

ITINERARY
MEXICO: OAXACA'S ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC SLOPES
March 9 - 20, 2024



Orange-breasted Bunting is one of the many specialty birds we will search for along the Pacific Coast of Oaxaca. These beauties are restricted to the Pacific slope of Mexico. Photograph by guide Dan Lane.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Mexico: Oaxaca's Atlantic and Pacific Slopes 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, flight 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

Oaxaca sits at the juncture of two distinct biogeographic realms--the Pacific and Atlantic (Gulf) Slopes. Combine this with its rugged, mountainous topography and you get *the* most biodiverse state in all of Mexico. From hot cactus deserts to chilly conifer-cloaked ridgetops and bromeliad-laden cloudforests, and from thorny coastal scrublands to lush lowland rainforests on ancient limestone ledges, Oaxaca boasts a staggering number of habitats that translates to an impressive number of birds, many of which are found nowhere else. On our venerable Oaxaca Valley tour, we explore the numerous habitats surrounding Oaxaca City. If you've taken that tour, or plan to take it at some point (and you absolutely should!), here's an opportunity to experience even more of Oaxaca!

For this new tour, we'll start in Oaxaca City and head south into the mountains (the Sierra Madre del Sur) in search of White-throated Jay, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, and Red-headed Tanager near the picturesque town of San Jose del

Pacifico. We'll then bird our way down the winding highway to Huatulco, searching the cloudforest for Blue-capped Hummingbird, Gray-crowned Woodpecker, and Wagler's Toucanet (the Pacific form of Emerald Toucanet, which many authorities consider a separate species). We'll spend several days birding the dry coastal forest in Parque Nacional Huatulco, where we'll have the chance to see the flashy Red-breasted Chat, Flammulated Flycatcher (which looks like a miniature *Myiarchus*), Citreoline Trogon, Spot-breasted Oriole, Orange-fronted Parakeet, Orange-breasted Bunting, Colima Pygmy Owl and Lesser Ground-Cuckoo. A night excursion here could yield Mottled Owl, Pacific Screech-Owl, and maybe a Northern Potoo! If the weather allows, we'll do a morning boat trip off the coast of Huatulco. Here, thanks to a subduction zone, the sea floor plunges to more than 3,000 feet deep just a few miles offshore, so birds and marine mammals that occur in the pelagic zone can be seen within a relatively short boat ride. We may see a number of shearwaters including Galapagos, Wedge-tailed, and Pink-footed, both Black and Least storm-petrels, and any of the three jaegers. Humpback Whales and Spinner and Spotted dolphins are generally the most common marine mammals in these waters, and local biologists have recorded 21 species of whales and dolphins over the years, so who knows what else might show up? Yellow-bellied Sea Snake and Green Sea Turtle are also very good possibilities.

From Huatulco, we'll drive the coastal highway to Tehuantepec, land of the stunning Rosita's Bunting and Sumichrast's Sparrow. We'll scope the coastal wetlands for waterbirds and bird the thornscrub before crossing the isthmus over to Valle Nacional, where we'll spend the next few days. The limestone outcroppings in this area are home to the unusual Sumichrast's Wren, another bird named in honor of the Swiss-Mexican ornithologist who spent a considerable time in Oaxaca in the late 1800s. During our exploration of the Atlantic cloudforest, we'll keep our eyes peeled for goodies like White-naped Brushfinch, Slate-colored Solitaire (check out a recording of that bird!), Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, and Unicolored Jay.

These are just a few of the nifty birds we hope to find--the actual list of potential species is almost mind-boggling! All this, combined with Oaxaca's famously delicious cuisine, vibrant culture, and breathtaking landscapes, is sure to make this a delightful getaway. So, dust off your binoculars, pack your sense of adventure, and prepare for 12 days of outstanding Oaxacan birding!



Slate-colored Solitaire is a resident of the cloud-forests from southern Mexico to Nicaragua. Although they are widespread, they have an amazing song that is well-worth seeking out. Photograph by participant Steve Parrish.

