

ITINERARY  
***Enchanted Chiapas***  
*February 22- March 3, 2023*



*The overlook at Sumidero Canyon is one of the most dramatic views in all of Mexico.  
Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2023 Field Guides Chiapas 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 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

**Y**et another new tour in Mexico, and this time we head all the way south to Chiapas. With its colossal mangroves, coastal savannahs, tropical dry forests and orchid-filled cloud forests, Chiapas is home to a dazzling array of birds, many of which are found nowhere else. Biogeographically, Chiapas is set apart from the rest of Mexico thanks to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the low, narrow strip of land that acts as a barrier to montane species. This isolation has set the stage for the evolution of a unique suite of birds found only in Chiapas and neighboring Guatemala—birds like Pink-headed Warbler, Bearded Screech-owl and Blue-throated Motmot. We'll seek these specialties in the highlands, and bird the lowlands for Rosita's Bunting, Belted Flycatcher, Bar-winged Oriole, Giant Wren and White-bellied Chachalaca.

Our journey begins in Tuxtla Gutierrez, the bustling capital of Chiapas with 600,000 inhabitants, and from there we'll escape to the tranquility of Reserva el Ocote. Located just 40 minutes from Tuxtla Gutierrez, Reserva el Ocote is *the* most biodiverse reserve in all of Mexico, with over 500 birds recorded within its boundaries. Here lives the endemic Nava's Wren, an elusive songster of limestone outcroppings. Hearing its loud, rich song is easy... getting to see it as it

mouses its way through the cracks in the rock is a bit trickier, but we'll try our best! Slate-colored Solitaires, Band-back Wrens, Black-headed Saltators, Buff-throated Foliage-gleaners and Tawny-winged Woodcreepers add to the dawn chorus here at El Ocote. It's also one of the best places to see the endemic Long-tailed Sabrewing. After a morning at El Ocote, we head to Cañon del Sumidero, a truly mind-boggling kilometer-deep gorge carved by the Rio Grijalva. We'll take in the views from various viewpoints and search for Belted Flycatcher, Red-breasted Chat and Fan-tailed Warbler in the dense bamboo thickets along the road.

From Tuxtla, we'll drive up in elevation to the colonial city of San Cristobal de las Casas. When we're not sipping hot chocolate or walking the narrow cobblestone streets downtown, we'll seek Pink-headed Warbler, Blue-throated Motmot, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Wine-throated Hummingbird, and the White-breasted form of Sharp-shinned Hawk in the conifer forests above. In the evening, we'll try for both Bearded Screech-Owl and Unspotted Saw-whet Owl, two rarities which favor lush, bromeliad-laden pine forest slopes.

Then it's down to the Pacific lowlands to look for Rosita's Bunting (aka Rose-bellied Bunting), Sumichrast's Sparrow, Great Swallow-tailed Swift, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Long-tailed Manakin and Green-fronted Hummingbird in the dry forest near the town of Arriaga, and after that we'll canoe through the mangrove forests of Centro Ecoturistico Costa Verde in search of Giant Wren, White-bellied Chachalaca, Northern Potoo, Agami Heron, and Yellow-naped Parrot.

Our tour ends in the cloud forests of Volcan Tacana. At 13,320 feet, Tacana is the second highest peak in Central America. Here, we'll be based out of a lodge in the picturesque village of Union Juarez and we'll bird the hummingbird-filled slopes of the volcano. Some of the species we'll look for here include Black-crested Coquette, Green-throated Mountain-gem, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Slender Sheartail, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Azure-rumped Tanager, Ocellated Quail, and Buffy-crowned Wood-partridge. If you've been with us to Oaxaca or the Yucatan and are craving another dose of Mexican birds (and food and culture!), then put on your hiking boots and let's head for the forest! We're looking for an enthusiastic group of birders for this truly immersive adventure—*vamonos*, let's make it happen!



*Rosita's Bunting or Rose-bellied Bunting occurs in a tiny zone of foothill dry forest along the Chiapas/Oaxaca border. We stand a good chance of seeing this remarkable bird near the town of Arriaga. Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.*

**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, for tours departing on or after March 1, 2022, includes a booster).** Having a vaccinated group will greatly diminish but not eliminate the possibility of the group and individual participants being adversely affected by COVID-19. **We are requiring all of our staff guides to be vaccinated, including getting the booster.** Note too, that many travel destinations are or soon will be requiring 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 become a requirement for some travel destinations if they choose to declare that vaccinations do not last indefinitely. And having a booster means your risk is lowered and your travel plans and those of our group are less likely to be disrupted.



