

ITINERARY
CANADIAN ROCKIES: ALBERTA 2024
June 16-26, 2024



While we visit the mountains and prairies of Alberta, we'll be able to observe up to 20 different types of sparrow, including the handsome Grasshopper Sparrow. Photograph by participant Kathleen John.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Canadian Rockies: Alberta tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing and noting the birds we see
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

In a country with more than its share of spectacular scenery, the stretch of mountains along Alberta's western boundary with British Columbia stands out as arguably the most beautiful of all. With breath-taking vistas at pretty much every turn in the road, a journey through this region is filled with one postcard-worthy panorama after another. The famous national parks we'll visit—Banff, Jasper, and Waterton Lakes—are worth visiting for the scenery alone, but the wildlife in these regions makes the experience even more exciting. Big game animals abound in the parks, and we stand a good chance of seeing bears, moose, elk, sheep, and more as we patrol the park roads in search of our main quarry, birds. A good variety of smaller mammals, from coyotes and foxes to pikas, beavers, and an assortment of ground-squirrels, make the area one of the best mammal-viewing areas on the continent, with previous outings recording upwards of 20 mammal species in the course of the tour. And the location of these parks along the eastern edge of the Rockies, and the western edge of the prairies, gives us easy access to a great variety of habitats, and thus a fantastic assortment of birds, from high

mountain denizens like White-tailed Ptarmigan and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, to grassland specialists such as Sprague's Pipit, Thick-billed Longspur, and Baird's Sparrow.

Our tour kicks off in the provincial capital of Edmonton, from where we will visit nearby Elk Island National Park in the aspen parklands to the east. The park plays an important role in the conservation of the American Bison, with free-roaming herds of both the Plains and Wood subspecies (each in different, fenced-off sections of the park). But the mosaic of aspen woodland, wetlands, and grasslands here are also home to a great variety of birdlife, including several species we're unlikely to see elsewhere, and we'll have a full day of searching for species from Red-necked and Western grebes to Nelson's and LeConte's Sparrows, Mountain Bluebird, and more typical eastern species like Broad-winged Hawk, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. If our timing is right, we may also track down the tricky Connecticut Warbler in this region.



*We'll travel through some magnificent scenery and some iconic parks, such as Waterton Lakes National Park.
Photograph by guide Jay VanderGaast.*

From Edmonton we wind our way westwards towards the mountains of Jasper National Park. Amidst the magnificent mountain scenery, we'll scour mountain streams for Harlequin Ducks and American Dippers, search among the towering conifers for Northern Pygmy-Owl, Canada Jay, Varied Thrush, Boreal Chickadee, and White-winged Crossbill, and visit the alpine tundra, via a motorized tram, in an attempt to track down White-tailed Ptarmigan, American Pipit, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch while enjoying a spectacle of alpine flowers. Our journey then finds us heading south along the famous Icefields Parkway, into Banff National Park, with a number of stops along the way, including the thundering Athabasca Falls and the famous Columbia Icefields, with views of the impressive Athabasca Glacier. Clark's Nutcrackers may attempt to pilfer goodies from our picnic lunch en route, and along the highest section of the road we'll look for the "Timberline" Brewer's Sparrow, a form that is being suggested as a future split. Continuing our sampling of the mountain parks, we'll move on to the spectacular vistas of Kananaskis Country, crossing the highest paved pass in the country--Highwood Pass, at 7237' (2206m) -- then skirting the eastern edge of the mountains to arrive in Waterton Lakes National Park, in the southwestern corner of the province. With targets including Calliope Hummingbird, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Townsend's Solitaire, Western Tanager, and Lazuli Bunting, not to mention Mountain Goat, Bighorn Sheep, Elk, Moose, Beaver, Black Bear and Grizzly Bear, all with the constant backdrop of some of the most majestic scenery on the continent, our time in the mountains will be unforgettable indeed!

