

ITINERARY

**COLOMBIA: MEDELLIN ESCAPE - ANDES AND VALLEYS**

May 25-June 3, 2019



*The Red-bellied Grackle is an endemic found in the cloud forests of the Colombian Andes. Like other grackle species, they are found in noisy flocks, however, this attractive blackbird is classified as vulnerable due to habitat disruption. We'll seek them near Medellín, where they can be common. Photograph by guide Richard Webster.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Medellín Escape: Colombia's Andes and Valleys 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

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- 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 reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Trying to come up with fresh adjectives to describe the birding in the country with the world's longest list is not easy, nor is capturing it in itineraries that will be perfect for everyone. What we have done is take our 17-day survey of the Cauca Valley and the Western and Central Andes and divide it into two shorter tours, visiting many of the same places while adding a few new ones. These shorter itineraries take advantage of direct flights from the U.S. to Colombia, which is short flight across the Caribbean.

As for the adjectives, "juicy" is really obvious, but it is also right on target. This tour is going to be fun, visiting a terrific variety of birdy forests with really juicy birds, many of them endemics in remote regions of the Western and Central

Andes. While “remote” suggests hardship, and there are some simple lodges and the challenges of birding in rainy regions, there is also ease and comfort—our gateway is a city of millions served by major international airlines. And good birds are not always remote birds—one of the classiest endemics of Colombia, the Red-bellied Grackle, occurs in the hills above Medellin. It is also a list that is still growing, with Antioquia Wren described from the Cauca Valley since we started the tour. To expand the variety, we have added a lowland forest at the edge of the Magdalena Valley to the cloud forests of the Andes visited on other parts of the tour.

Colombia is well known to Field Guides clients for many things, particularly the juxtaposition of the length of its checklist with the magnitude of its internal troubles over the 20 years since our last tour offerings to this beautiful land. But Colombia has been mending, and we have returned to this diverse and rich country since 2010 with an expanding list of tour offerings. Those tours have gone well, and we will continue to offer an approach that focuses on multiple thorough immersions rather than hoping to skim the best in a single visit to Colombia, just the way we do not try to cover Ecuador, Peru, or Brazil with a single itinerary. While Medellin Escape is part of the bigger picture of our Colombian coverage, if you are looking for a single-visit sampler, this 10-day itinerary traverses almost 10,000’ (3000m) of elevation and visits two of Colombia’s major valleys and two of its cordilleras in pursuit of a dazzling variety of tropical birds.

And while political and military changes have been occurring, there has also been a steady growth in Colombian ornithology and the establishment of many private nature reserves to complement the public ones, all making locating many of the special birds more practical. Colombia has not had time to catch up to the ecotourism standards of its neighbors, and so be forewarned that while birding in Colombia is fun and feasible, there are a few more rough edges (discussed below) than on comparable tours. All of our trips will have local support from our in-country operator both before and during the tour. As for the Colombians you will meet, the biggest puzzle will be how things could have gone so wrong because so many Colombians are warm, engaging people, happy to see foreign tourists, although not yet inured to them.

In Colombia, the Andes are split into three long, north-south running cordillera separated by two deep valleys carrying the Rio Cauca and the Rio Magdalena. The valley of the Rio Cauca separates the Western and Central Andes and, in comparison with the valley of the Rio Magdalena, is narrow and slightly higher. The floor and lower slopes of the Cauca Valley are in a modest rainshadow in between the very wet Central Andes and the exceedingly wet Western Andes, the west slope of which is in the Choco, one of the five wettest areas in the world. The Magdalena Valley is wetter, and we will visit one lowland forest on its edge, diversifying the bird possibilities from what is otherwise an Andean orientation.



We will visit the Reserva Natural de las Aves Loro Orejamarillo above Jardin, where conservation efforts are helping to increase the population of the Critically Endangered Yellow-eared Parrot. *Photo by participant Greg Griffith.*

**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** There are no major difficulties with this tour, but there are a number of points that need to be considered carefully to determine if this tour is right for you. Some of this relates to basic facts about Colombia: The tourist infrastructure is early in its re-birth after two decades of security problems, and habitat destruction endemic to this planet means it can be a long way between spots where threatened, endemic birds are to be found.



