

ITINERARY
WINTER JAPAN
Dancing Cranes & Spectacular Sea-Eagles
January 10 - 25, 2025



*Red-crowned Cranes are resident year-round in southern Hokkaido, and we'll see them at the sanctuary at Tsurui.
Photograph by participant Rick Thompson.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2025 Field Guides Winter Japan 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
- 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 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 islands of Japan lie at the eastern edge of Eurasia and cover a diverse range of habitats, from the sub-tropical Ryukyu Islands to the almost Siberian taiga-like wilds of Hokkaido. Japan is a surprisingly mountainous and wooded land, with beautiful varied coastlines and very heavily populated lowlands, where tiny rice fields dot the landscape amidst the rural dwellings. Winter birding here is one of the great spectacles on earth, with three areas in particular being essential. These are the Hooded and White-naped Crane sanctuaries of Kyushu in the far south, the Red-crowned Crane reserve in southern Hokkaido, and the wintering grounds of the magnificent Steller's Sea-Eagles on the ice fields around Lake Furen

in the far north. Add to this the wintering wildfowl, thrushes, finches, and alcids, the challenge of the large Asian gull complex, plus a useful sprinkling of endemics including the huge, marvelous and rare Blakiston's Fish-Owl, and you have the makings of a truly memorable visit.

Japanese culture is also a feature of the trip, as some of our lodgings are in traditional Japanese guest-houses or minshuku, with sliding walls, tatami rush matting and futon bedding, whilst a couple of the hot spring hotels called onsen have wonderful deep hot-spring baths. The food is also very distinct, with a fantastic selection of sauces for the elaborate fish, rice, and vegetable dishes which make up the traditional cuisine, and we will have some memorable meals.



Steller's Sea-Eagle and White-tailed Eagle are both seen at Rausu. Steller's on the left here, is a much more massive bird. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory..

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 (up to 2 miles per day), mostly on level terrain along roadsides and on wide trails. We may walk in ankle-deep snow or on icy surfaces for short distances (walking sticks recommended, and ice-grippers can be useful in the Japanese Alps).
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We have several significant periods of travel on this tour. Participants should be able to step up (and step down) 10-12 inches to get into and out of our vehicles. Parking lots, roads and tracks can be icy at times so sticks and ice-grippers are recommended.
- **PACE:** After breakfast (usually set for 6:30-7:00 a.m.), we will bird until lunch time. Normally, we bird after lunch or continue traveling to our next destination. We will not have opportunities for afternoon breaks on this tour.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the low 20s to 40s F (−20C to 5 C). Rain showers are likely in the south, where it can also be cold and windy, and snow is likely in the north.
- **ELEVATION:** We reach elevations of up to 2000 feet on this tour but there are no high altitudes involved.

- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** We generally use modern, indoor facilities on this tour.
- **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 (as we do often on this tour).



Itinerary for Winter Japan: Dancing Cranes & Spectacular Sea-Eagles

Days 1-2, Fri-Sat, 10-11 Jan. Departure from the US; arrival in Narita. There are direct flights from many US cities to Narita; our office will be happy to help you with the best schedule from your home city. From the US, you'll cross the international dateline, arriving the afternoon of Day 2 (Jan 11). If you arrive in time, the grounds of our hotel and the nearby Tokko creek channel (just across the main roads, about a mile, exit the Nikko Narita, take first right downhill (100m away), turn left along the path by the motorway (300 m) then use the pedestrian crossing to cross the highway before heading downhill to the creek. It is worth a check for the somewhat tricky Brown-headed Thrush (this is the best place to find it), Bull-headed Shrike, Japanese Wagtail, Warbling (Japanese) White-eye, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. We'll gather for dinner in the lobby of our hotel at about 7pm. Night in Narita.

Day 3, Sun, 12 Jan. The Japanese Alps, with a short walk to the area around Tokko Creek at Narita (after breakfast), then we'll begin the first leg of our tour with a 3–4-hour vehicle (Grand Cabin van) ride from Narita to our hotel

near Karuizawa, a part of the Japanese Alps where we'll spend two nights. The snowy forests here offer our first real taste of birding in Japan. The feeders at a nearby hotel can be a major attraction as we go out in search of Japanese (Green) and Japanese Pygmy woodpeckers, Varied, Japanese (Great), Willow, Coal, and Long-tailed tits, Brown Dipper, Dusky Thrush, Japanese Accentor, Eurasian Jay, Meadow, Yellow-throated, and Black-faced buntings, Asian Rosy-Finch, maybe Long-tailed Rosefinch, Hawfinch, and the comical looking Japanese Grosbeak. We also have a slight chance for Japanese Waxwing (if it is an invasion year, we saw them in 2024), and the elusive Copper Pheasant. **Ice grippers and sticks are recommended here and all snowy areas.** En route we will make a stop at Inbanuma which has become a good wintering area for Baikal Teal recently. Night at Karuizawa.