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:** Moderate amounts of walking (1-3 miles in morning, 1-2 miles in afternoon), mostly on roads or packed dirt trails. Some instances we will need to hike up some steep, and possibly slippery trails with loose rocks and gravel, so come prepared with walking sticks if you need them. Participants should be able to spend long hours on their feet. A folding stool could come in handy for picnics.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** At Centro Ecoturístico Costa Verde, we will be spending a full morning (3 hours) of birding from canoes along the mangrove channels—bathroom breaks will be difficult, if not impossible, from the canoes.
- **PACE:** Early starts (5:30 a.m. breakfast) followed by birding until lunch, which is sometimes a picnic. In the afternoons, we will bird or take in cultural attractions such as ruins and local markets. On most days, we will be away from the hotel for the entire day. There will be several optional nighttime excursions to look for owls and other night things. For these we will aim to return to the hotel by 10:30 p.m.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures range from the low 40s in the early morning in the higher elevations of mountains to the mid-90s F in the lower elevations with high humidity, so be prepared for a range of weather conditions. While springtime is considered the dry season in this part of Mexico, we might still encounter afternoon showers, especially up at Volcan Tacana.
- **ELEVATION:** Anywhere from sea level to 8,000 feet, where it can be quite chilly.
- **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 most days, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** We will be on the go for much of the tour moving from town to town, so there will be few opportunities to opt out.

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.

***This tour may be combined with Mexico: Oaxaca Valley I, March 4-11, 2023.***



*The Giant Wren is well-named. This range-restricted species is one of the specialties we'll seek near Mapastepec. Photograph by guide Jorge Montejo.*

## About the Birding Areas



The beautiful city of **San Cristobal de las Casas** sits in a valley surrounded by pine forest at 7,200 feet. The city features picturesque cobblestone streets and colonial architecture, with vendors selling colorful handicrafts ranging from textiles to products made from amber. San Cristobal used to be the capital of Chiapas, before it was moved to Tuxtla Gutierrez, however San Cristobal continues to be the cultural center of the state. **Reserva Montetik** is a community reserve just outside San Cristobal. The humid pine forest slopes are home to the snazzy Pink-headed Warbler, Wine-throated and Garnet-throated Hummingbirds, Blue-and-white Mockingbird and Blue-throated Motmot. Even Scaled Antpitta can be found here! On clear nights, Bearded Screech-Owls and Unspotted Saw-whet Owls sing from these forest slopes.

Right outside Tuxtla Gutierrez is the spectacular **Cañon del Sumidero**, a 3,300-foot-deep gorge carved by the Rio Grijalva as it flows to join the Rio Usumacinta before reaching the Gulf of Mexico in the state of Tabasco. Sumidero Canyon began to form some 35 million years ago, which is about when the

Grand Canyon began to form and its huge limestone walls contain marine fossils from the Mesozoic. Some of the birds that are possible along the road include Belted Flycatcher, Singing Quail, Red-breasted Chat and Fan-tailed Warbler at army ant swarms.

**Reserva el Ocote** is a 40-minute drive from Tuxtla Gutierrez. The reserve protects forest on karst (limestone) hills, home to the secretive Nava's Wren, only found in a little corner where Chiapas, Veracruz and Oaxaca meet. A staggering 500 bird species have been recorded in the reserve, making it the most bird-rich reserve in all of Mexico. Other birds in the reserve include Long-tailed Sabrewing, Slate-colored Solitaire, Golden-hooded Tanager, Green Shrike-vireo, and a myriad of other tropical species. The forest here acts as an important filter for the watershed that supplies water to the Mal Paso Reservoir.

The town of **Arriaga** sits in the hot lowlands of the Pacific Coast, east of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. It was the first option for the US to create a canal between the Atlantic and Pacific, before they settled for Panama. Arriaga is surrounded by coastal tropical deciduous forest, home to the range restricted Rose-bellied Bunting, Long-tailed Manakin, Russet-crowned Motmot, Great Swallow-tailed Swift, Orange-breasted Bunting, Citreoline Trogon, and Green-fronted Hummingbird. It is the contact zone between many species that replace each other east and west of the isthmus.

**Centro Ecoturistico Costa Verde**, in the heart of the Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve, near the town of **Mapastepec** is a birder's paradise. It is *the* place to see Giant Wren and White-bellied Chachalaca and the rare Yellow-naped Parrot. On a canoe trip through the mangrove forest, one can see the shy Agami Heron, Boat-billed Heron, Collared Forest Falcon, the five kingfishers of Mexico, Northern Potoo, Plumbeous and Gray-headed Kites, and the only Southern Lapwings known in Mexico, along with numerous other waterbirds. Lady of the Night Orchids (*Brassanova nodosa*) with their beautiful white flowers grow at eye level along the mangrove channels.

**Union Juarez** is a small village of just under 3,000 people at the base of the spectacular **Volcan Tacana**, which straddles the border of Mexico and Guatemala. Coffee is the main industry at Union Juarez and we will drive through several coffee plantations to reach the town. One can easily spend several days birding the road above Union Juarez, which zigzags up the lush cloud forest slopes of the volcano. Some of the birds here include Blue-tailed Hummingbird, Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, Azure-rumped Tanager and Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge.





