

ITINERARY  
**PANAMA'S CANOPY TOWER**  
*February 4-February 10, 2023*



*The colorful Ocellated Antbird is an obligate follower of ant-swarms, so we'll keep watch for one of these amazing spectacles, and hope to see this lovely bird, and many other fascinating attendants. Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.*

*We include here information for those interested in the 2023 Field Guides Panama's Canopy Tower 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*

**L**ong famous as the pathway between two oceans, the Isthmus of Panama is ecologically more important as the pathway between two vast continents. With forested mountains in east and west separated by the central lowlands, Panama constitutes both a land bridge for many species and a biogeographic barrier for others. Consequently, it is a rich mixing ground for various elements of the avifaunas of North and South America. Panama hosts more than 970 species of birds, and this short tour to the Canopy Tower, the *birder's* wonder of lowland Panama (we will, of course, visit the Canal), is designed as your pathway to about one-third of them.

One of the highlights of this tour, even for veteran Neotropical birders, is as likely to be the rewards of *becoming* a canopy-dweller, as it is the intimate views you will be able to get of a becoming assortment of feathered canopy-dwellers—from electric Blue Cotingas and Green Shrike-Vireos to splendid Black-headed Tody-Flycatchers, Brown-capped Tyrannulets, Fasciated Antshrikes, Scarlet Tanager, or a kettle of Mississippi Kites. Our exhilarating site for the week will be the remarkable, award-winning Canopy Tower, a former radar installation located at the top of Semaphore Hill that has been transformed into a marvelous birding facility.

Here our host for the week will be Raúl Arias de Para, the Panamanian conservationist who owns the Canopy Tower and who conceived its felicitous transformation. The hospitality and food are exceptional, and the library is notably replete with natural history volumes. All you will need to bring along is your copy of Angehr & Dean's *Birds of Panama: A Field Guide*, an excellent field guide that makes preparing for your trip all the more pleasurable. All six nights will be spent at the Tower, and there is no need to fight the Panama City traffic in order to visit most of the birding spots.

If you've never birded the American tropics, you'll find that little is quite as exciting as coming upon your first army ant swarm, attended—sometimes feverishly—by Ocellated, Bicolored, and Spotted antbirds, Plain-brown, Northern Barred-, Cocoa, and Black-striped woodcreepers, and Gray-headed Tanager; or a *Cecropia* tree full of frugivorous birds from Keel-billed and Yellow-throated (formerly Chestnut-mandibled) toucans to Red-capped and Blue-crowned manakins; and lethargic species like trogons, puffbirds, and motmots that sit almost motionless, seemingly content to watch forest life go by.



*The Green Shrike-Vireo is found from southern Mexico to Panama, but it can be difficult to see in the green canopy. We have seen them well from the Canopy Tower. Photograph by participant François Grenon.*

When not enjoying raptors from the deck level or mesmerized by the hummingbird feeders at ground level, or taking a look out over the canopy at the observation tower of the new Discovery Center near the beginning of the justly famous Pipeline Road, we'll make day trips from our canopy perch along the Continental Divide out Pipeline Road on the Caribbean slope in hopes of seeing Streak-chested Antpitta, Pheasant Cuckoo, Black-tailed Trogon, and with luck a raiding army ant swarm being attended by some fascinating antbirds; or to the rich, semi-deciduous forest of Metropolitan Nature Park on the Pacific slope, home of Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Lance-tailed Manakin, and Rufous-and-white Wren as well as Yellow-green Tyrannulet, a Panamanian endemic.

