

ITINERARY

FRANCE: CAMARGUE & PYRENEES

August 31 - September 10, 2024



The Alpine Accentor is a member of the family Prunellidae. These birds are found in high alpine habitats such as the Pyrenees; we'll look for them in the Port de Boucharo when we visit there. Photograph by participant Richard Kaskan.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides France: Camargue & Pyrenees 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 website)
- 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 south of France is acclaimed for its sunny Mediterranean beaches, ancient Roman ruins, fine Provençal cuisine, and internationally famous movie festival. But birders know of other reasons to visit this lovely area—the Camargue, a 210,000-acre national park situated in the very heart of the vast Rhone delta, and the Pyrenees, brooding mountains that form a towering wall between France and Spain.

Our tour begins along the Mediterranean coast in the flat lowland marshes of the Camargue, one of the best-known and most important birding areas in Western Europe. Though the park is perhaps most famous for its huge breeding colony of rosy-hued Greater Flamingos, in autumn it's also a vital rest and refueling stop for untold thousands of Palearctic migrants. Early September is arguably the peak time to visit the Camargue. Most of the region's specialty breeders are still around at this time, and with flocks of migrant shorebirds also passing through, we may encounter

anything from Squacco and Purple herons, Wood Sandpiper, and Slender-billed Gull, to colorful European Rollers and Eurasian Hoopoes, Spectacled Warbler, Short-toed Snake-Eagle, and the omnipresent Eurasian Marsh-Harrier.

Throughout our stay in this delightful corner of Provence, we'll be based near the historic Roman town of Arles in a small country hotel that features wonderful regional cuisine. Not only is our hotel convenient to all the prime wetland sites, it's also only a short distance from two additional habitat types—the dry plain of La Crau and the low wooded hills around Les Baux de Provence. Among the many varied possibilities here are such species as Lesser Kestrel, Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone-curlew), Little Bustard, Iberian Gray Shrike, and Sardinian Warbler, while an evening foray to look for the mighty Eurasian Eagle-Owl could result in a thrilling highlight to our stay in the lowlands.



After enjoying the varied habitats around the Camargue, we'll move west to the Pyrenees. Rising to more than 10,000 feet, these rugged mountains comprise the highest limestone range in Europe. Stretching from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the warmer blue waters of the Mediterranean in the east, they run more or less the full length of the border between France and Spain—a span of 250 miles—but they're at their most spectacular in the scenic Gavarnie area south of Lourdes, where we'll spend four nights at a lovely hotel in the picturesque mountain village of Gèdre.

Hemmed in by montane forests, upland meadows, and the spectacular peaks of the High Pyrenees, Gèdre is the perfect base from which to enjoy a series of short drives and leisurely walks in our quest for some of Europe's most sought-after birds. Here, we'll search for Alpine Accentor, Black and Iberian Green woodpeckers, Citril Finch and Yellow-billed (Alpine) Chough, plus the rare and impressive Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier). The precipitous alpine crests can act as a barrier to many of Europe's summer migrants, southbound now toward their winter quarters in tropical Africa, and periods of inclement weather during September sometimes result in sizable fallouts in the valleys. Those who enjoy watching birds of prey will find this an exciting place, too, as many European raptors pass south via the high mountain passes in the fall.

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 for the tour:

- TRAILS AND WALKING:** For much of the trip, we'll be birding along smooth paved roads or wide, rough dirt tracks. We may (optionally) venture onto narrower dirt trails which may be rough or muddy, with potential trip hazards or loose stones. Those who use walking sticks should be sure to bring them along. The terrain in the Camargue and La Crau is predominantly flat and easy-going. Much of our birding here is possible from or close to the road and most walks are short, typically one-half to two miles (one to four kilometers). In the Pyrenees, and around Les Baux de Provence (in low hills in the Camargue region), some of our birding will be done from the roadside and some along trails on foot. In both places, most of our steepest ascents will be made in the vehicles. At the Cirque de Gavarnie, we will be on foot for most of the day, making a round trip of about 6 miles/10 kilometers (closer to 7 miles/12 kilometers if you go up into the cirque itself); there is a café where we can rest

and refresh near the furthest point on the trail. As one would expect from a mountain region, there are inevitably some steeper sections, but our pace will be leisurely enough so as to present little difficulty to anyone in reasonable health and used to some regular walking.

- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** Our hotel near Arles does not have an elevator, so you may need to climb a flight of stairs to reach your room; if you are unable to do so, please contact our office **as soon as possible** so that we can try to get a room for you on the ground floor. Access to some of our birding spots entails travel along unpaved tracks that may be bumpy and/or dusty. Those with a fear of heights should be aware that some of the roads and tracks that we use in the mountains are edged by significant drops on one side.
- **PACE:** Throughout the tour, breakfast is served from 7:30 a.m. onwards. In the Camargue, we'll offer a few pre-breakfast outings (starting at 7 a.m. and returning for a later breakfast); those who want a later start can join us for breakfast. We'll then be out for the whole day, taking a picnic lunch with us and returning to the hotel between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. At both hotels, dinner is served from 7:30 p.m. onwards.
- **ELEVATION:** Our hotel in Gedre sits at 3100 feet. We'll reach elevations of 5500 feet in the Cirque de Gavarnie (with an elevation gain of 680-850 feet, depending on whether you stop at the café or continue up into the cirque itself), and up to a maximum of about 7600 feet in the Port de Boucharo and on the hills above the Col du Tourmalet (reached by vehicle in both places).
- **WEATHER:** The south of France is renowned for its sunny, Mediterranean climate. Daytime temperatures are typically in the 80s F, though in some years, they've reached the high 90s in the Camargue and in others, they've dropped to the 60s in the Pyrenees. Early morning temperatures in the mountains can dip into the low 40s. It is often quite breezy in the Camargue, with winds occasionally approaching 40 mph. Rain is possible on any day, though it is generally more likely in the mountains. At the highest elevations, snow is also possible, though highly unlikely this early in the season.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** We'll travel in two 9-seater vans. You'll need to be able to climb in and out using the running board step, which is about 15 inches from the ground, and to maneuver into the rear seats of the vehicle, which will entail some degree of flexibility. Your guide(s) will implement a rotation system so that everyone has a chance to be "up front". Those who experience motion sickness should bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for those with medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** While we'll use modern, indoor facilities where they're available, our options in many places in France will be limited, so participants should be prepared for the inevitable bush stop.
- **OPTING OUT:** On all but our transfer days, participants can easily opt to sit out a day – and sometimes a half-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 will put you in touch with your guide.



*We'll hike through some of the most spectacular scenery in the Pyrenees, such as the Barrages des Gloriettes.
Photograph by participant Eileen Wheeler.*



*In the Camargue, we'll see the wonderful Greater Flamingos, and numerous gulls, terns, herons, and other waterbirds.
Photograph by participant Eileen Wheeler.*

Itinerary for France: Camargue & Pyrenees

Day 1, Sat, 31 Aug. Flights depart from the US.

Day 2, Sun, 1 Sep. Arrival into Montpellier and transfer to hotel. Your guide(s) will meet the group just outside the baggage claim exit in the Montpellier Airport at 2:00 p.m. Once we've assembled, we'll transfer to our hotel, which is about a 90-minute drive away—though our journey will take longer, as we'll be birding along the way. Be sure to have your binoculars handy, as there should be plenty to tempt us, with chances to look for Mediterranean, Black-headed, and Yellow-legged gulls, Little Egret, Great Crested Grebe, and our first Greater Flamingos. We plan to arrive at our hotel by 6:30 p.m. Night at Hotel des Granges, Arles.

Days 3-5, Mon-Wed, 2-4 Sep. The Camargue. Our hotel near Arles is well placed for easy exploration of this wonderful corner of France, famed for its flocks of pink-dusted Greater Flamingos, galloping white horses, and black fighting bulls. Although much of the northern part of the huge Rhone river delta has been converted into rice paddies, further south there are still wide expanses of reed, marsh and lakes, saline lagoons, and dry Mediterranean steppe that shelter a rich variety of resident species as well as a host of passage migrants and shorebirds. Little Egrets, Gray, Squacco, and Purple herons, Eurasian Marsh-Harrier, Little and Whiskered terns, Zitting Cisticola, and Cetti's Warblers are among the many mouth-watering possibilities we could see. Colorful migrant European Rollers seem to favor certain stretches of roadside wires, but despite their dazzling colors, troops of mellow-voiced European Bee-eaters can be surprisingly hard to spot as they too drift south, passing high overhead.

