

ITINERARY
COLOMBIA'S MARVELOUS MAGDALENA VALLEY
January 22-February 1, 2025



The Sooty Ant-Tanager is much lovelier than its name suggests. This Colombian endemic is found in the Magdalena Valley; we'll look for it near Río Claro. Photograph by participants David and Judy Smith.

We include here information for those interested in the 2025 Field Guides Colombia's Marvelous Magdalena Valley 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:

- 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 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

The Magdalena Valley, like most inter-Andean valleys, once boasted forested habitats stretching from valley floor to mountain summits—in the Magdalena's case, the summits of the Central and Eastern cordilleras of Colombia's Andes. Today, though forests are far more limited in extent, they do persist in places, and this tour is a moveable pilgrimage exploring the birds of this vast valley and the Andean ramparts that frame it. Meandering for nearly a thousand miles, the wide Magdalena River flows northward toward the Caribbean Sea, its basin draining over 100,000 square miles. On this tour, we'll follow the flow of the river, birding the valley floor on several days but chiefly birding up the western slope of the Eastern Cordillera and the eastern slope of the Central. The valley represents one of the royal roads of South American birding, with a truly memorable suite of endemic and endangered species to be found at each location we visit, whether in

beautiful canyons or diverse forests. The journey takes us to corners of Colombia few visitors ever see, places where the rhythms of life are very much as they were many decades ago and where traditional foodways are very much alive. One of the real joys of this tour is simply connecting with the honorable realities of rural Colombian culture. We'll sample some of the local cuisine and steal a few moments to appreciate coffee fincas, cacao plantations, working ranches, open-air markets, and churches along the way.

Beginning in Bogotá, we'll descend the western slope of the Eastern Cordillera on our first morning. Our guide and drivers will know just the right spots to check for our first endemics, hopefully to include Velvet-fronted Euphonia and Apical Flycatcher, en route to the city of Ibagué. In the foothills above that city, we'll visit a lodge where we hope to see endemics Tolima Dove, Yellow-headed Brushfinch, Tolima Blossomcrown, and Indigo-capped Hummingbird, among many other fantastic birds of the Central Cordillera, potentially including the spirited Crested Ant-Tanager. The next morning will find us at the wetlands of El Hato, where we'll take in many more widespread birds of the countryside before heading over to the tiny town of Victoria, getting into position to bird a small reserve with endemics such as Beautiful Woodpecker, White-mantled Barbet, Sooty Ant-Tanager (it should be called Superlative, not Sooty!), and White-bibbed Manakin, plus several birds with restricted ranges like Sooty-headed Wren.



The Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo is a near-endemic, found mainly in northern Colombia. We'll watch for this one when we stay at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve. Photograph by participant Linda Rudolph.

Following the valley northward, we'll reach the Cañón del Río Claro Reserve, where the cacophonous emergence of hundreds of Oilbirds from their cave will rank among the tour's great highlights, even for those who have seen this unique species elsewhere. Río Claro also hosts the rare Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant, Magdalena Antbird, Saffron-headed Parrot, and more widespread but often elusive birds like Russet-winged Schiffornis or Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaner, so we'll do a bit of walking for them and many other foothill species. Heading back into the valley, we'll hop next to the ProAves reserve named Reinita Cielo Azul—Cerulean Warbler—set in the lovely oak-rich cloudforests of the Serranía Yariguies. At higher elevations here, some truly tough birds are the order of the day: Gorgeted Wood-Quail, Parker's Antbird, Magdalena Tapaculo, White-bellied and Ochre-breasted antpittas, and Yellow-throated Spadebill among them. Near our lodge, set near shady cacao plantations, we'll look for Niceforo's Wren, Turquoise Dacnis, Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo, Double-banded Graytail, the very rare Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, and hopefully (if one is around) Recurve-billed Bushbird.