*The Golden-crowned Tanager is a common member of mixed species foraging flocks in the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador. Photograph by participant L. C. Jackson.*

The focus will be on the endemics and specialties, although at times we will pursue the widespread because in this taxonomic climate even the widespread can become very interesting. And we will generally look at the widespread species because we like looking at birds and that is often what is in front of us. Still, this is just to say that birding in Colombia is still new and special, and there is an emphasis on what makes Colombia unique.

This tour involves a moderate amount of driving, although less than our Bogota to Santa Marta tour. Still, a fingernail length on the map is, in the Andes, a half-day of driving. The countryside is interesting, and while the environment is generally greatly disturbed, in comparison with many countries there are actually fewer areas that are devastated: There are large trees or riparian corridors or patches of substantial secondary growth. Of course, the shift to sun coffee (as opposed to shade-grown coffee) has been extensive in the last two decades—another piece in the environmental puzzle that has not been favorable to birds. The pros and cons are that when we travel, that is really all we

do—little roadside birding, few stops to check out birds; and when we bird, we are immersed in birding on trails and tracks as close to the wild as we can be, escaping from the bustle of roadside and cities. For four days at two locations (Jardin and RNA Las Tangaras) we use 4WD vehicles to get to the habitat; these are not SUVs, these are old Willys or "coffee jeeps," and we must climb in and out of the back (which is covered), and hang on.

This is not a strenuous tour. Most of the trails are not especially long (several kilometers) or difficult, but do require normal balance and agility on what are often steep slopes (it is the Andes). The pace will be slow. The most important endurance relates to long hours in the field (often a half day at a time, and much of an entire day) rather than miles walked. While birding, bathrooms will generally be bushes. 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 one of the guides.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This tour will be limited to just SEVEN participants, which means, of course, that it costs more than tours with larger limits. We realize that the price of a tour always matters, especially when a recession is an actuality or a recent constraint, but we maintain the small limit for several reasons. First, a couple of our lodges have limited rooms and singles may not be available for everyone. Second, comfort in the vehicles matters on a trip long in miles and days, and we would like to preserve an open seat or two in our bus and also reduce crowding when we use multiple 4WD vehicles on several segments of the tour. Third, a smaller group makes the birding easier. So when you see similar, less expensive itineraries with tour limits of 8, 9, and 10, please remember that there's a good reason our tour is more expensive. Furthermore, several lodges are raising funds for conservation through their prices.

## About the Birding Areas

**Rio Claro**—East of Medellin the highway to Bogota drops down the Central Andes into the foothills at the edge of the Magdalena Valley. This private reserve features a gorgeous river named, obviously, for its clarity, and it is surrounded by lovely forest that is home to several endemics: White-mantled Barbet, Beautiful Woodpecker, Magdalena Antbird, and Sooty Ant-Tanager, none of which is easy, but each of which offers a fair chance of being seen in the reserve or at birding spots en route. Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant is present, but a challenge in the canopy. We will be looking for many raptors, hummingbirds, trogons, toucans, woodcreepers, antbirds, manakins, flycatchers, thrushes, and tanagers typical of lowland forests, among which are such tropical classics as King Vulture, Purple-crowned Fairy, Rufous Motmot, Collared Aracari, and White-bearded and Blue-crowned manakins, along with Olivaceous Piculet, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Pacific Antwren, Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, Cinnamon Becard, Band-backed, Black-bellied, and Bay wrens, Black-chested Jay, Fulvous-vented Euphonia, Dusky-faced, Tawny-crested, and Golden-hooded tanagers, Black-faced (Yellow-tufted) Dacnis, and Chestnut-headed Oropendola. Good fortune might include an antswarm with Blue-lored, Chestnut-backed,

and Bicolored antbirds, and sharp eyes might spot one of several species of puffbird present in the reserve (Barred and White-whiskered puffbirds and Gray-cheeked Nunlet). Other potential (translate as “unlikely”!) prizes include Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Saffron-headed Parrot, Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo, Blue Cotinga, and Black Oropendola. One afternoon we will explore some moist pastures in the main valley, hoping for the uncommon Northern Screamer, and seeing in the process many species of open country.