*The town of Union Juárez backdropped by the glorious tropical volcano of Volcan Tacana.  
Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.*

## Itinerary for Enchanted Chiapas

**Day 1, Wed, 22 Feb. Arrival in Tuxtla Gutiérrez.** Please plan to arrive in Tuxtla Gutiérrez (TGZ) at any time today. You will be met at the airport and driven to the hotel, about 40 minutes away. If your flight arrives late in the evening, we suggest getting dinner during your layover in Mexico City (MEX). Night in Tuxtla Gutierrez.

**Day 2, Thu, 23 Feb. Birding Reserva El Ocote; drive to San Cristobal.** Our morning will start early, with a light breakfast at 5:30am before heading out for birding at Reserva El Ocote. The primary target will be seeing the endemic Nava's Wren, which likes to hang out in limestone outcroppings. Slate-colored Solitaire, Long-tailed Sabrewing, Black-throated Saltator and Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner can be seen along the road that goes through the park. After lunch back in Tuxtla, we'll drive our way up to San Cristobal and spend the afternoon at Parque Montetik. If the weather looks good, we'll do a night trip in search of Bearded Screech-Owl and Unspotted Saw-whet Owl. Night in San Cristobal.

**Day 3, Fri, 24 Feb. Birding around San Cristobal.** Another full day of birding around San Cristobal. We will revisit Reserva Montetik in the morning, looking for Pink-headed Warbler, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, Unicolored Jay, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, and the White-breasted Sharp-shinned Hawk. After a well-deserved lunch, we'll spend the afternoon exploring around town. Night in San Cristobal.

**Day 4, Sat, 25 Feb. Birding at Cañon del Sumidero; afternoon birding along road to Arriaga.** We will be up early to drive out of San Cristobal to Canyon del Sumidero, where we will spend a full morning stopping at the overlooks and searching for Belted Flycatcher, Red-breasted Chat, Varied Bunting, Slender Sheartail, Blue Seedeater, Plain-capped Starthroat, Bar-winged Oriole and Fan-tailed Warbler in the dense bamboo forest along the road. After lunch in Tuxtla, we will begin our descent to the Pacific Lowlands. Before reaching Arriaga, we will scan an overlook for Great Swallow-tailed Swift, which regularly patrols the hillsides. We could also begin to see Rose-bellied Bunting, Cinnamon-tailed Sparrow, Banded Wren, Green-fronted Hummingbird, Russet-crowned Motmot and numerous other dry forest birds as we descend to Arriaga. Night in Arriaga.

**Day 5, Sun, 26 Feb. Birding around Arriaga; drive to Mapastepec.** Our morning efforts will be dedicated to finding Rose-bellied Bunting if we haven't seen it already. From the dry forest of Arriaga, we will continue along the coast to the town of Mapastepec. After settling in the hotel, we will spend the afternoon birding along the road south to Centro Ecoturistico Costa Verde searching for Giant Wren, Spot-breasted Oriole, and White-bellied Chachalaca. Night in Mapastepec.

**Day 6, Mon, 27 Feb. Canoe trip at Centro Ecoturistico Costa Verde.** Morning will find us in canoes exploring the vast mangrove forest of Centro Ecoturistico Costa Verde in search of Yellow-naped Parrots, Agami and Boat-billed Herons, American Pygmy Kingfishers, Northern Potoos and White-necked Puffbirds. Our bird list could easily surpass 100 species just a few hours on this canoe trip. We will return for lunch at Costa Verde and spend the afternoon birding along the main road. At night we'll try for Pacific Screech-owl. Night in Mapastepec.

**Day 7, Tue, 28 Feb. Birding above the town of Mapastepec; drive to Union Juarez.** After an early breakfast we will depart Mapastepec and drive to the foothill forest to the north, where we'll spend the morning looking for Long-tailed Manakin, Rufous-and-white Wren, Turquoise-browed and Tody Motmots, White-faced and White-eared Ground Sparrows and the newly described Chestnut-capped Warbler, a recent split from Rufous-capped Warbler. This is also one of the best areas of the tour for King Vulture. After lunch, we'll make our way to the town of Union Juarez on the flank of Volcan Tacana. Night in Union Juarez.



*We'll be looking for Long-tailed Manakins in the foothills near Mapastepec. Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.*

**Day 8, Wed, 1 Mar. Birding along the road to Chiquihuites, Volcan Tacana.** The road to Union Juarez switchbacks up the volcano to the little community of Chiquihuites, another town that produces great coffee. This is a good stretch to see the range-restricted Azure-rumped Tanager among numerous other cloud forest specialties like Sparkling-tailed and Garnet-throated hummingbirds, Hooded Grosbeak, Black-capped Swallow and Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner. Night in Union Juarez.