Without question, this is an energetic road-trip of a tour, with several invigorating hikes. It's also, without question, a really fun journey, with memorable, often very rare, birds recorded every single day. For those who love tours that travel to the very heart of a country, this one's for you!

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 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:** This is a tour for walkers in relatively good physical condition and with a good sense of balance. Although we do only moderate amounts of walking (2-4 miles per day), and some of it is along roadways, we will walk several muddy trails (a few with steep stretches), and in one case we walk a moderately steep, slippery trail of mossy cobblestones. In some places, it will be necessary to walk uphill, and in others, we will walk downhill as we bird. Even for agile walkers, walking sticks can be useful on this tour, especially when the terrain is a bit uneven, steep, or slick (the Lengerke Trail at Cerulean Warbler Reserve is a good example). Much of this tour is spent in lower elevations, and in fact our maximum elevation will be 8600 feet on the first morning in Bogotá.
- **PACE:** Early mornings (departures between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m.), with birding sessions in morning and afternoon broken by a picnic or restaurant lunch. We will travel by small bus.
- **WEATHER:** The weather can be cool in the higher mountains in the early morning, as low as the 50s F, but most of the weather we'll experience in lower elevations will be comfortable (60s, 70s) in the morning and quickly rise to hot and humid (in the 80s and 90s) by later in the day. We will visit in the local dry season, but rain showers are possible at any time.
- **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:** We will often be birding in natural habitats where there are often no restrooms, so it will be necessary to make comfort stops in nature when we are birding.
- **OPTING OUT:** When we stay at the same lodging for multiple nights, participants can easily opt to sit out a day.

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'll put you in touch with a guide.

This tour may be combined with Colombia's Eastern Cordillera, January 14-22, 2025 and Colombia's Santa Marta Mountains & Caribbean Coast, February 1-9, 2025.

About the Birding Areas

Colombia is *full* of birds, nearly 2000 species (about 20% of all the world's birds, and more than any other country!). Our Colombia program has five tours, all designed to see as much of this incredible country's avifauna as possible. Each tour tends to focus on a suite of species that is special to the itinerary's birding sites. For instance, if a scarce species is rather reliable on one tour but quite difficult on another, it's likely that we'll search for that species primarily where we have a reasonable chance of finding it (and often will not invest long hours looking for it where our chances are very low). For this tour, we have a large core of specialty species that are not seen on any other Field Guides tours, such as Beautiful Woodpecker, Sooty Ant-Tanager, Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant, Saffron-headed Parrot, Tolima Dove, Magdalena Antbird, White-bibbed Manakin, Tolima Blossomcrown, Niceforo's Wren, Magdalena Tapaculo, and Yellow-headed Brushfinch, and we'll give each of those a very strong Field Guides effort. There are also many important birds on this tour's route that we see on only one or possibly two other tours—birds like Crested Ant-Tanager, Velvet-fronted Euphonia, White-mantled Barbet, Apical Flycatcher, Black Inca, Double-banded Graytail, Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo, Black-headed Brushfinch, Sooty-headed Wren, Parker's Antbird, and Turquoise Dacnis. We have also included time to search for these great birds. Realistically, because many birds we hope to see are quite scarce, some quite endangered, we know that we will not be able to detect all possible species on any given tour. Habitats are very limited for these and many other species of the Valley and lower foothills, and some places we visit are not yet protected as preserves. The Magdalena Valley does have a splendid variety of more widespread Andean and Neotropical species, and we will take time to enjoy them on this tour. The species noted for each site below are just examples, and some species are possible at multiple sites, even though not mentioned in each account here.

Western slopes of the Eastern Cordillera—On our first day, a travel day, we'll make some strategic stops before the heat of the day sets in to look for birds we might not find later on in the tour, among them Velvet-fronted Euphonia and Apical Flycatcher, both endemic to Colombia. These birds hang on in fragments of dry secondary forest, sometimes rather small ones, but they can be local, so it's likely we'll make several stops.