Most conspicuous of all the region's long list of breeding birds, however, will be those beautiful but fragile-looking flamingos. Although most of the "ugly-duckling" youngsters will have dispersed from their breeding colony by this time, some will doubtless remain, huddled together into a noisy creche at the back of their nesting lagoon. Flocks of peculiarly "nosey" Slender-billed Gulls, their bodies often flushed a quite startling shade of pink, are another delight at this season, and, with a little perseverance, we may be able to locate a skulking Spectacled Warbler or two amidst the *Salicornia* scrub.

As we thread our way around the maze of unpaved tracks that crisscross the Camargue's patchwork of brackish lagoons, we may find scattered groups of Sandwich, Black, and Common terns, and we should add the likes of Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Kentish, Common Ringed, and Little Ringed plovers, Little Stint, Dunlin, Ruff, and Wood, Green, and Curlew sandpipers to our already impressive list of species. As a further incentive, September is an excellent month for turning up some of the Camargue's rarer visitors. Unexpected highlights on past tours have included such uncommon treats as Eurasian Spoonbill, Eleonora's and Red-footed falcons, Elegant Tern, Broad-billed Sandpiper, and Temminck's Stint.



The stony steppe habitat of the Crau attracts migrants such as the Eurasian Dotterel. Photograph by participant Bill Byers.

Twelve thousand years ago, the Crau—an arid, stony plain to the east of the Camargue—was the delta of the river Durance. With its waters long since diverted into the Rhone, this unique steppe-meadow habitat is now home to a fascinating range of dry-country birds. The piles of stones that stretch away in all directions provide ample lookout posts for Eurasian and Lesser kestrels, and Little Owls. Though these stone piles may seem something of a puzzle at first sight, they were in fact made by POWs during the Second World War; the Nazis were trying to prevent Allied forces from mounting an airborne invasion using troop-carrying gliders. In September, flocks of up to fifty Eurasian Thick-knees (Stone-curlews) sometimes gather on the Crau, and we'll keep an eye open too for the Iberian Gray Shrike, widely recognized as a full species now (having formerly been lumped with Southern Gray Shrike and with Northern Gray Shrike before that). **Note: vehicular access to the Crau has been greatly restricted since an illegal rave in 2017; this will limit us to areas we can reach on foot, and will reduce (but not eliminate) our chances for a few of the Crau area species.**

To the north of Arles, the rugged limestone hills around Les Baux de Provence lie within easy reach of our hotel and offer yet another delightful change of scene. The herb-scented slopes, dotted with pines and evergreen scrub, are the haunt of Alpine Swift, Eurasian Crag-Martin, Long-tailed Tit, Blue Rock-Thrush, and scolding Sardinian Warblers, while migrants such as Tree Pipit and European Pied Flycatcher often pause here during September. It's in the evening, however, that these attractive low hills really come into their own. As the sun begins to set and the daytime temperature cools, we'll watch and eagerly await the appearance of the impressive Eurasian Eagle-Owl from its rocky roost. Nights at Hotel des Granges, Arles.

Day 6, Thu, 5 Sep. To The Pyrenees. Leaving Arles this morning, we'll wind south along the coast and then west, taking the Autoroute to Toulouse and then onward to Tarbes. Although it's a fairly long drive, the roads are good and (traffic permitting) we'll plan several birding stops along the way. Once we're south of Toulouse, we'll meander along quiet rural roads through a rolling landscape dotted with sleepy, red-roofed villages, farmland, and deciduous woods, keeping our eyes open for Common Buzzard, Eurasian Hobby, European Stonechat, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Cirl Bunting, and other species typical of this part of southern Europe.