The Japanese Tit is one of a number of wintering small songbirds that we'll see in the Japanese Alps. This species was recently split from the Great Tit complex. Photograph by participant Gil Ewing.

Day 4, Mon, 13 Jan. Birding the Japanese Alps. We'll have a full day to bird in Karuizawa and the surrounding areas. We'll begin with an early morning walk looking for Copper Pheasant, then visit a nearby river and water impoundment for Smew, Falcated Duck, Japanese Buzzard, perhaps Crested Kingfisher and Long-billed Plover, assorted buntings and with a chance of Green Pheasant as well. Night at Karuizawa.

Day 5, Tue, 14 Jan. Another day around the Karuizawa area, looking for some of the species we may yet want to see such as Copper Pheasant and Japanese Accentor and always hopeful for waxwings and Azure-winged Magpie.

Day 6, Wed, 15 Jan. Hot springs and Snow Monkeys then to Haneda. This morning we'll have the opportunity to view the famous Snow Monkeys (Japanese Macaque), a terrestrial monkey endemic to Japan. In the mornings during the winter, the monkeys descend from the forests where they spend the night to the warm waters of the hot springs. The monkeys are remarkable for the amount of time they spend relaxing in these natural hot-tubs and we'll observe them as they laze about in the snow-surrounded pools. Once we have enjoyed the extraordinary spectacle of the monkeys and wondering how come they don't freeze to death when they emerge. It is just over a kilometre (half a mile +) to walk in to the springs, but they keep the pathway fairly clear from the surrounding deep snow. Ice grippers and sticks are recommended here. After lunch at Enza Café, drive back to Haneda with some stops en route.

Day 7, Thu, 16 Jan. Haneda to Fukuoka. A travel day, with a flight leaving early morning for Fukuoka where we will pick up the van and then bird our way to Miyazaki via the Saga / Higashiyoka coast / Higatayoka Park area. This is good for

shorebirds such as Pied Avocet and Long-billed Dowitcher as well as raptors like Hen Harrier, the rare Saunders's Gull and various small passerines if the season permits. Overnight in Miyazaki. with a boat trip for Japanese Murrelet next morning as long as the weather permits, in which case some local birding in the hills will be possible. Night in Miyazaki.



We'll visit the mouth of the Minami River near Izumi to look for wintering gulls, and hope to find a Saunders's Gull; this is a first-year bird. We've had great views of this rare species on previous tours. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

Days 8-9, Fri-Sat, 17-18 Jan. Miyazaki to Arasaki. We will begin with a 2-hour boat trip for Japanese Murrelet from Miyazaki, then head south to Arasaki via Yatsushiro. These two days should be some of the most memorable of the tour. Hooded and White-naped cranes winter here by the thousands, and Arasaki is a major refuge for both species. The crane flocks can number up to 17,000 birds, one of the largest assemblages of them on Earth. They give tremendous views as they come to feed on fish and grain put out early in the morning, before dispersing out to the fields for the day. Other species of cranes also turn up here, so both Common and Sandhill are a good bet, while Siberian White and Demoiselle are an outside possibility.

The fields hold flocks of wintering wildfowl, thrushes, buntings, and finches, with Chinese Penduline-Tit also a good possibility, as well as the scarce Long-billed Plover and endangered Black-faced Spoonbill. Woodland areas will give us a chance of Eurasian Sparrowhawk and Eastern (Japanese) form of Buzzard, usually now treated as a distinct species, along with Japanese Wagtail, Brown Dipper, and Crested Kingfisher.

We'll be staying in a hotel close to the Crane Centre. We'll visit sites that are wintering grounds for two major East Asian rarities, which are both critically endangered, Black-faced Spoonbill, which feeds along the tidal flats while Saunders's Gulls fly over searching for crabs. We will have a good chance of other birds as well, and a few of these include Eurasian Spoonbill, Japanese Pheasant, Buff-bellied and Red-throated pipits, Siberian Meadow, Chestnut-eared and Rustic buntings, and Daurian Jackdaw. Nights at a business hotel at Izumi (which has very compact rooms!).

Day 10, Sun, 19 Jan. Arasaki to Lake Miike. This morning we'll drive to Lake Miike where Mandarin Duck, White's (Scaly) Thrush, and Gray Bunting are possible, in addition to the elusive Ryukyu Minivet and maybe White-backed Woodpecker. Night at Kagoshima.