As a coda to our time in the mountains, we'll make a broad sweep eastward out into the prairies that cover most of the southern half of the province. Sloughs and potholes dot the grasslands here, and a great assortment of waterfowl and waders inhabit these, the number and variety dependent on the depth of the water, the presence or absence of vegetation, and/or the alkalinity of the water. Eared Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, Franklin's Gull, Wilson's Phalarope, American Avocet, and many more will likely be found at these waterholes, while the grazing reserves, remnants of the endless Mixed-Grass Prairie that once blanketed this region, host a completely different suite of birds. In these areas we'll watch for Long-billed Curlew, Ferruginous and Swainson's hawks, Prairie Falcon, Sprague's Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Baird's, Brewer's, and Grasshopper sparrows, McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, and Lark Bunting, as well as elegant Pronghorns and industrious American Badgers, as we work our way northward to the prairie town of Brooks. Our final morning will see us visiting the spectacular badlands along the Red Deer River at Dinosaur Provincial Park, where in addition to some amazing vistas, we'll seek out birds like Say's Phoebe, Rock Wren, Spotted Towhee, Lark Sparrow, and the elusive Yellow-breasted Chat, before making our return to Calgary to wrap up the tour.



*We'll watch for Long-billed Curlews and other grassland nesters when we travel through the prairies.
Photograph by participant Tony Nastase.*

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Light to moderate amounts of walking, much of it on paved roads or well-groomed tracks or trails. No single walk exceeding 2 miles, most much shorter. Our visit to alpine habitat will be facilitated by a tram up the Whistlers Mountain in Jasper. The optional walk at the summit of Whistlers is not long, but is steeply uphill.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We cover much ground on this tour, and some days will feature long periods of time in the vans and lots of roadside birding with much getting in and out of vans.
- **PACE:** Early mornings (5:30-6:30 a.m. breakfasts), with one or two afternoon breaks during the tour. Optional post-dinner excursions on several days, with return to hotel potentially as late as 10:00 p.m.

- **ELEVATION:** Most birding will take place at moderately high elevations (4000-6000 feet), with parts of several days spent at elevations up to about 7400 feet. Nights will be spent at lower elevations; the highest is Canmore at 4300 feet.
- **WEATHER:** Spring is just reaching the highest elevations in June, whereas lower elevations have warmer weather then. Expect temperatures in the low 50s in the evening (low 40s at higher elevations), with days in the high 50s to low 70s F. Rain is a possibility at any time; snow and ice are unlikely but possible at higher elevations.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but on occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide for the tour.

About the Birding Areas



Elk Island National Park—Just to the east of Edmonton, Elk Island National Park is an incredibly diverse area of grasslands, large marshes, aspen parklands, and spruce forest. The diversity in habitat is reflected in the mix of birds, from forest species such as Tennessee and Mourning warblers, to Nelson's, LeConte's, and Clay-colored sparrows in the wetlands and grasslands. Both Woodland and Plains bison are found in Elk Island, in addition to Elk and Moose.

Jasper National Park is one of Canada's "crown jewels." It is not as heavily visited as Banff, but has incredible scenery and birding opportunities to offer. Here we shall be looking for typical western mountain species such as Harlequin Duck, Black Swift, American Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, and alpine birds like the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch and White-tailed Ptarmigan. Local forests also offer the chance to see some boreal species such as White-winged Crossbill, Gray Jay, and maybe even Black-backed or American Three-toed woodpeckers. Jasper lies in a contact zone between eastern and western forms of certain species, such as the Yellow-rumped Warbler and Dark-eyed Junco, and we may be able to study pure forms and hybrids between "Audubon's" and "Myrtle" warblers as well as "Oregon" and "Slate-colored" Juncos.

Banff National Park—A bit more touristy than Jasper but certainly well worth the visit, Banff includes some of the most scenic places in the Canadian Rockies. The birding is not too shabby either, with Varied Thrushes, Mountain Chickadees, and the comical Clark's Nutcracker. We also hope to encounter more than our fair share of Elk and Moose, perhaps some Black Bear, Bighorn Sheep, and Mountain Goats, and if we are lucky, Wolf. Note that we will not stay in Banff, but will drive through it and bird as we go along.