Our tour is *limited to eight participants* in order to eliminate the confusion that sometimes ensues with a large group at the Canopy Tower. This way we are ensured of riding in the same Canopy vehicle when we travel to and from birding sites and of having a *better participant-to-ornithologist/guide ratio* in the field and at meals; this is especially valuable on our night drive in the Rainfomobile when everyone is able to be in the same open-air vehicle with the guide who is using the spotlight. As with all Canopy birding groups, ours are accompanied by a *local Tower guide* who has the most up-to-date knowledge of the area and is excellent at finding birds and quickly putting them in the spotting scope for everyone to see. In a small group, our Field Guides leader can more effectively impart a wealth of knowledge that is otherwise difficult to get from local guides who have not had the breadth and depth of Neotropical experience that characterizes all our

Panama guides. And both guides have fewer folks to satisfy with scope views. It is more expensive for us to operate small groups to the Canopy Tower, and so our fee is somewhat higher than most of our competitors. However, based on the response from our clients—who remark on the pleasure they take in learning so much about what they encounter—this intimacy and expertise are well worth a slight premium.



*Rosy Thrush-Tanager is an understory species that can be difficult, but we've had success on previous tours.  
Photograph by guide Chris Benesh.*

**All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which, for tours departing on or after March 1, 2022, includes a booster).** Having a vaccinated group will greatly diminish but not eliminate the possibility of the group and individual participants being adversely affected by COVID-19. **We are requiring all of our staff guides to be vaccinated, including getting the booster.** Note too, that many travel destinations are or soon will be requiring proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may become a requirement for some travel destinations if they choose to declare that vaccinations do not last indefinitely. And having a booster means your risk is lowered and your travel plans and those of our group are less likely to be disrupted.

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

### Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (1-2 miles in morning, 1-2 miles in afternoon), mostly on roads or wide dirt trails. Several walks require going up and down a moderate grade for a short distance.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We will likely stand for long periods to observe flocks of birds. Participants will need to be able to climb in and out of safari-style trucks via secure fold-down ladders. Guest rooms at the Canopy Tower are on the second and third levels, the dining room on the fourth level, and the observation deck one further level up. There is no elevator, so participants should be able to manage these flights of wide, sturdy stairs. We will visit the Discovery Center Tower as well which involves climbing a sturdy circular stairway going up about 100 feet to the top of the tower.

- **PACE:** Early starts (5:30-6:00 a.m. breakfasts) followed by birding until lunch. On some days, there is a break after lunch and optional afternoon birding. On one day, we'll spend the entire day on Pipeline Road and take a picnic lunch with us. There will be at least one nighttime excursion after dinner to look for birds and mammals, this usually lasts 1 to 1 ½ hours depending on our luck.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures range from the low 60s in the early morning to the mid-90s F later in the day. Rain is a possibility, and the climate is humid.
- **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 occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** As we stay in the same lodging throughout this tour, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day.

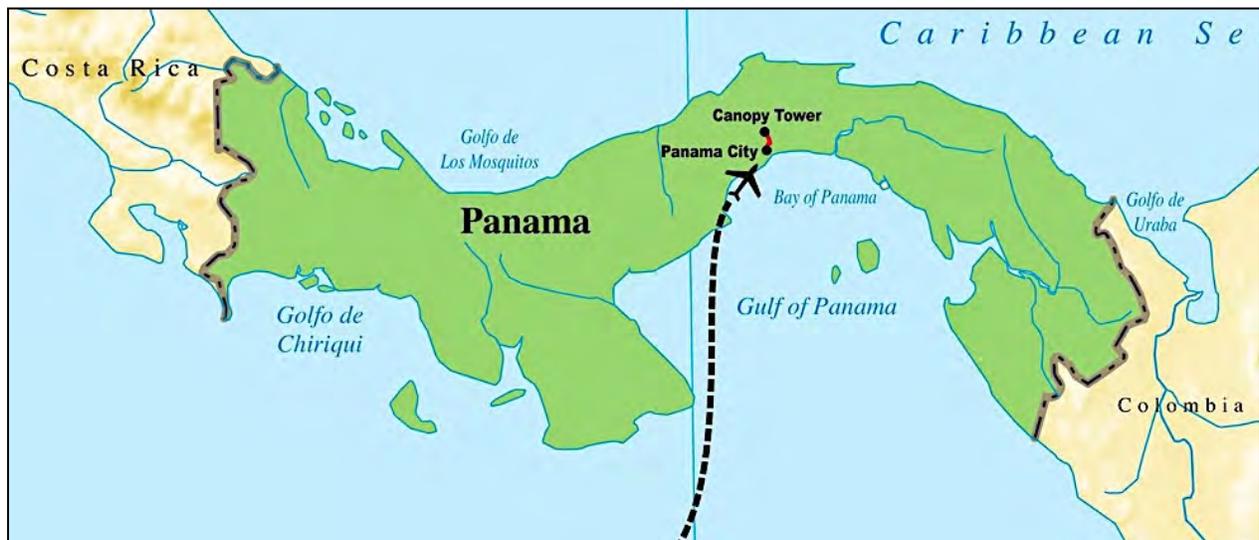
**Other considerations:** The acoustics of the Tower are magnificent, one might say (to put the best face on it). The alert reader will recognize the silent meaning embedded here: if you are a light sleeper, you may want to use earplugs (now provided by the Tower) since birders come and go at different hours, occasionally while you are trying to sleep!