Days 11-12, Mon-Tue, 20-21 Jan. Journey to Hokkaido; Rausu area. On the morning of Day 11, we'll fly from Kagoshima to Kushiro with a stop in Haneda. We'll take a quick look at the harbor in Kushiro if time permits in the late afternoon, or visit a Red-crowned Crane sanctuary at Tsurui.

We may start Day 12 (depending on weather) with an early visit to the famous riverine roost site at Otowa Bridge where the cranes emerge out of the morning mists; once we've seen the cranes to our satisfaction, we'll move northwards to Rausu and the Shiretoko Peninsula, checking a Ural Owl site en route and no doubt encountering the amazing Steller's

Sea-Eagle. We stop in Teshikaga for lunch and do some birding by the local park, which is great for Whooper Swans and other wildfowl. Our main object, the huge, magnificent Blakiston's Fish-Owl—arguably the largest owl in the world—is a regular visitor outside the small minshuku at Washi-no-Yado (where we will either stay or have arranged a visit), where the stream and surrounding ponds are kept free of ice and stocked with fish. There are good photo ops here, now from both bedrooms and dining room. Nights in Kushiro (Day 11) and at Rausu (Day 12).

Day 13, Wed, 22 Jan. Rausu area. We'll spend another day in this rich area. Depending on the weather and the state of the ice, we will make an early morning boat trip out to the edge of the pack ice for up-close and personal views of the marvellous Steller's Sea-Eagle, the largest of the family and a truly impressive creature—once seen, never forgotten! The boat crew are experts in throwing out fish for both Steller's and White-tailed Eagle to snatch from the sea, and there can be dozens of them soaring around waiting, so photo ops are fantastic. We'll bird the harbors and bays looking for Whooper Swan, Harlequin Duck, and a variety of alcids before traveling south towards the bleak frozen wetlands of the Notsuke peninsula, where Spectacled Guillemot and Black and Stejneger's scoter are often seen offshore. Night at the wonderful hot-spring onsen of Yoroushi, where there is another chance of Blakiston's Fish-Owl (amazing here in the past 3 years!) and some interesting feeder birds such as the white-headed *caudatus* race of Long-tailed Tit, a dark-eyed race (*brandtii*) of what is currently Eurasian Jay, a Eurasian Nuthatch race *asiatica* with white underparts, the very distinctive *japonicus* taxon of Great-spotted Woodpecker and sometimes Hawfinch, whilst in some years (as in 2017 and 2018) we had a Solitary Snipe feeding in the stream right outside!



A highlight of the tour is the chance to see Blakiston's Fish-Owl, one of the rarest owls in the world. We've had some amazing experiences with these enormous night-birds. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

Day 14, Thu, 23 Jan. Travel to Lake Furen. Lake Furen is a well-known Japanese birding center in the heart of Steller's Sea-Eagle country. Here, we'll find a very different, wild, and snow-covered landscape where we expect to see some of the most spectacular birds of the trip during our two-night stay. Passerines will be very scarce, but Great-spotted Woodpecker, Japanese Pygmy-Woodpecker, Marsh Tit, Eurasian Nuthatch, and Asian Rosy-Finch are likely. Night at a hotel in Nemuro or at Lake Furen Lodge.

Day 15, Fri, 24 Jan. Lake Furen area. Today will be very full and exciting, with trips to Cape Nosappu and Cape Kiritappu as well as local Furen sights, such as sea-eagles gathered around fishing holes cut in the pack ice on the lake. Wildfowl and seabirds come into their own here, and we'll search some of the unfrozen harbors and bays for wintering Harlequin Duck, Common Goldeneye, Long-tailed Duck, Black and Stejneger's scoters, Whooper Swan, and loons. Sea-watching will give us practice with alcids, and we may hope for Common Murre, Spectacled Guillemot, and a chance of

Least and Crested auklets or Pigeon Guillemot, all depending on the year's seabird distribution and the thickness of the ice. It is a good area, too, for northern gulls, with Glaucous, Glaucous-winged, Slaty-backed, and Common (Kamchatka) gulls to be expected. Return to Kushiro overnight.

Day 16, Sat, 25 Jan. Return to Narita; flights home. We'll transfer this morning to the Kushiro airport for a late-morning flight back to Haneda and then Express bus to Narita (45 min). Most flights to the US depart Narita after 4:00 p.m. You will arrive on the same day (January 28), after recovering that lost day by once again crossing the International Date Line—in the opposite direction.