*This tour may be combined with **MEXICO: OAXACA VALLEY I 2024, March 2 - 9, 2024.***

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (1-3 miles in morning, 1-2 miles in afternoon), mostly on roads or packed dirt trails. Some instances we will need to hike up some steep, and possibly slippery, trails with loose rocks and gravel. Our cabins at San Jose del Pacifico are situated along a very steep, brick walkway. We will assist you with bags if necessary.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We will likely stand for long periods to observe flocks of birds in the heat and humidity. On our boat trip we may experience rough water so, if you are prone to sea sickness, plan accordingly.
- **PACE:** Early starts (5:30 a.m. breakfast) followed by birding until lunch, which is sometimes a picnic. In the afternoons, we will bird or take in cultural attractions. On most days, we will be away from the hotel for the entire day. There will be a few optional nighttime excursions to look for birds, but we will return to the lodge by about 10:30 p.m.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures range from the low 40s in the early morning in the higher elevations of mountains to the mid-90s F in the lower elevations with high humidity. Rain is certainly a possibility.
- **ELEVATION:** In the mountains, we reach almost 10,000 feet; however, much of the tour will be closer to sealevel.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms but, on most days, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature. And, yes, the boat does have a bathroom.
- **OPTING OUT:** We will be on the go for much of the tour moving from town to town, so there will be few opportunities to opt out. Those who would like to opt out of the boat trip can spend the morning around the hotel in Huatulco.

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



About the Birding Areas

San Jose del Pacifico is a picturesque town at 8,000 feet nestled within the Sierra Madre del Sur (aka Sierra Miahuatlan). The town is famous for its hallucinogenic mushrooms, which you are more than welcome to try when you're not on a Field Guides tour! The forest surrounding the town is a mix of pine and oaks and some of the birds that can be seen in the vicinity include the elusive White-throated Jay, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, Long-tailed Wood-Partridge, and Garnet-throated Hummingbird. There are numerous side roads around town, some of which are quite steep.

La Soledad and Pluma Hidalgo are two small villages whose main export is coffee. Bromeliad-laden cloud forest grows at this elevation (5,000 feet), which is habitat for numerous species including the endemic Blue-capped Hummingbird, Wagler's (Emerald) Toucanet, Collared Trogon, White-faced Quail-Dove, Mexican Hermit, Eared Poorwill, Gray-crowned Woodpecker and Fan-tailed Warbler.

Huatulco sits right on the Pacific Coast. The forest that grows here is a short-stature deciduous thorn scrub. Parque Nacional Huatulco is a 29,400-hectare reserve just outside of town with a system of trails and boardwalks. Some of the birds in this area include Colima Pygmy Owl, Citreoline Trogon, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, Red-breasted Chat, Flammulated Flycatcher and Olive Sparrow.

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec is the narrowest stretch in Mexico from the Pacific to the Atlantic. This 200-km strip of low-elevation habitat is an important biogeographic break and there are numerous examples of species turnover from the mountains in Oaxaca and the mountains of Chiapas. This low-lying region is also the windiest part of Mexico, where trade winds from the Gulf of Mexico get funneled between the two mountain ranges. Consequently, numerous energy companies have installed wind turbines, which unfortunately kill thousands of birds each year especially during migration. Rosita's Bunting and Cinnamon-tailed Sparrow are our two main target birds in this part of Oaxaca.



Cinnamon-tailed Sparrow was formerly called Sumichrast's Sparrow. This endemic is found in the lowlands of the Pacific Slope. Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.

The town of **Tuxtepec** sits right at the foothills of the Sierra Madre Oriental and is surrounded by giant limestone ridges, home to the endemic Sumichrast's Wren. Here we have access to lowland tropical forest as well as the cloud forest up in the mountains. The lowlands here have been cleared for agriculture except where the karst limestone makes this impossible (lucky for the wren!), and Gulf coast forest birds hang on in these patches. Things we'll keep an eye out for include Collared Trogon, Keel-billed Toucan, Emerald Toucanet (this is the nominate form, different from Wagler's on the Pacific slope), and a whole host of tanagers, brushfinches, flycatchers, the northernmost spinetail, and even an antbird or two! We will also visit several elevations of the Sierra Madre Oriental here to look for more montane species, ranging from Azure-hooded and Unicolored jays to Slate-colored Solitaire (perhaps the most beautiful bird song in the world?), Common Chlorospingus, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Bumblebee and Emerald-chinned hummingbirds, among others. Higher up, we will be back in pine-oak forest similar to San Jose del Pacifico, but with a few different species (Dwarf Jay instead of White-throated, for example).