**Medellin**—The environs of Medellín have been much altered, but we will take a morning to visit a suburban park that is a mixture of forest patches and heavily disturbed secondary (and eucalyptus!). Not only does the park have some real specialties, foremost of which is the Red-bellied Grackle, two more endemics (Colombian Chachalaca and Stiles’s Tapaculo), and a chance for the rarely seen Yellow-headed Manakin, but it is just fun birding, with other possibilities including Sickie-winged Guan, Highland Motmot, Emerald Toucanet, Metallic-green and Saffron-crowned tanagers, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, and White-naped (Yellow-throated) Brushfinch.

**Montane Choco**—We would love to go to some known locales and reserves much farther south in the Western Andes. But there are areas of Colombia that are still known to be dangerous and others that are marginal, including the Colorful Puffleg reserve (sigh), Cerro Munchique, and areas close to the Ecuadorian border. Our contacts in Colombia have suggested, and we have visited, some safe areas west of Jardín and Pereira. Be forewarned that one of the mountain ridges of the area translates as "Umbrella Mountain" and that this steep terrain is one of the wettest areas on Earth, with all of its correlates, such as mud.

On Medellín Escape, we will visit RNA Las Tangaras, the ProAves reserve west of **Jardín**. It features a good trail through lovely cloud forest, with additional birding and feeders along a little-used dirt road. The bird list of this area is replete with the endemic Black-and-gold Tanager and Black Solitaire; other species of interest include Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl (we were lucky to see it twice), Toucan Barbet, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Olivaceous Piha, Tatamá (described in 2017) and Narino tapaculos, Beautiful Jay, Buffy Tuftedcheek, Fulvous-dotted (Star-chested) Treerunner, Uniform Treehunter, Purplish-mantled, Glistening-green, Rufous-throated, and Silver-throated tanagers, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, Crested Ant-Tanager, Indigo Flowerpiercer, Choco (Tricolored) Brushfinch, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia, and a nice selection of hummingbirds (White-tailed Hillstar, Brown Inca, Empress Brilliant, Violet-tailed Sylph, Velvet-purple Coronet). On our first visit we looked for the canopy-loving Choco Vireo and did not find it, but we have connected with this canopy speck on our latest forays. Mixed flocks may include Yellow-vented Woodpecker, Handsome and Ornate flycatchers, Variegated and Marble-faced bristle-tyrants, Red-faced Spinetail, and Rufous-naped Greenlet. We can expect to hear a number of skulkers, such as the tapaculos, Yellow-breasted and Ochre-breasted antpittas, Chestnut-breasted and Sooty-headed wrens, and Olive Finch, and where there is a good spot, we will try to see them. Depending on our success (especially as it relates to the weather), we will likely have time to try a different road that reaches slightly higher elevations where Munchique Wood-Wren and Tanager Finch occur, but we will concentrate on specialties of RNA Las Tangaras first.

**Jardín and the Reserva Natural de las Aves Loro Orejiamarillo**—We will use a very nice country hotel above the mountain resort town of Jardín as our base to visit the Yellow-eared Parrot reserve. The reserve is on a ridge above town, and requires 4WD to reach. We will need to be up at 10,000 feet (3000m) early in order to maximize our chances for the Yellow-eared Parrot (Critically Endangered), which commutes from roost sites to feeding areas (a soaked-in morning is the biggest threat to success). This parrot, which resembles a small macaw, has been the subject of recent conservation efforts that have increased its population through nest boxes and education efforts aimed in part at preserving the wax palms (heavily used in religious ceremonies on Palm Sunday) on which the species is partly dependent. The population is now around 1500 in Colombia, and it is almost certainly extirpated from Ecuador. The sooner and better our success with the parrot, the more birding we can do in the forest patches down the mountain, which

is also where we occasionally have the best views of Yellow-eared Parrot, if we are lucky enough to find a feeding flock. Specialties and special challenges in the forest patches include Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, skulkers like Ocellated Tapaculo and several antpittas, Chestnut-crested Cotinga (rare), Black-collared Jay, the *richardsoni* form of Citrine Warbler, Golden-fronted Redstart (Whitestart), White-capped and Golden-crowned tanagers, and Tanager Finch (skulking). While looking for those, we could encounter either Crested or Golden-headed quetzal, and mixed flocks will include a number of flycatchers, warblers, tanagers, mountain-tanagers, and flowerpiercers. Dusky Starfrontlet has been reported here, but not often, and not (yet!) by us, but we should see a number of other hummingbirds, including Tourmaline Sunangel, Collared Inca, and Mountain Velvetbreast, and Sword-billed Hummingbird is possible. We will have information from local contacts on the best current spots for the parrot, and the locations in which to search for other specialties. Warning: This can be a very wet spot! Which is why there is all that lovely forest!