About Your Guides

Phil Gregory was born in the UK and became a birder when the steam engines were scrapped and birding offered a way to travel and look for wonderful things. The quest for birds has led to many forays in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific. He and his wife, Sue, worked as teachers for eight years in Nigeria and Zambia, and for seven years in Papua New Guinea. Since 1997 they have lived in Australia.

Phil's major interests are field identification, vocalizations, and the geographic distribution of birds. He has contributed to various reference books including *The Handbook of Birds of the World* and has now written 3 books: *The Lynx Field Guide to the Birds of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago (2017)*, *A Field Guide to the Birds of North Queensland (with photos by Jun Matsui, new edition 2024)* and a family monograph on *Birds of Paradise and Bowerbirds (2020)*. He also published and now maintains three on-line checklists, for Australia and its island territories, New Guinea and associated islands and the Solomon Islands.

Phil and his wife, Sue sold the well-known Cassowary House at Kuranda, near Cairns in far north Queensland in early 2020, and have relocated to a rainforest property near Malanda on the Atherton Tablelands, which they share with two large dogs and with 2 grandchildren nearby. Look for Phil guiding Field Guides tours to Japan, Taiwan, Cambodia, Ghana, Mongolia and Madagascar.

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

Jun Matsui has had a lifetime interest in wildlife. He started guiding in 1993 when he worked as a volunteer ranger at the Hikarigoaka nature park in Tokyo. After working for the Japanese Environment Agency where he collected and managed data and at several reserves where he was involved in setting up environmental education projects and guiding, he decided in 1999 to move to Australia. He spent a year traveling around the country and volunteering at various birding hotspots (including Broome Bird Observatory), and then he settled in the tropical Far North Queensland town of Cairns and took a job as a specialist bird tour guide for inbound Japanese groups.

Jun is a keen photographer and has been involved in several bird publications. He is the author of the very popular Japanese language *A Photographic Guide to the Wildlife of the Cairns Region* and has just published the second edition of a photo *Field Guide to North Queensland Birds* with Phil Gregory. He joined Sicklebill Safaris in 2007 and has been working with them ever since, with Japan tours his specialty, of course.

Financial Information

FEE: \$9250 from Narita (does not include flights within Japan; see note below)

DEPOSIT: \$925 per person

INTERNAL FLIGHTS: \$950 USD (as of May, 2024; subject to change)

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: July 14, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$625 (If we have too many singles we may have to double up at Lake Furen and Washi-no-Yado)

LIMIT: 7

“Phil's tours are among our favorites. And we enjoyed traveling with his assistant guide/driver, Jun, who was beyond patient when it came to explaining what we were eating, etiquette, and the like.”
B. S.; Winter Japan

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

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations are generally good on this tour. Most hotels will be western-style, but a few will be Japanese-style with Japanese-style bathhouses (see cultural etiquette below). Futons make a great warm, firm base on which to sleep, and you simply pile quilts up on top to make a really comfortable nocturnal nest. Some places may get you to make up your own futon and quilts, and these are simply folded up and put away in a cupboard next day (as at Washi-no-Yado). Some shared rooms may be necessary in Hokkaido, sleeping on platforms or tatami rush matting floors. We try to ensure en suite where possible.

CULTURAL ETIQUETTE: Some of the accommodations will have Japanese-style bathhouses. If you use the onsen (hot spring facilities), you need to shower beforehand just outside the hot spring baths, and stack your clothes in the lockers there. Footwear is removed before going into Japanese houses and non-western style hotels. There will be an array of slippers available to wear, but as our feet tend to be larger than the average in Japan, we advise packing a light pair of slippers of your own.

Toilets are usually western-style, and the Japanese lead the world in toilet technology, with such things as in-built bidets, piped relaxing music, and warmed seats, which can be very handy when freezing in Hokkaido!

Bowing is a traditional way of greeting, and you may respond with a similar bow, but a smile and handshake will not cause offence. Bows are part of the service in many places. Blowing your nose in public is also taboo, and gauze masks are common in many places to avoid catching colds or infecting others. Covid protocols in 2023 included social distancing, wearing masks and using plastic disposable gloves when collecting food at buffets.

DOCUMENTS: US citizens will need a current passport to enter Japan. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Japanese consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Field Guides is a full-service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.

LUGGAGE: Please 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. Packing compactly also greatly helps luggage placing in the vehicle.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$9250 for one person in double occupancy from Narita. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 15, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through lunch on Day 16, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leader(s).

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

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$625. (If we have too many singles we may have to double up Washi-no-Yado) If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$925** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by July 14, 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.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

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

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

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

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

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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