

ITINERARY
**Israel Migration Magic:
Birding the Land of Milk and Honey-Buzzards**
April 23-May 7, 2021



Split by some authorities as a separate species, the “Arabian” Green Bee-eater, the subspecies found in Israel, is endemic to the region. These colorful and charismatic birds can be very accommodating, and we’ll look forward to seeing them on this tour. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

We include here information for those interested in the 2021 Field Guides Israel Migration Magic 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 reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

This revamped offering of our fairly new but already successful Israel offering is going to be a big hit! Not only have we moved the dates later in the season in order to try and connect with the most intense migration windows of several species, but we have also added the northern part of Israel, allowing us to survey the entire breadth of the spectacular habitats spread across this tiny country. Our two additional days exploring the Golan Heights and Mt. Hermon will surely be a wonderful counterbalance to the stark desert scenery that is predominant through the southern part of the tour route. Throw in the additional birds for which we have a chance in the north (including Syrian Serin, Western Rock Nuthatch, Rock Bunting, Sombre Tit, Long-billed Pipit, Little Swift, among others), and count Doug and Eran as even more excited about the prospect of sharing Israel with you!

The land of Israel, long relevant in the cultural and political landscape of humankind, has for much longer been of tremendous importance as a hotspot for birds. Human habitation in the area stretches back over 100,000 years, and the landscape has witnessed interpersonal strife for as long as there are records. However, long before human conflict entered this setting, an intense and no less compelling drama gripped the land and skies of the region: the annual migration of tens of millions of birds through and over a breathtaking stage of inhospitable desert dotted with lush *wadis* and punctuated by vital oases.

Israel is a fairly small country but is biogeographically rich, bracketed by the largely barren Negev Desert in the south and the fertile Hula Valley and Mount Hermon in the north. Lying in between these end-pieces is a diversity of habitat types, including the verdant hills of Jerusalem, the scenic Mediterranean coast, and the freak of nature that is the Dead Sea. We will begin our tour by focusing on the south of Israel, taking advantage of the regional geography that makes Eilat and the Arava Valley the epicenter of a web of migration spanning three continents, before we then work our way north, exploring the northern Negev Desert and heading up to the lush Golan Heights and up to Mount Hermon.

Whether it is flocks of herons and egrets coming in off the Red Sea, waves of Old World warblers filing through lush desert wadis, or the awe-inspiring scene of tens of thousands of raptors materializing thick as fleas out of the desert mountains and parading overhead in battalions that will leave you speechless, Israel is one of those places where attaching the word “spectacle” to bird migration is not hyperbole.



Our tour is set to coincide with the spring migration. One of the species we'll watch for is the European Honey-Buzzard, which migrates in enormous flocks. Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

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 rather easy walking (up to 4 miles per day), along various substrates (roads, shorelines, desert wadis, trails). Some walking on uneven terrain, especially in rocky environments, though this will vary from year to year. There is some potential for a couple of walks to have an uphill element, though just for short sections.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** It can get hot in the desert, and it will certainly be sunny, though we will be providing plenty of water. We also spend a bit of time stationary while watching migrating birds on this tour (a small folding stool can provide relief as needed).

- **PACE:** On most days, we'll have breakfast early (5:30 a.m.) and spend the better part of the day in the field. A few days will feature afternoon breaks at the lodgings, with optional outings in the later afternoon, and on several days we'll have picnic lunches.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures may range from the high 40s F at night to the high 90s during the day. Early mornings in deserts and mountains can be quite chilly, but temperatures usually rise quickly.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. 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 participants will need to be able to make comfort stops in nature in more remote areas. Even in desert areas, there are typically places to avail oneself of nature. This should NOT discourage you from staying properly hydrated!
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

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

About the Birding Areas



Nitzana—Located in the northern Negev Desert, Nitzana and Ezuz are small communal settlements that lie along the northern part of the eastern border of Sinai, Egypt. From a birding perspective, the area is best known for bird species such as MacQueen's Bustard, Pin-tailed, Black-bellied, and Crowned sandgrouse, Cream-colored Courser, and the desert subspecies of Little Owl (*A.n.lilith*).

In addition to these northern Negev specialties in the area, there are a couple of local sewage ponds which can be excellent migrant traps.

Yeruham Lake & Sde Boker area—Two excellent birding spots are located close to where we will be spending our nights in this region. The town of Yeruham is just to the east, and its main attraction for us will be Lake Yeruham. The lake can be an amazing migrant trap and also hosts a population of Syrian Woodpeckers, and White-throated Kingfishers can be reliably seen. The lake also provides possibilities for waterbirds such as Ferruginous Duck, Little Crake, Little Bittern, and others.