Kananaskis Country—This was the site of the Calgary Winter Olympics, but now it's a multiple use natural area with ample opportunities for birding as the forests and trails are extensive. We will primarily be birding from the roadside, with our eyes peeled for the likes of Spruce Grouse as well as Rufous Hummingbird, Varied Thrush, Mountain Bluebird, Mountain and Boreal Chickadees, and Townsend's Warbler. We'll carefully check any sapsuckers to determine whether

they are Red-naped or Yellow-bellied, or something in between, and listen closely to the calls of any “Western”-type Flycatchers, in hopes of sorting out whether Cordilleran or Pacific-slope is the bird we’re observing. As we drive the higher parts of the Kananaskis highway, we have a fair chance of encountering Grizzly Bear, and an excellent chance to see delightful American Pikas scrambling among the boulders of the Rock Glacier.

Waterton Lakes National Park—Right at the border with the United States, this beautiful park abuts Glacier National Park in Montana. Waterton Lakes is perhaps not as famous as Banff and Jasper, but it should be. The abrupt change from prairie to mountain forest is nowhere as obvious as in Waterton, and this creates some great opportunities for photography. Add to this an amazing wildflower and butterfly show along with a very diverse avifauna, and you understand why it’s one of the guide’s favorite birding spots. In the park, we’ll be on the lookout for species such as Bald Eagle, Lazuli Bunting, Steller’s Jay, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Cassin’s Finch, Pine Grosbeak, and a host of other western and northern species. Note that this park has had a couple of devastating forests fires in the past couple of years, and some areas of the park may still be closed at the time of our tour.

The Prairies—Grazing reserves in the southern prairies still support most of the species typical of the formerly vast mixed-grass prairies. Swainson’s and Ferruginous hawks, Prairie Falcon, Say’s Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Lark Bunting, Chestnut-collared and Thick-billed longspurs, and Baird’s, Brewer’s, and Vesper sparrows are among the many species we hope to find on our sojourn across this expansive region. Prairie potholes may hold a great assortment of waterfowl, plus American Avocet, Wilson’s Phalarope, and Willet, while larger lakes may host Western (and rarely Clark’s) Grebe and American White Pelican. In the Brooks region, we’ll also visit the dramatic badlands of Dinosaur Provincial Park, where Rock Wren, Brown Thrasher, Spotted Towhee, Lark Sparrow, and Yellow-breasted Chat will be among our targets.



The American Dipper is a resident of fast-flowing streams in western North America that we’ll see the mountains of Jasper National Park. Photograph by guide Cory Gregory.

Itinerary for Canadian Rockies: Alberta

Day 1, Sun, 16 Jun. Arrival in Edmonton. Please plan to arrive in time to meet your guides in the hotel lobby at 6:30 p.m. for introductions and dinner. Night in Edmonton.

Day 2, Mon, 17 Jun. Elk Island National Park. Today we will head out early to get the most out of our day in Elk Island National Park. We will be hoping to see Red-necked Grebe, perhaps the rare dark morph of the Broad-winged Hawk, Nelson’s, LeConte’s, Swamp, and Clay-colored sparrows, Mourning Warbler, and if we are very lucky, the elusive Connecticut Warbler. The park is home to several typical eastern species that we will be unlikely to see elsewhere on the

tour, and we will also be on the lookout for Broad-winged Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak, to name a few. Depending on our time, and on what birds have been present, we may make a side trip east to a series of productive marshes in search of an assortment of waterfowl, Sora, Black Tern, Sedge Wren Yellow-headed Blackbird, and many others. Night in Edmonton.

Day 3, Tue, 18 Jun. To Jasper National Park. This will be primarily a travel day from Edmonton to Jasper in the Rocky Mountains, though of course we plan on birding a few areas of boreal forest en route for species such as Pileated Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Western Tanager. The areas to the west of Edmonton will also give us another chance for Connecticut Warblers, and we'll be targeting them as well if we still need them. As we enter the mountains, we'll need to be on the lookout for big game, and will likely see our first Elk and Bighorn Sheep of the trip. After dinner this evening, if the weather is right, we may offer an optional visit to a nearby canyon to watch for the arrival of Black Swifts. Night in Jasper.