Our visit to Jardin will also include a visit to a fabulous lek of Andean Cock-of-the-Rock where a private land owner has provided access to these spectacular birds almost on the edge of town!



*We will be visiting some of the best birding habitats in the Colombian Andes on this short tour. This view of forested mountains and valleys is representative of our tour route. Photograph by guide Richard Webster.*

## Itinerary for Medellin Escape: Colombia's Andes and Valleys

**Day 1, Sat, 25 May. Arrival in Medellin.** Flights on several international carriers are available to Medellin; check with your tour manager for the best flight available from your home. If you need a luggage cart, have a couple of dollar bills handy as you enter the luggage area; you can change money at the bank just before you exit the customs area to the outside. You will be picked up at the airport (it is essential that we have your flight information if you have not booked through us) and transferred to our hotel, the Santiago de Arma, located five minutes from the airport in the small community of Rionegro on a mesa outside of Medellin. If something goes awry, a local taxi costs under \$5 and we will reimburse you. For those coming a day early, you can arrange a city tour of Medellin (e.g., the Museo de Antioquia and Botero Plaza), rest up, and/or bird the hotel grounds (a few things along the lane that runs downhill on the south side of the hotel).

**Day 2, Sun, 26 May. To Rio Claro.** We will drive east this morning, starting our birding as we reach the forested foothills of the Central Andes. We will have lunch en route, and end up at Rio Claro mid-afternoon, in time to have an evening birdwalk in the forested canyon. We'll settle in for our two-night stay at Cabanas La Mulata.

**Day 3, Mon, 27 May. Rio Claro.** We'll have a full day for birding on foot in the reserve and for an afternoon foray to some marshy pastures out in the valley. At Rio Claro we usually bird for one to two hours before having breakfast, then resume birding. Nights and meals at Cabanas La Mulata, Rio Claro.

**Day 4, Tue, 28 May. To Sabaneta (Medellin).** We will have all morning to revisit the reserve forest on foot. After lunch at the lodge, we will drive back to Medellin, making one or two short birding stops. Our destination is a comfortable hotel in Sabaneta, a suburb on the west side of Medellin, and a convenient place from which to start the next day. Night at Hotel La Extremadura, Sabaneta.

**Day 5, Wed, 29 May. To Jardin.** To take advantage of the morning hours, we will start in a small park on the outskirts of Medellín, looking for Red-bellied Grackle, Stiles' Tapaculo, Colombian Chachalaca, and the scarce and local Yellow-headed Manakin. Leaving Medellin mid-morning, we will take a few minutes to bird the dry forests near the bottom of the Cauca Valley. We will look forward to a cold drink with lunch at a restaurant near the Rio Cauca, and continue on in the afternoon into the Western Andes and the town of Jardin, located in a basin on the east side of the western Andes. We'll end the day at a nice hotel in the Western Andes, planning time to enjoy Andean Cocks-of-the-rock at a lek near town. Night at Hotel Hacienda Balandu.



*We'll visit an Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek, where we'll hope to see the spectacular males displaying.  
Photograph by guide Richard Webster.*

**Day 6, Thu, 30 May. Jardin.** Yellow-eared Parrot, like a small macaw, is the special goal, for which we will take 4WDs to almost 10,000' (3,000m), birding a small pass and the basin behind it at dawn (leaving around 5 a.m.), and then drive back down the road birding large patches of forest, returning to our hotel in the late afternoon, having had a picnic breakfast and lunch. Night at Hotel Hacienda Balandu.