As is customary on most of our tours, we will use playback, sensitively, with the aim of bringing into view otherwise difficult-to-see species—for example, furtive species, canopy species, nightbirds—or flock-leaders whose response will often attract a number of species at once. Often our local guides will imitate vocalizations to the same purpose.

Our main purpose is for all to see well and enjoy a rich diversity of species, but emphasis will be given to indigenous birds special to Panama and to learning about representative groups of Neotropical birds rather than rarities to Panama. In this sense, this manageable tour makes an excellent introduction to the American tropics.

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 one of the guides.

## About the Birding Areas



**Central Lowlands**—Originally constructed for the laying and maintenance of oil and gas pipelines that span the isthmus, Pipeline Road transects what is probably the wildest forested area within the former Canal Zone. From its beginning near Gamboa, just north of the continental divide, Pipeline snakes through forested hills with clear-flowing streams for more than thirty kilometers, eventually to dead end in Gatun Lake. Only here, within the former Zone, is Jaguar reputed still to wander. Recognized as important in protecting the Canal watershed, the area transected by Pipeline has been designated by Panama as Parque Nacional Soberanía. Because the road is little traveled except by other naturalists or research scientists, walking various stretches of Pipeline is the ideal way to bird it. In addition, the Canopy Tower, where we will spend all six nights, puts us practically at the beginning of Pipeline Road and holds in itself—around the base of

Semaphore Hill—a wealth of possibilities. As a consequence, we do not have the long drives from the city. Our staying in the Tower and our visiting the observation tower at the Discovery Center will virtually assure us of seeing the dazzling Blue Cotinga, often feeding in the trees at eye-level!

We'll start early and have at least two full mornings, and perhaps more, to bird Pipeline. When the first sunlight floods the tall trees, parrots, toucans, and puffbirds sit up, and hummingbirds start to feed. A single flowering tree could attract Crowned Woodnymph, Snowy-bellied (the endemic, nominate subspecies), Blue-chested, and Violet-bellied hummingbirds, or a White-vented Plumeleteer. Red-capped Manakins and Blue Dacnis are often found feeding at the same fruiting tree, which may also attract aracarís, trogons, and Bright-rumped Attila. One never knows what surprises are waiting around the next bend: perhaps a perched Ornate Hawk-Eagle, a Plumbeous Hawk, a troop of Coatis, or a mixed-species foraging flock, with antwrens, Spot-crowned Antwren, woodcreepers, and a xenops. What we would most like to find along Pipeline is a large, active army ant swarm, for the phenomenon of army ant followers is one of the most fascinating of tropical ecology. A number of species of birds feed primarily on insects disturbed by army ant raids. Some, considered obligate army ant followers, are rarely seen away from ant swarms, even when feeding young! One such species in Panama is the Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo, a terrestrial, bronze-and-green cuckoo with an enormous bill which it snaps, Roadrunner-like, as it forages for lizards and large insects in the path of the swarming ants. While we might not encounter such a prize on Pipeline, our chances for finding at least a small swarm are good. And even a small swarm can be very impressive, with attendant antbirds and woodcreepers seemingly tame, so preoccupied are they with foraging. The most characteristic army ant followers of the Panama lowlands are Northern Barred- and Plain-brown woodcreepers, Bicolored, Spotted, and Ocellated antbirds, and Gray-headed Tanager. Sometimes a Barred Forest-Falcon will make regular visits to a swarm, perhaps not only for large insects, but for an occasional unwary bird.