Day 4, Wed, 19 Jun. Jasper National Park. This morning will find us being whisked up the mountainside on an early flight of the Whistlers tramway, en route to the alpine tundra, where we hope to find the very cryptic White-tailed Ptarmigan as our main target. Few other birds breed up here, but we'll keep our eyes peeled for Golden Eagles gliding overhead, and Horned Lark, American Pipit, Townsend's Solitaire, and perhaps, with a large dose of luck, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch foraging among the showy alpine flowers and rocky slopes. After our alpine ascent, we'll continue in our exploration of the park, perhaps searching for Harlequin Ducks and American Dippers at scenic Maligne Lake, or Alder and Willow Flycatchers, Blackpoll Warbler, and Purple Finch at Cottonwood Slough. This evening, if anyone still has the energy, an optional drive up the Maligne Lake road can be good for Black Bears, which often feed on dandelions in the ditches lining the road, and we've even seen Wolf here on a past tour. Night in Jasper.

Day 5, Thu, 20 Jun. Jasper to Kananaskis. Today will be another travel day, but one to look forward to, as we shall be driving one of the most beautiful roads in North America. One of our many stops will be at the Columbia Icefields, with a view to the dwindling, but still impressive, Athabasca Glacier. If we do our picnic lunch here, as we have in the past, we may have to fend off some cheeky Clark's Nutcrackers! In this region, we'll also search for "Timberline" Brewer's Sparrow, which share the scrubby willow habitat with White-crowned and "Slate-colored" Fox sparrows, and the occasional Golden-crowned Sparrow. Further south, in Banff NP, we'll make roadside stops as time and opportunity allow, whether to take a photo of a particularly stunning mountain scene, or to observe any big game mammals that we happen to spot en route. This day will be our best chance to see Mountain Goats! Night in Canmore.



We'll look for Harlequin Ducks in the Kananaskis Country. Photograph by guide Eric Hynes

Day 6, Fri, 21 Jun. Kananaskis Country. We'll have the full day to explore this vast and lovely area. Harlequin Duck, Northern Goshawk, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-naped (and/or Yellow-bellied) Sapsucker, Dusky and Hammond's flycatchers, Boreal and Mountain chickadees, and MacGillivray's, Orange-crowned, and Townsend's warblers are among the many species we could encounter today, with stunning mountain vistas serving as a spectacular backdrop throughout the day. Night in Canmore.

Day 7, Sat, 22 Jun. Kananaskis Country to Waterton Lakes. Today we continue traveling south en route to Waterton Lakes National Park, reaching an elevation of over 7300' at the beautiful Highwood Pass. En route to the pass, we'll drive through one of the most reliable areas for sighting Grizzly Bear, so we'll keep a sharp eye out for them. We'll also make a stop at the Rock Glacier, a jumble of boulders that is home to a pretty good number of cuddly American Pikas as well as Hoary Marmot and (if we're lucky) Yellow-Pine Chipmunk, while Pine Grosbeaks occasionally belt out their bubbly song from the surrounding forests. The pass itself offers up another chance for Fox Sparrow, with "Timberline" Brewer's Sparrow also being possible. After crossing the pass, we'll eventually work our way out of the mountain forests into the fescue grasslands along the eastern edge of the Rockies. The first stretch of this habitat is excellent for Mountain Bluebirds, with many nest boxes set up for that species. Reaching the town of Longview, we'll turn south and drive along the flank of the mountains, with beautiful sweeping vistas to the soaring peaks on our right, and the broad expanse of the prairies to our left. Hawks become more prevalent here, with many Swainson's and Red-tailed, the latter showing a diverse number of plumages, from very dark morphs, to rufous, to extremely pale types. Night in Waterton Lakes National Park.

Day 8, Sun, 23 Jun. Waterton Lakes National Park. Despite recent forest fires which heavily damaged parts of the park (some of which may not yet be reopened in time for our tour), Waterton remains an excellent area for many species of birds that can be difficult in other regions of the province. An extensive marsh near the park entrance may hold Trumpeter Swan, Sandhill Crane, and even Virginia Rail. The clear, cold mountain lakes and river could turn up Common Merganser, Harlequin Duck, and Barrow's Goldeneye, and Calliope Hummingbird, Cassin's Vireo, Steller's Jay, American Redstart, Veery (the darker western form, historically known as the Willow Thrush), Pacific Wren, MacGillivray's Warbler, Cassin's Finch, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, and Western Tanager are just some of the birds we'll be looking for in the surrounding forests. Towards dusk, Vaux's Swifts may be seen flying over the townsite. Night in Waterton Lakes National Park.