Sde Boker is a Kibbutz just to the south of here, and with the neighboring Midreshet Ben-Gurion (Ben

Gurion Grave Park) and the Ovdat Gorge below, it comprises a very productive and interesting birding location. Alpine Swift, which we hope to detect as a migrant elsewhere on the tour, breeds here, as does a healthy and well-monitored population of the regionally endangered Eurasian Griffon. The fields just south of Sde Boker can reveal foraging Black-bellied Sandgrouse as well. The Yeruham/Sde Boker area is also typically good for finch diversity, which tends to wane south of here.

Negev Desert and Makhtesh Ramon—Makhtesh Ramon, (also known as the Ramon Crater, despite not technically being a crater) takes up an impressive area in the central Negev desert. It is also effectively the southern cutoff for several species, such as Hooded Crow and Great Tit. The walls of the "crater" can host Blue Rock-Thrush, Hooded Wheatear, nesting Egyptian Vulture, and occasionally even Striolated Bunting. South of the Makhtesh lie a couple of excellent desert areas where you can find Temminck's Lark, Crowned and Spotted sandgrouse, and high numbers of Isabelline

Wheatears. Because of the barrenness of the land in this region, any wadi, or indeed even any little bit of green, even a single tree, can host migrants, from a plethora of wheatears and *Sylvia* warblers, to forest-loving species like Tree Pipit, which sometimes find a two-foot tall bush the closest thing to a tree.

Eilat and the Arava Valley—Eilat is justly recognized as one of the meccas of bird migration on the planet. Lying at the northern end of both the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba and the mountains that range south into the desolate Sinai Peninsula, it is an important way-station for an enormous volume of birds, especially in drier years, when the surrounding desert habitats are not as fertile and useful for migrants. With a diverse array of habitats, the area predictably hosts a diverse set of species, to say nothing of the impressive numbers of individual birds overall. From North Beach, seabirds, waterfowl, waders, and shorebirds can regularly be seen flying north up the Gulf before having to reckon with the fact that they've run out of water to fly over, and that a couple of hundred miles of desert to cross lie ahead. This situation lends itself to incongruous sights like jaegers, waterfowl, and terns setting out over desert, risking a long crossing of inhospitable land to get on with their migrations. This is also where we will look for the Red Sea endemic White-eyed Gull. Several of Eilat's city parks can be excellent for a good selection of migrant passerines as well. The IBRCE (International Birding and Research Center Eilat) is one of the crown jewels of the migrant hotspots, and it also functions as an amazing outreach and education center for the general public to learn more about birds, migration, and conservation. We will likely spend a morning here, and we hope to get a banding demo from some of the staff, as part of the sanctuary is devoted to a long-term bird banding/ringing project.

The Arava Valley is the southern extent of the Jordan Rift Valley and extends out of Eilat to the north. Not only does it have some great natural areas, but the Kibbutzim that are scattered up and down the southern Arava, and their associated sewage ponds, can be extremely productive. Yotvata is the most well known of these to birders, and we will likely be making multiple visits to there, for both the birding and the locally famous ice cream.



Though rather drab in appearance, the Arabian Babbler has an interesting social structure that's been the subject of much study. We'll look for this species in the Arava Valley. Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Dead Sea—The Dead Sea is the largest hypersaline lake in the world, lying at the terminus of the Jordan River and without any outlet. One of the most unusual large bodies of water in the world, its shores lie 1400 feet below sea level. We will be exploring a couple of locations in the region for species not found farther south, such as Fan-tailed Raven and Clamorous Reed Warbler, as well as enjoying the landscape around this unique lake. This region is also home to a few very interesting nocturnal species, including the recently described Desert Tawny Owl, the *tamaricis* subspecies of Nubian Nightjar, and Pallid Scops-Owl. These species are all highly protected in Israel, and the permit situation to search for them changes year to year; if we are allowed to do so, we will attempt at least one nocturnal excursion in the hopes of experiencing one or more of these cryptic species.

Jerusalem—We have the potential to visit the Jerusalem Bird Observatory (JBO), a small urban observatory, nestled in between the Knesset and the Supreme Court right smack dab in the thick of the city. More than 10,000 birds are banded (ringed) annually on this tiny postage stamp of land, highlighting the importance of the region as a migratory chokepoint. Jerusalem has one of the richest cultural histories of any city on the planet, and in order to get a thorough experience, you will want to budget another day or more either before or after the tour to explore, as we will barely scratch the surface during the tour.