Ukuku Rural Lodge—This relatively new lodge on the eastern slope of the Central Cordillera sits in the truly picturesque Caño del Río Combeima, with a view to the snow-capped Nevado del Tolima. The lodge grounds host four species that can be quite difficult to find just knocking around in the state of Tolima: Yellow-headed Brushfinch, Tolima Dove, Indigo-capped Hummingbird, and Tolima Blossomcrown. Sometimes, all four are right on the property! The lodge is truly rural and isn't reachable by vehicle, so we'll leave our bus in the dark and walk about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to reach it (the last 300 yards have a bit of steepness) Birds like White-tipped Swift, Whiskered Wren, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Red-billed Emerald, Mountain Elaenia, and Streaked Saltator may be around, as well as Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Black-billed Peppershrike, and other classics of the Colombian Andes.

Humedal El Hato and vicinity—For a change of pace from forested habitats, it's always in order to do some wetland and open-country birding, of which there is plenty in the Magdalena Valley. The marshes around El Hato have some second-growth around them, making them a good "backup" for endemic Apical Flycatcher and Velvet-fronted Euphonia in case we are

still looking for them, but we'll be mostly taking in nonpasserines here, birds like Wattled Jacana (a striking black subspecies or morph), Bare-faced (Whispering) Ibis, as well as herons and other waders. We will keep ears and eyes alert for Spectacled Parrotlet (nearly endemic), Barred Puffbird, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Olivaceous Piculet, White-bellied and Jet antbirds, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, White-fringed Antwren (*hondae*), Tropical Gnatcatcher (*anteocularis*), Buff-breasted Wren, and the babbler-like Black-capped Donacobius as well.

La Victoria and Bellavista Nature Reserve—We will enjoy an early morning of birding in this small, fragmented reserve that's a little off the beaten track but that has been good over the years for White-bibbed Manakin, White-mantled Barbet, Beautiful Woodpecker, Velvet-fronted Euphonia, and Sooty Ant-Tanager. We have chances to see most of these elsewhere on the tour, with the exception of the manakin, so we'll concentrate especially on finding this Colombian endemic, a close relative of White-ruffed Manakin.

Río Claro Nature Reserve and Park—Over parts of two days, we'll explore the trails of this protected area, located where the Río Claro drains into the mighty Magdalena. The reserve protects a spectacular canyon on the east slope of the Central Cordillera and is surrounded by humid tropical forest. Among the 540 or so species recorded in the area are a few Colombia endemics and birds shared only with Panama, birds like Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant (endangered; described in 1988), Saffron-headed Parrot (scarce), Blue-chested and Shining-green hummingbirds, and Southern Bentbill. In the morning, Channel-billed Toucan (*citrolaemus*; Citron-throated) is often heard giving its rough, croaking calls, as the similar-sized Yellow-throated Toucan (*swainsonii*; Chestnut-mandibled) gives its yelping calls. The Oilbird cave in the reserve is nothing short of mind-blowing when hundreds of these big birds emerge at dusk; we will certainly be in attendance one evening here! Side roads near the park can sometimes produce Sooty Ant-Tanager, Beautiful Woodpecker, or White-mantled Barbet, so we will keep an eye on our endemics list, in case we need to work on one or two. Closer to the Magdalena, we can make several stops at marshy spots to check for birds like Northern Screamer, whistling-ducks, Yellow-billed Tern, Dwarf Cuckoo (unpredictable), or other open-country species.

