and join a group, this potentially puts at risk others in the group. Additionally, it puts at risk the work schedule of the guide, since the guide may not have sufficient time between tours to recover if infected and thus may lose a substantial amount of work and income.

A note about local guides and staff: Travelers with us should be aware that we are not able to guarantee that all local guides, drivers, and staff with which the group may come into close contact will be fully vaccinated against COVID at the time of your tour. We do query our local operators about such status, but the group may encounter and be working with local staff (as well as members of the public) who are not vaccinated. Additionally, please note that we may not be able to answer questions about specific local staff in advance of your tour, and in any case local staff's vaccination status may subsequently change by the time of the tour.

A note about lodging and transportation: Motels, hotels, and the lodges where we will be staying have their own protocol for cleaning rooms that has been in effect for months. The reality is we cannot guarantee all rooms have been sanitized, beyond normal cleaning, from top to bottom. If it would help you feel more comfortable, we recommend having disinfectant wipes to wipe down bathroom counters, bed stands, and other regularly

touched surfaces. For multi-night stays you may request that housekeeping only change towels and empty waste baskets. In cases where we use a local transportation service to provide our vehicle(s), vehicles are cleaned on a regular basis with their own protocols that have also been in place for many months. However, clients may want hand wipes for wiping down surfaces, and frequent hand cleaning is recommended.

****Note:** There are many online sources of FDA and/or NIOSH-approved N95 and KN95 respirators (masks). The [cpap1000.com website](http://cpap1000.com) (associated with 3M) offers a selection of such respirators ([currently on this page](#)) and may facilitate your sorting through all of the many mask options available. A NIOSH-approved N95 respirator is also currently available [via Amazon at this link](#). Whenever and wherever your purchase, confirm that your respirator is FDA- or NIOSH-approved, as there are reports of numerous counterfeit and ineffective N95 and KN95 respirators being sold online.