*The tiny Bumblebee Hummingbird can be found on both slopes of Oaxaca, in the pine-oak forests.
Photograph by guide Dan Lane.*

Itinerary for Mexico: Oaxaca's Atlantic and Pacific Slopes

Day 1, Sat, 9 Mar. Arrival in Oaxaca (or continue from the Mexico: Oaxaca Valley I 2024 Tour). Upon arrival into Oaxaca City, you'll be met at the airport by our local driver (who should be carrying a sign with your name and "Field Guides" on it) and transferred directly to our hotel. The ride from the airport to our hotel can take about 45 minutes. We'll get together in the hotel lobby at **7:00 p.m.** for a short get-acquainted session; then, we'll head to dinner, where we'll discuss our plans for the tour. Night in Oaxaca City.

Day 2, Sun, 10 Mar. Drive to San Jose del Pacifico. After breakfast at the hotel, we'll drive to the town of San Jose del Pacifico. We'll check into our cabins, have lunch and spend the afternoon birding the high elevation pine/oak forest around town. Some of the species we'll keep an eye out for include Hooded Yellowthroat, Mountain Trogon, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, and Red Warbler. Night at San Jose del Pacifico.

Day 3, Mon, 11 Mar. Birding around San Jose del Pacifico. We'll have breakfast and bird the grounds of our lodge and on nearby sideroads in the highland pine-oak forests looking for Bumblebee and Garnet-throated Hummingbirds, mixed warbler flocks, Black-headed Siskins, and the elusive White-throated Jay. Night at San Jose del Pacifico.

Day 4, Tue, 12 Mar. Birding around Pluma Hidalgo. After breakfast, we will pack up and descend into the mid-elevations of the Pacific slope, stopping on a side road that enters a nice patch of the more humid tropical forest near Pluma Hidalgo. The road down is very windy so if you are prone to motion sickness, plan accordingly. Some of our main targets will be the endemic Blue-capped Hummingbird, and "Wagler's" Emerald Toucanet, Fan-tailed Warbler, Red-headed Tanager and many of the other specialties of this humid habitat. We'll have a picnic lunch and continue birding another side road that visits similar habitat on the other side of the highway at a site called "La Soledad." Finally, the late afternoon will see us heading down to the coast, arriving at our hotel in the resort town of Huatulco. Night in Huatulco.

Day 5, Wed, 13 Mar. Boat trip out of Huatulco; birding Parque Nacional Huatulco. After breakfast at the hotel, we'll board the boat and spend the morning out on the water. We won't need to venture far to see numerous pelagic species, likely including Wedge-tailed, Pink-footed, Galapagos, and Black-vented shearwaters, a few boobies, Magnificent Frigatebird, and others. We'll return to Huatulco for lunch, then spend the afternoon at Parque Nacional Huatulco looking for Red-breasted Chat, Flammulated Flycatcher, Colima Pygmy-Owl, and Citreoline Trogon, and then after dusk we'll turn our attention to Pacific Screech-Owl, Mottled Owl, Buff-collared Nightjar, and Northern Potoo. Night in Huatulco.

Day 6 Thu, 14 Mar. Birding PN Huatulco and drive to Tehuantepec. We'll spend a couple hours birding around Huatulco in search of more dry forest species like Lilac-crowned Parrot, Lesser Ground-cuckoo, Russet-crowned Motmot and the "Long-crested" form of Northern Cardinal before driving the coastal road south to Tehuantepec. After checking into our hotel, we'll bird Laguna Superior for shorebirds and waders. Night in Tehuantepec.

Day 7 Fri, 15 Mar. Birding around Tehuantepec; drive to Tuxtepec. After an early breakfast we'll drive to a site about 40 minutes from Tehuantepec to look for Rose-breasted (or Rosita's) Bunting and Cinnamon-tailed (or Sumichrast's) Sparrow. We will then do lunch in Juchitan and continue the long drive to Tuxtepec. Night in Tuxtepec.