**Day 9, Thu, 2 Mar. Birding upper limits of road to Chiquihuites; drive to Tapachula.** We will bird the cloud forest above Chiquihuites where we might run into Black-capped Siskin, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer, and Gray Silky Flycatcher. After lunch, we will pack up and begin to make our journey down the mountain to the city of Tapachula where we will have our final birding around the hotel grounds before dinner. Night in Tapachula.

**Day 10, Fri, 3 Mar. Flights out of Tapachula to the US via Mexico City (or continue to Oaxaca Valley tour).** You may schedule your departure for any time today and we will arrange your transfer to the airport. Buen viaje!



## About Your Guides

**Micah Riegner** grew up exploring the Central Arizona Highlands and was fortunate to have parents who took him along on college field courses ranging from the coast of Mexico to the mountains of Costa Rica, where encounters with tinamous, barbets, and jacamars launched him into the birding world at a young age. During his time at Prescott College, he made annual pilgrimages to Amazonia, where he worked as a guide and participated in expeditions, mostly in Brazil. For his master's he studied the foraging ecology of Amazonian woodcreepers. When he's not in the field, he tries to make time to paint birds and other creatures that spark his interest.

Micah guided tours with Bret Whitney, John Coons, Dan Lane, and Tom Johnson before joining Field Guides full time in 2019. Micah is a generous guide with an easy laugh and is eager to share his love of birds and nature in the years to come. We know you will have a great time traveling with him, too!

Micah scouted for this tour with Jorge and his partner Amy back in 2021. He is thrilled to be going back to this bird rich part of Mexico.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for complete tour schedules for Micah; just click his photo.

**Jorge Montejó-Díaz** was born in Yucatan, Mexico and developed a passion for nature from a very early age, exploring the surroundings of his native Merida, where he began to observe birds and learn how to trap them! His interest in birds and nature continued to grow during his college years in Veracruz, when Jorge and a group of friends "discovered" the great coastal migration in the state, now known as the Veracruz River of Raptors. Since the late 90's, Jorge has guided birding tours throughout Mexico.

His explorations have taken him across Mexico and to other parts of the world, including Venezuela, Brazil, and much of the US and Canada. Because of both the beauty and importance of birds, he considers the opportunity to watch them and share his passion with others a great honor, as well as a great responsibility. On the rare occasions when he is not in the field, Jorge shares his bird observations with his partner, Amy, from their base in the city of Xalapa, set in the foothills of central Veracruz.

*"Micah is a real bird finder and a delightful guy. He obviously knows the country and the culture well. He provided us with some really great owling, too." P.B., Central Mexico & Baja: Birds, Butterflies & Whales 2022*

*"Jorge was absolutely indispensable by virtue of his local knowledge, negotiation ability, and birding acumen and his expertise in the design of this tour. The choices were excellent and his access to local landowners and conservation efforts made the trip more meaningful. Jorge was great!" M.H., Mexico: Veracruz's River of Raptors 2021*

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$3975 from Tuxtla Gutiérrez** (Please note that the tour begins in Tuxtla Gutiérrez and ends in Tapachula.)

**DEPOSIT:** \$400 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** August 26, 2022

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$350

**LIMIT:** 10

### **Special Note: Tour fees may be subject to change due to the global economic effects of COVID-19.**

We have published the itinerary and price for this tour with the understanding that during these uncertain times we are likely to encounter unforeseen changes. Some of our tours may incur higher costs due to increases in currency exchange rate fluctuations or COVID-19 related fees imposed by countries and/or suppliers. Travel and hospitality companies all over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required we will make every effort to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes or other unforeseen causes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The tour 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!

**DOCUMENTS:** For US citizens traveling to Mexico, a current passport is necessary to reenter the United States. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Mexican 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 your 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.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT IMMIGRATION IN MEXICO:** Upon arrival in Mexico, the immigration officer will give you a paper form which you **MUST** keep with you at all times with your passport. Failure to present this when you are leaving for home will result in at least an extra day's delay.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Flights are available to Tuxtla Gutiérrez via Mexico City. 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 \$3975 for one person in double occupancy from Tuxtla Gutiérrez. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 9, all ground transportation including airport transfers, 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 Tuxtla Gutiérrez and from Tapachula, airport taxes, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, breakfast on Day 8, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature. **For those combining with Oaxaca Valley**, please note the flight from Tapachula to Oaxaca and the extra night between tours are not included.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$350. 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 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.



**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please [contact our office](#). 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 \$400** 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 August 26, 2022**. **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.**

Please note that if you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will require **proof of travel insurance**. 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. If you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will **require proof of travel insurance**. 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 within 90 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 90 to 179 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 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 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. 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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