**Day 7, Fri, 31 May. To RNA Las Tangaras.** We will start with breakfast at dawn on the lovely town square and then travel a short distance to some patches of forest where Yellow-eared Parrots occasionally feed, and we can enjoy a few forest specialties like Parker's Antbird along with a nice variety of birds of more open habitats, such as the brilliant red-rumped "Flame-rumped" Tanager. In the afternoon we will cross a low pass in the Western Andes to another ProAves reserve, RNA Las Tangaras, and our lodge for the next three nights. Night at Las Tangaras.

**Days 8-9, Sat-Sun, 1-2 June. RNA Las Tangaras.** We will have two full days to visit the reserve, which is located a half-hour by 4WD from the lodge on a little-traveled road. Patches of cloud forest along the road are excellent for many birds of the montane Choco, but we will concentrate on a good, level trail that has already been constructed in the stunning mossy forest, and try any newer trails as well. Depending on the weather/our results, on the second day we may also try a nearby road that offers slightly higher elevations. Our routine here will involve pre-dawn breakfasts, e.g., at 5:15 a.m., a drive to the habitat, potentially a picnic lunch brought to us by the lodge on a trail, and dinner at the lodge. Nights at Las Tangaras.

**Day 10, Mon, 3 June. Las Tangaras.** We will take some early morning time to bird the reserve near the lodge. Then it is onward, for a return to Medellin, and for evening flights to the U.S. (or an overnight near the airport, not included, for flights the following morning; your guide will stay over for a morning flight).

## About Your Guide

**Jesse Fagan** (a.k.a. the Motmot or just "Mot") has been passionate about birds since his teens, when he had an encounter with a flying Pileated Woodpecker. He has birded extensively throughout North America and in 2016 published the [Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America](#) (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) with co-author Oliver Komar and illustrators Robert Dean and Peter Burke. In addition, Mot has experience in many other areas of Central and South America, Europe, and Africa. He likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time.

Jesse holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University. He is currently living in Lima, Peru with his wife, Rocio.

*"Jesse is a top-notch birder; his spotting skills are incredible--and almost as importantly, he's excellent at getting people in the group on the birds he's spotted. He's also well-organized, good at handling group logistics, and has a flaming sense of humor, all of which combine to make the tour both rewarding and a lot of fun." S. G., Machu Picchu & Abra Malaga, Peru*

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Jesse's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$4450 from Medellin

**DEPOSIT:** \$450 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** Jan 25, 2019

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$375 [Note: singles may not be available all nights]

**LIMIT:** 7

## Other Things You Need to Know

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

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** At two places we will stay at reserve lodges that are new, but simple and small, with private facilities; singles are not guaranteed. At one of these, Rio Claro, the rooms are truly spartan (cold water shower, just a couple of sheets) but airy, and are well built and set in the forest. Our airport hotel is a small, standard facility that is just five minutes from the airport. Our other hotels are like nice "country hotels" in suburban or a rural setting.

The food is good, and individual health has been fine. At the lodges the menu will be fixed. While vegetarian fare is available, it isn't diverse. At restaurants in the larger cities and hotels, the usual choices are available. Breakfasts are a weak point; good early breakfasts are one of the last things to evolve in the ecotourism world. Overall, the foregoing is overly negative; there is plenty of tasty food on this trip.

**A NOTE ON ALTITUDE:** We will have one day of birding at 10,000 feet (3000m) above Jardin and probably one day to 9000 feet (2700m) above Las Tangaras; the rest of the tour will be below 7,500'. We will take our time at the higher elevations.

**DOCUMENTS:** A current passport valid six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Colombia. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Colombian 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:** The tour begins and ends in Medellin. There are direct flights to Medellin (José María Córdova International Airport –MDE) from Miami and connections via Panama City or Bogota from other US cities. You may plan to arrive at any time on Day 1. On Day 10, we will drive to Medellin in time for a departure as early as 8:30 p.m. Those who wish to stay overnight for a departure the next day can book a night through our office.

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.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$4450 for one person in double occupancy from Medellin. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 10, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader. 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 and from Colombia, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$375; *singles may not be available all nights*. 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, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$450** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by January 25, 2019**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 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 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (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 the 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 airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. 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, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (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 from us a brochure 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, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. 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 reverse side of 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. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility 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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