Days 8-10 Sat-Mon, 16-18 Mar. Birding around Tuxtepec and Valle Nacional. We'll have two full days to bird the Gulf slope lowlands and foothills around Tuxtepec and Valle Nacional. One morning we'll dedicate to looking for the mysterious Sumichrast's Wren, denizen of limestone outcrops that are draped with forest. This site is also home to a huge diversity of other low-elevation species such as Lesson's Motmot, Mayan Antthrush, various woodcreepers, flycatchers, Black-faced Grosbeak, Blue Bunting, and an impressive diversity of wintering warblers. We shouldn't be lacking for things to look at! Another morning we'll drive up into the cloud forest to look for White-naped Brushfinch, Unicolored and Azure-naped jays, and Blue-crowned Chlorophonia, among many other residents of the lovely humid cloud forest. The aural experience may be one of the trip's highlights, with the ethereal songs of Slate-colored Solitaires, Ruddy-capped and Black-headed nightingale-thrushes forming a memorable background. Nights in Tuxtepec.



The Northern Bentbill is a small flycatcher that reaches its northern limits in northern Oaxaca and Veracruz. We've had great views of these birds on our tour. Photograph by guide Micah Riegner.

Day 11 Tue, 19 Mar. Drive back to Oaxaca City. We'll pack up today and head upslope on the highway that returns to Oaxaca City, stopping to bird the higher cloud forest along the way, in part to clean up any targets we haven't already seen. The Gulf slope Emerald Toucanet (quite distinct in appearance from the Wagler's form we should have seen on the Pacific slope), Emerald-chinned and Azure-crowned hummingbirds, Amethyst-throated Mountain-Gem, Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Unicolored Jay, Crested Guan, and White-faced Quail-Dove will be among our targets as we scale the dramatically forested slopes here. We will have our final lunch in a quaint restaurant along the highway that we have come to know well as we head back to Oaxaca City. Night in Oaxaca City.

Day 12 Wed, 20 Mar. Departure for home. You may schedule your departure for any time today; we will provide transportation to the airport based on departure times. ¡Que les vaya bien!

About Your Guides

Dan Lane was barely out of diapers when his love for birds manifested itself. He was an active birder in his home state of New Jersey until he moved to Louisiana to pursue a master's studying Neotropical birds at Louisiana State University. By 1999, he'd received his degree and participated in three LSU expeditions to Peru and Ecuador, discovering a new species of bird (Scarlet-banded Barbet) along the way. His increasing experience with the Peruvian avifauna, coupled with having the luck of being "in the right place at the right time," landed Dan coauthorship on the recently published *Birds of Peru*—alongside his childhood heroes Ted Parker and John O'Neill. Meanwhile, his continuing fieldwork has resulted in uncovering additional new species to science (although writing these up, sadly, takes far more time than finding the birds, and Dan's way behind schedule).

Dan's interests in birds also include illustration, bird vocalizations, and bird biogeography and evolution. He's pleased to share his knowledge with participants on tours and loves birding with folks who are really enthusiastic about seeing BIRDS! Working with Field Guides is a blast and Dan thoroughly enjoys the friendship and fun the Field Guides family provides. His favorite areas are largely in tropical Latin America, but on occasion he has led tours to other corners of the globe and of course (somewhat) regularly birds near his home in Louisiana.

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

Micah guided tours with Bret Whitney, John Coons, Dan Lane, and Tom Johnson before joining Field Guides full time in 2019.

Micah is a generous guide with an easy laugh and is eager to share his love of birds and nature in the years to come. We know you will have a great time traveling with him, too!

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$4200 from Oaxaca

DEPOSIT: \$425 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: September 11, 2023

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional*): \$550

LIMIT: 14

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.

"Dan Lane is superior in all aspects as a guide—excellent recognition of bird sounds, patient in drawing birds in for views, able to relate to group members with relaxed courtesy and helpfulness. We rate Field Guides the highest." J.N. & E.H., Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge

"Micah Riegner was outstanding. He seemed to get on every bird out there for the hard-core birders, while also sharing his expertise about natural history and ecology in general. He had a good sense of timing for getting everyone smoothly through the long days, and he did it with good humor and energy. Kudos to Micah!" S.J. ; Arizona's Second Spring

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The tour manager for 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 contact her!

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

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

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$4200** for one person in double occupancy from Oaxaca City. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 11, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 11, all ground transportation including airport transfers, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Oaxaca City, airport taxes, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, breakfast on Day 12, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$550**. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

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

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact 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 \$425** 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 September 11, 2023**. **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 within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 90 to 179 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

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

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

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

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

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the 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 when 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.

NCP 7/2020

9/21 MR and DL

11/21 NC; 12/21peg; 9/22NC

MR 3/22/23; 7/23NC; 8/23peg