RNA Reinita Cielo Azul (Cerulean Warbler Reserve)—On the western slope of the Eastern Cordillera where the Chicamoca and Magdalena valleys meet, this 500-acre ProAves reserve abuts the much larger, mostly inaccessible Yariquies National Park. The reserve is traversed by the 150-year-old Lengerke Trail, a cobbled path built as a trading route in the 1850s by Georg Ernst Heinrich von Lengerke, who fled what is now Germany after a duel to the death over a lady in 1852. On one morning, after a half-hour 4x4 ride up from the lodge, we'll bird through the oak forest on Lengerke's

often slippery trail, in pursuit of a host of special birds, among them four endemics: Gorgeted Wood-Quail (very tough!), Parker's Antbird (described in 1997), Magdalena Tapaculo (described in 2005), and Black Inca. Some other interesting forest birds along the trail include White-bellied and Ochre-breasted antpittas, Golden-headed and Crested quetzals, Yellow-throated Spadebill, and, yes, even Cerulean Warbler. The elevation here is about 6100 feet (1850 m). Our lodge, located about 4600 feet (1400 m) next to a coffee plantation, also has birds around it, sometimes including Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird (rare) and Turquoise Dacnis. The shaded plantations of coffee and cacao in the area also support Bar-crested Antshrike and a fine variety of dry forest species. We will use part of one day to search the bamboo stands and plantations below the lodge for some remarkable but usually rather difficult species: Niceforo's Wren, Double-banded Graytail, and Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo.



The tiny Tolima Blossomcrown is a specialty we'll seek at the Ukuku Rural Lodge. This is another Magdalena Valley endemic, found along the eastern slopes of the Colombian Andes. Photograph by participant Linda Rudolph.

Itinerary for Colombia's Marvelous Magdalena Valley

Day 1, Wed, Jan 22. Flights to Bogotá depart from the US. On arrival at Bogotá, and after clearing customs and immigration, you may wish to change money for Colombian pesos at the El Dorado airport if you have not already done so in the United States. Most flights from North America arrive in the evening; transfers will be scheduled from the airport to our hotel in Bogotá. For those participating in the **Colombia's Eastern Cordillera** tour, your guide will accompany you to the hotel from that tour this evening. Night near the international airport in Bogotá (8600 feet elevation).

Day 2, Thu, Jan 23. To Ibagué, birding along the way. To beat the city traffic, we will depart early for some good birding spots on the western slope of the eastern cordillera, hoping to connect in scrub and second-growth woodlands with endemic species such as Apical Flycatcher and Velvet-fronted Euphonia. We plan on lunching in a small town and maybe a little Colombian culture before pushing on to the comfortable Hotel Iguaima in Ibagué, our home for the next two nights. Night in Ibagué.

Day 3, Fri, Jan 24. Ukuku Rural Lodge. Our destination this morning is not too far from the city, a small eco-lodge with feeders on the lower slopes of the Central Cordillera. Here, we have a solid chance to see three range-restricted endemics that most tours do not search for: Tolima Blossomcrown, Yellow-headed Brushfinch, and Tolima Dove. The feeders also often attract the stunning Indigo-capped Hummingbird, along with a fine assortment of Central Cordillera

birds, including White-tipped Swift and perhaps the furtive Masked Saltator. To reach the lodge actually requires about a ¾-mile walk, a bit of it uphill, but we'll take our time and bird along the way. Night in Ibague.

Day 4, Sat, Jan 25. Humedal El Hato. Today involves a bit of travel, but we'll want to take advantage of the cooler morning hours for birding. We will plan on visiting the wetland area called "El Hato" locally, which will have a nice representative sampling of waterbirds and a few species of secondary forests as well. We'll probably adjust our route to include searches for a few species we might have missed in previous days or would like to bank before heading northward through the valley. Night in Victoria.



While the Wattled Jacana is found in wetlands from central Panama through Brazil, the subspecies found in the Magdalena Valley is a black-backed morph not found in the southern parts of this range. Photograph by guide Dan Lane.

Day 5, Sun, Jan 26. Victoria and Bellavista Nature Reserve. This morning will find us in the small but usually birdy Bellavista reserve, searching for White-bibbed Manakin, Sooty Ant-Tanager, White-mantled Barbet, and several other range-restricted species. We'll depart after the day warms up, heading for our next destination but making a few birding stops en route. Night in Rio Claro.