Returning to the highway, we'll continue west to Lourdes and then swing south to begin the ascent to our hotel at Gèdre, which nestles in the wooded Gavarnie valley at an elevation of around 3100 feet, in the heart of the French Pyrenees. Along the way, we'll make a stop at Pic du Pibeste, an area well-known for its raptor roost. There we might see soaring Eurasian Griffons, Red Kites, Peregrine Falcons and Egyptian Vultures. Night in Gèdre.



We'll take a day hike into the Cirque du Gavarnie, one of the most scenic areas in the Pyrennes, where we'll seek some alpine specialties like White-throated Dipper and Gray Wagtail. Photograph by participant David Blue.

Days 7-9, Fri-Sun, 6-8 Sep. The Gavarnie valley is the premier bird-watching site in the French Pyrenees, and our hotel is superbly situated to give easy access to this marvelous place, with its resident Lammergeiers, its fascinating alpine flora and fauna, and its breathtaking vistas. (On several recent tours, our groups have been treated to views of Lammergeier while enjoying a beer on the hotel's terrace. Some have even been lucky enough to spot one from their bedroom windows!) An additional attraction of the Gèdre-Gavarnie area is that much of our birding can be enjoyed on foot.

We'll begin with a day's ramble to the foot of Gavarnie's magnificent cirque—classified as a World Heritage Site. Surely no one can fail to be impressed by the immensity of these vast glacial cliffs, which here form a huge rock basin on the border between France and Spain. White-throated Dippers and jaunty Gray Wagtails inhabit the swift-flowing mountain streams, with Crested Tit, Goldcrest, and Red Crossbill to watch for in the pines, and Black Redstart, European Serin and the delightful but often elusive Citril Finch to search for in the cirque itself. Mammals of note include Pyrenean Chamois (Isard) and the bulky Alpine Marmot (the latter's loud, birdlike whistles are a characteristic feature of the high alpine grasslands), and participants with an all-around interest in natural history will find plenty of alpine plants and butterflies to distract them from their birding.

On our visit to the Port de Boucharo, we can gaze down a glacier-scoured valley into Spain while the immense shapes of Eurasian Griffon, Lammergeier, and Golden Eagle patrol the skies above. Parties of Water Pipits are common on the grassy slopes, and it's here that we'll also hope to find a well-camouflaged Alpine Accentor or two. These are the high passes through which a host of passerine migrants, such as Eurasian Wryneck, Tree Pipit, Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush, Whinchat, Common Redstart, Eurasian Blackcap, Garden and Willow warblers, and European Pied and Spotted flycatchers must pass if they are to continue their journeys south. Many birds of prey traverse these same routes, and in early September we have good chances of seeing Short-toed Snake-Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, and Peregrine Falcon. The dimorphic Booted Eagle and three harriers (Montagu's, Hen, and Eurasian Marsh) are less predictable, but we should see parties of Eurasian Crag-Martins and white-rumped Common House-Martins as well as noisy flocks of Yellow-billed and Red-billed choughs.

We'll also explore the Col du Tourmalet—famous as part of the classic Tour de France bicycle race—as its forested lower slopes are home to Black Woodpecker, Song Thrush, Firecrest, Coal Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper, Common Chaffinch, and Eurasian Nuthatch. Nights in Gèdre.

Day 10, Mon, 9 Sep. Bidding farewell to our hotel at Gèdre, we'll make our way to Toulouse, retracing some of the route we made in the opposite direction on Day 6. We will have further opportunities to look for lowland farmland and woodland birds we may have missed so far, including such species as Eurasian Hobby, Booted Eagle, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Marsh Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch, and Short-toed Treecreeper. We'll plan another picnic lunch and a final afternoon in this wonderful timeless landscape before heading into Toulouse, where we'll spend our final night at a hotel close to the airport. Night in Toulouse.