The dazzling blue of the male Mountain Bluebird is unmistakable. We'll watch for these gorgeous birds on our way to Waterton Lakes National Park. Photograph by participant Jeff Wahl.

Day 9, Mon, 24 Jun. Waterton Lakes to Brooks. Today we'll leave the mountains behind and begin a 2-days swing through the prairies in search of the many grassland birds that breed in southern Alberta. This first day will find us crossing large grazing reserves along the border with Montana, where the extensive grasslands still support good populations of Pronghorn, as well as many, many birds. Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon nests may be found on the cliffs overlooking the Milk River, Long-billed Curlew and Upland Sandpiper forage in fields of tall grass and wildflowers, while American Avocet, Willet, and Wilson's Phalarope make use of the numerous sloughs that dot the region. Gray Partridge will challenge our spotting abilities, Sprague's Pipits our patience (their display flights can go on and on!) and all the while we'll watch for Say's Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Chestnut-collared and Thick-billed longspurs, and an abundance of sparrows. Night in Brooks.

Day 10, Tue, 25 Jun. Brooks Region, including Dinosaur Provincial Park, to Calgary. Our final day of birding will start off with a visit to the spectacular badlands along the Red Deer River at Dinosaur PP. Here among the impressive hoodoo formations and in the cottonwood flats along the river, we'll be looking for a handful of species we won't likely have seen before this point, including Western Wood Pewee, Rock Wren, Brown Thrasher, Spotted Towhee, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Lark and Brewer's sparrows. As time allows, we may visit other sites in this region, targeting whatever local species are still eluding us, a list that could include things like Burrowing Owl (a declining species in the province), Lark Bunting, and Baird's Sparrow, before we work our way back to Calgary for our final night. Night near airport in Calgary.

Day 11, Wed, 26 Jun. Departure from Calgary. Feel free to book your flight home for any time today. Our hotel provides a courtesy shuttle to the airport, as well as breakfast, if your flight isn't too early in the morning. Safe travels!

About Your Guide

Jay VanderGaast was introduced to birding by his father, and his obsession with birds was evident by age seven when he memorized the plates in Peterson's eastern field guide. He went on to earn a B.S. in biology at university and briefly contemplated a career in research, but two years on the buggy arctic tundra watching ptarmigan do little other than occasionally getting eaten by Gyrfalcons soon put an end to that plan! Instead, he strapped on a backpack and a pair of bins and began roaming the world in search of birds. His travels eventually led him to Costa Rica, where he took a job as a birding guide at Rancho Naturalista Lodge. He held this position for six years, becoming one of the country's leading guides in the process, before joining Field Guides in 2000. When not touring, Jay can be found at home in the Montreal region, usually with his own three nestlings-daughters Ariane and Elodie, and son Noah-- in tow.

*"Jay is an excellent guide. He is a native Canadian, so he not only knew his birds and was expert at getting everyone on each bird -he knew the culture. He dispatched all obstacles seamlessly. We really felt taken care of at all times."
S. L., Owlberta*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Jay's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

A **second guide** will be added as tour size warrants.

Financial Information

FEE: \$4925 from Edmonton

DEPOSIT: \$500

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: December 19, 2023

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$1100

LIMIT: 10

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: All accommodations on this tour are comfortable and of high quality, and all rooms have private baths.

DOCUMENTS: US citizens will need a valid passport for travel to Canada. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Canadian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: **Please note that the tour begins in Edmonton and ends in Calgary.** Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$4925** for one person in double occupancy from Edmonton. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 10, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 11, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to Edmonton and from Calgary, airport taxes, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to maids at our hotels, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$1100**. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: **To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/.** Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$500** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by December 19, 2023. We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any

changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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