Golan Heights and Mount Hermon—The north of the country is as lush as the south is stark. Mount Hermon is high enough that we might even see snow, a rarity at this latitude in May. This will allow us to search for several special species that don't occur elsewhere in the Golan Heights, including a couple of very special birds. Syrian Serin will be a major target on Mount Hermon, which is perhaps the only easily accessible breeding location anywhere for them at the current time. Rock Bunting, Western Rock Nuthatch, Wood Lark, Cretzschmar's Bunting, Sombre Tit, *semirufus* Black Redstart, Rock Sparrow, and Spectacled Warbler will be some of the key species here, and if we are lucky enough to get to the highest reaches of the mountain, we'll have a chance for Pale Rockfinch (if we haven't already connected with this), Shore Lark, and even Crimson-winged Finch. The rest of the Golan Heights between Mount Hermon and Lake Tiberias (The Kinneret) is also quite productive in terms of birds, and definitely in terms of scenery. The *captus* Long-billed Pipit (this subspecies is restricted to the Middle East), Upcher's Warbler, Eastern Orphee Warbler, Black-headed Bunting, Syrian Woodpecker, Calandra Lark, Woodchat Shrike, Corn Buntings galore, and Eurasian Eagle Owl are some of the bounty we may run into in these scenic landscapes.



White Storks and other large soaring birds such as hawks and eagles migrate through Israel by the thousands in spring. We'll hope to be in the right place to see this spectacle as it unfolds. Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Itinerary for Israel Migration Magic

Day 1, Fri, 23 Apr. Flights depart from the US.

Day 2, Sat, 24 Apr. Arrival in Tel Aviv. If you are flying in, please take a taxi from the airport to our hotel located in Tel Aviv. We will meet in the lobby at 6:30 p.m.. If you arrive early to Tel Aviv, there are many things to do and see in the Tel Aviv-Jaffa area, from cultural attractions to culinary delights. Night in Tel Aviv.

Day 3, Sun, 25 Apr. Tel Aviv to the Negev Desert. We will depart the hotel after breakfast, and bird our way south towards the Negev Desert, stopping along the way to look for some species that are more difficult to find, or absent altogether, in the south. Depending on weather, we may stop in Jerusalem to visit the JBO (Jerusalem Bird Observatory) right in the heart of the city, across from the Knesset. If we don't visit on this morning, we will have another chance later on in the tour if conditions warrant. Depending on how long the morning's birding takes, we may have a late afternoon/evening birding stop in the northern Negev before dinner. Night in Mashabei Sadeh.

Day 4, Mon, 26 Apr. Nitzana and the northern Negev Desert. We will have another early departure at 5:00 a.m. for the 40-minute drive to Nitzana, where we'll look to pick up MacQueen's Bustard and our first couple of sandgrouse species of the tour. We will then explore some migrant traps and desert hotspots, hoping for species such as the "Lilith" Little Owl and Cream-colored Courser. Depending on the weather, we may break after lunch, but if the weather permits we may go birding right from lunch to maximize our time in this biogeographically unique area. Night in Mashabei Sadeh.

Day 5, Tue, 27 Apr. Drive to Eilat. We will depart early to make our way down to Eilat, birding all along the way. We'll drive through the truly impressive Makhtesh Ramon, which in addition to providing amazing scenery, and some good birds, is a good area in which to find Nubian Ibex. Night in Eilat.

Day 6-9, Wed-Sat, 28 Apr-1 May. Eilat. Eilat, famed worldwide for the winged migration that it experiences every spring, will be our home for four nights. We will be flexible depending on weather while here, but we will likely be out very early every morning to take advantage of the cooler morning temperatures in the desert, before coming back for lunch and a midday rest, then heading back out and birding till dusk most evenings. We will probably have one or two night outings down here to look for some nocturnal fauna (not restricted to birds!) as well. Nights in Eilat.

Day 10, Sun, 2 May. Eilat to the Dead Sea. We will leave Eilat early in the morning and bird our way north through the Road 90 corridor. If we get to the Dead Sea area with some time left to bird, we may have a short outing in the area, and if it is a calm night we may go on a night-birding excursion. Night at the Dead Sea.

Day 11, Mon, 3 May. Dead Sea. We will bird the Dead Sea and surroundings, looking for regional specialties like Clamorous Reed Warbler, Dead Sea Sparrow, Striolated Bunting, and perhaps Sinai Rosefinch, amidst the more common local specialties like Fan-tailed Raven and Tristram's Starling. Night at the Dead Sea.



The attractive Dead Sea Sparrow is a member of the same genus as the familiar House Sparrow. This species has a spotty distribution throughout much of the Middle East, however Israel may be one of the best places to find them. We should see them near their name-sake location. Photograph by guide Doug Gochfeld.