Day 11, Tue, 10 Sep. Flights home. You may schedule your departure for any time today. Our hotel provides a free shuttle to the airport, which is 5-10 minutes away (depending on traffic). **Please be aware that the hotel shuttle only operates between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.** If you schedule a departure flight that requires leaving the hotel between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., you'll need to arrange a taxi; your guide can help. *Bon voyage!*

About Your Guides

Megan Edwards Crewe has been birding since childhood, when she discovered she could have her father all to herself (rather than sharing him with her brother and sisters) if she was willing to get up very early on Saturdays and tromp around the woods in search of birds. After graduating from Purdue University, she sampled an impressive variety of jobs (including veterinary technician, park ranger, junior high school science teacher, freelance writer and computer programmer) before discovering Field Guides. Since joining the company more than two decades ago, Megan—who brims with information and enthusiasm—has delighted in sharing the wonders and adventures of birding and the natural world with tour participants. One unexpected bonus of the job was meeting her husband, Mike, with whom she co-led a trip to France in 2000. After bouncing back and forth between Europe and North America, they now live in a tiny village along the coast of the North Sea in England. She has led tours for Field Guides since 1997, including 22 of our previous Camargue and Pyrenees tours.

“Megan Crewe is a star, with superb birding (and people) skills, unbounded patience, and a fascinating trove of bird lore... We were abundantly favored and look forward to future trips with her.” J.H., Spring in Cape May

Willy Perez has been leading birding tours for more than ten years. He has also worked as a resident guide at Maquipucuna Reserve on the west slopes of the Andes, on a project protecting marine turtles in Costa Rica, and on bird conservation in northwestern Ecuador. He was a resident guide at Kapawi Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon for three years, mastering the art of finding and identifying the many secretive birds of the lowland rainforest. He has since guided throughout Ecuador including both the east and west slopes of the Andes, the Amazon basin, the Galapagos Islands, and southern Ecuador. During the last few years he has also guided birding groups in Bolivia. In his free time he trains local guides and is a frequent lecturer, in English and in Spanish, on birding and conservation issues in the Neotropics.

Willy's wife, Fiona, is British and he has traveled with her to England several times to bird and visit family, and Willy and his family have relocated to England for a few years. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads a great deal of fun.

“Willy Perez was a consummate professional, and one of the best guides I've had. I can't think of a single thing he could have done better. As a college professor, I assigned grades on merit routinely. Willy Perez is the easiest A+ I've ever given!” D.W., Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for complete tour schedules for Megan and Willy; just click on their photos.

Financial Information

FEE: \$4725 from Montpellier

DEPOSIT: \$475 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: March 4, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$675

LIMIT: 12

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 Nicole Cannon. Nicole will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her on her direct line at 512-900-7792 or email her at ncannon@fieldguides.com.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations are comfortable throughout the trip, though rooms are cozy in typical European fashion. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms (most have showers only), while our hotel in the Pyrenees has only showers. Guaranteed non-smoking rooms are available in Gedre (where the entire building is a non-smoking area) and in Toulouse on the final night of the tour.

ALTITUDE: The highest altitude we'll reach on the tour will be about 7600', on the hills above the Col du Tourmalet, and at the Port de Boucharo. Our hotel in the Pyrenees sits at about 3100'. While we'll spend a fair bit of our time in the mountains on foot, and while there are naturally some steeper sections on the trails we'll take, our pace will be slow enough so as to present little difficulty to anyone in reasonable health. The terrain varies from roadsides and well-trodden paths to occasional (optional) scrambling over rocks and streams, punctuated by frequent stops for birding.

DOCUMENTS: A current passport valid three months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter France. However, we recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the French 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, so as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: ***Please note that the tour begins in Montpellier and ends in Toulouse.*** When departing from the US, an overnight flight will be necessary. *If you choose to make your own airline arrangements, please be sure to arrive in Montpellier to meet the group by 2:00 p.m. on Day 2 (Sep 1). You may depart Toulouse at any time on Day 11 (Sep 10).*

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 may charge additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify its policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$4725** for one person in double occupancy from Montpellier. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 10, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 11, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping for hotel staff and restaurant staff 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 hotel staff for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to give an additional tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to Montpellier and from Toulouse, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$675**. 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, the guide in training will be taking a seat in the van or bus. 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 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 \$475** 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 March 4, 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.

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. Please note that smoking is not permitted anywhere in our Gedre hotel.

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.

MEC – 9/23; NC 1/24