Day 6, Mon, Jan 27. Rio Claro Nature Reserve and Park. We'll rise early to get a jump on the heat (a theme for the next few days!), to make the short drive from our hotel to the beautiful reserve. It's likely we'll bird a bit along the entrance road, then take an uphill trail by the lodges called the Mulata Trail, which has many of the species we seek. After lunch, we'll walk the more level paved trail along the river in search of Magdalena Antbird; and after dinner, we'll do this trail for our Oilbird experience! We sometimes also see bulldog bats (fishing bats) emerge with the Oilbirds. Night in Rio Claro.

Day 7, Tue, Jan 28. To Reinita Cielo Azul: Cerulean Warbler Reserve. Today is mostly a long travel day, but we'll certainly bird the hotel grounds (and nearby) in the morning before saddling up to head toward San Vicente de Chucurí, almost 5 hours distant, by far the longest of our travel days (but we're there for 3 nights!). At San Vicente de Chucurí, we'll transfer to 4x4 vehicles to reach our simple lodge (limited singles available here). Night at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve.

Day 8, Wed, Jan 29. Cerulean Warbler Reserve. Today (depending on the weather), we will drive up to the dense forest above the lodge. Once at the forest edge, we have a challenging climb on the cobbled trail that is very slippery

when wet (and it's usually wet!). **If you use a walking stick or benefit from resting on the perch of a folding stool, this is the place for them.** We will work our way steadily upward, trying for a variety of fine birds: Gorgeted Wood-Quail, Parker's Antbird, Black Inca, and Magdalena Tapaculo (*yariguorum*). We'll have a welcome picnic lunch in the forest. In the afternoon, we'll bird near the lodge in hopes of finding Niceforo's Wren, Turquoise Dacnis, and perhaps a few other fancy endemics. It is not a strenuous day (we don't go fast), but it is a tiring day that requires concentration to avoid slipping. Night at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve.

Day 9, Thu, Jan 30. Cerulean Warbler Reserve. Some truly tricky birds—Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, Double-banded Graytail, and Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo—inhabit the bamboo stands and coffee and cocoa plantations below the lodge, and we'll devote the better part of the day in search of them, both on foot and using 4x4 transport to save our legs a bit. Night at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve.

Day 10, Fri, Jan 31. Bucaramanga to Bogota. We will transfer by 4x4 back down to San Vicente and head to Bucaramanga for our mid-day flight to Bogota. Night in Bogota.

Day 11, Sat, Feb 1. You may plan to depart Bogota at any time today. For those continuing to the Santa Marta tour, and for those headed homeward, we wish you a *buen viaje!*

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

*"I can't say enough about how much I appreciate **Jesse Fagan's** professionalism, attention to detail, birding skills, organizational skills, thoughtfulness, and sense of humor. He worked so hard to cater to each individual. Jesse truly did an outstanding job in every imaginable way. I hope that I will be able to travel with him again in the near future." C.H., Florida*

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$5575 from Bogotá

DEPOSIT: \$550 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: July 26, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$300*

LIMIT: 7

*Space is limited at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve, so please be prepared to share – the cost of the single supplement does not include a single at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve (Days 9, 10, 11), though we will still try our best to accommodate all requests.

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 Christine Boilard. Christine will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations on this tour are mostly basic but comfortable: quite modern in the capital, more rustic in the ProAves reserve, and comfortable in Ibagué.

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: 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, pack only a medium soft-sided suitcase or duffel and one carry-on. 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 \$5575 for one person in double occupancy from Bogotá. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 10, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 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 and from Bogotá, airport taxes, 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. Please note that the flight required to combine tours with Colombia: Santa Marta Mountains & Caribbean Coast (Bogotá to Barranquilla) is not included in the tour fee.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$300. *Singles at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve are limited.* 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 \$550** 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 July 26, 2024. 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.

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases, one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

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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