Day 12, Tue, 4 May. Dead Sea to the Golan Heights. We will head north from the Dead Sea early and have a couple of birding stops on the way north, perhaps arriving with time to do a little bit of avian exploration in the lush north. Night in the Golan Heights.

Day 13, Wed, 5 May. Mount Hermon and the Golan Heights. Today we will ascend Mount Hermon. Our exact itinerary will depend on the weather, as the top of Mount Hermon can be quite chilly early in the morning, and birds are sometimes not active first thing. In any event, we will bird the lower and middle slopes of the mountain as well as the upper ski area. Western Rock Nuthatches, Rock Bunting, Sombre Tit, and the almost functionally (in terms of seeing it) endemic Syrian Serin will be some of the main targets. Crimson-winged Finch will be a possibility *if* we can get to the highest reaches of the mountain, which is sometimes closed to visitors. We will spend a considerable amount of time around the mountain in order to give us the best chances of connecting with these special species. We could have time for afternoon stops in the Upper or Central Golan as well, depending on how we do. Night in the Golan Heights.

Day 14, Thu, 6 May. Golan Heights to Tel Aviv. We will have another morning to bird the Golan Heights, likely in the southern section of the heights, where more of the northern Israel breeders will be available, along with continued excellent scenery. We will then make our way to Tel Aviv, planning to arrive in the mid-to-late afternoon. Night in Tel Aviv, where we will have our final dinner of the tour and say our goodbyes. If you plan on flying out on a red-eye tonight, please don't schedule a flight before midnight (airport security is very tight and often lengthy, so please don't cut this close).

Day 15, Fri, 7 May. Depart for Home.

About Your Guide

Doug Gochfeld was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, and his interest in birds was sparked at a young age (he participated in his first CBC at the age of 7), in part by his father. This interest soon spiraled into a full-blown obsession for Doug for a few years before he abruptly shelved it, in favor of baseball, for several adolescent years. He picked up his interest in birds again in college and once again became a dedicated/obsessed birder.

For several years before starting to lead a full slate of tours for Field Guides in 2016, he traveled extensively as a working birder.

These field jobs have included guiding on St. Paul Island, in Alaska's Pribilof Islands, for parts of four years, and multiple seasons spent monitoring migration at the legendary migration hotspots of Cape May, New Jersey, and Eilat in Israel (this last as recently as 2016). While in Eilat, he was able to thoroughly explore the southern part of the country, which is where his strong bond with desert landscapes originated. Doug is excited to share this love and appreciation of the desert spectacles with all those who accompany him to this part of the world.

Doug is a Leica Pro Staff member, and he has been a regular leader at birding festivals in Texas, Ohio, Florida, New Mexico, and Virginia. He has worked in Alaska, Suriname, and Brazil studying the breeding and wintering ecology of shorebirds, which hold a special place in his heart. His strongest interests in birding are migration, vagrancy, and patterns of distribution, and he's always excited to share his enthusiasm in, and knowledge of, these subjects and much more on his tours, whether close to home or halfway around the world.

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

An expert **local guide** will join Doug on this tour.

Financial Information

FEE: \$6675 from Tel Aviv

DEPOSIT: \$675 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: Dec 24, 2020

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$1050

"The stream of migrating hawks, eagles, kites, vultures, storks, and other raptors was truly spectacular, and I was at the right place at the right time, because of the excellent planning and birding skills of Doug Gochfeld."
C.B., *Israel Migration Magic*.

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. 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 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 manager for this tour is Tina Rose. Tina will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

DOCUMENTS: A **current passport** is necessary for US citizens to enter **Israel**. 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 **Israeli** consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please note that the tour begins and ends in Tel Aviv. Participants should arrive on or before Day 2 in time to meet in the lobby of our hotel at 6:30 p.m. Departure can be made on Day 15, anytime.

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.

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LUGGAGE: Due to vehicle size limitations, we ask that you limit yourself to one medium-sized bag and a carry on. Laundry service (not cheap) will be available at the Agamim Hotel in Eilat. We won't be staying anywhere else long enough to do laundry. Be aware that many international air carriers have weight restrictions on carry-on/cabin luggage, so check the requirements and plan accordingly. Also, 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 flights are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$6675 for one person in double occupancy from Tel Aviv. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 14, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through dinner on Day 14, all ground transportation except arrival transfer (taxi to hotel), entrance fees, add 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 Tel Aviv, 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 \$1050. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$675** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or by **December 24, 2020**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

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

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

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

Field Guides reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

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

US citizens will receive 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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