*Keel-billed Toucan is one of the iconic tropical species we'll see from the top of the Canopy Tower.  
Photograph by participant Paul Thomas.*

## Itinerary for Panama's Canopy Tower

**Day 1, Sat, 4 Feb. Arrival.** If you are joining the tour from home, you should plan to arrive into Tocumen, Panama's International Airport, no later than 8:00 p.m. this evening. You'll be met at the airport and transferred to the Canopy Tower, about forty minutes to one hour away, depending on traffic. All nights will be spent away from Panama City in the forest at the Canopy Tower!

**Day 2, Sun, 5 Feb. Canopy Tower and Semaphore Hill.** Before a delicious breakfast beside singing Red-ored Parrots or croaking Keel-billed Toucans, the early morning will be spent enjoying birding the canopy from the Tower. We hope to

see adult male Blue Cotingas sitting up or feeding in nearby trees as well as a lovely Gartered Trogon. As the morning unfolds, we should see raptors lifting out of the forest, catching the thermals as the day begins to heat up. And, we should be able to see that always-pesky Green Shrike-Vireo.

Then, it's down from the Tower for a stroll down Semaphore Hill in the richness of lowland rainforest. Along the way we will be looking for manakins, motmots, puffbirds, Great Jacamar, and mixed-species flocks, to mention a few. After lunch and some time off, we'll visit a nearby marsh for numerous other species, particularly those habitués of more open country and edge.

**Day 3, Mon, 6 Feb. Pipeline Road.** We'll devote this morning to an introduction to the legendary Pipeline Road. We'll start with a visit to the hummingbird feeders and the observation tower at the new Discovery Center situated only about two kilometers out the road. When it starts to warm up, we'll head back down to the cover of the forest. Among the many possible species on this rich, largely untraveled road are five trogons, including Black-tailed and Black-throated; three motmots; White-necked, Black-breasted, Pied, and White-whiskered puffbirds; Keel-billed and Yellow-throated (Chestnut-mandibled) toucans; Cinnamon Woodpecker; Black-crowned Antshrike and Spot-crowned Antwren; Spotted and Dusky antbirds; Golden-crowned Spadebill; Brownish (Twistwing) and Royal flycatchers; Cinnamon Becard; Blue-crowned and Golden-collared manakins; Bay and Black-bellied wrens; and Fulvous-vented Euphonia. We hope to encounter an army ant swarm somewhere along the way. Watch out! This is when it gets good.

After lunch at the Tower and some time off, we'll bird part of the Old Gamboa Road and Summit Pond, where the possibilities include Boat-billed Heron (often nesting there), American Pygmy, Green, and Amazon kingfishers, Jet Antbird, and possibly a day-roosting Spectacled Owl, as well as other species.



*The large Spectacled Owl is one of a number of nocturnal species we'll try for on at least one night.  
Photograph by participant Bruce Palmer.*

**Day 4, Tue, 7 Feb. Metropolitan Nature Park.** Morning will find us visiting the best city park in Panama, if not the best in Central America. Here Pacific slope species make their home among the expanse of dry understory and scattered canopy. Species we'll be searching for include Lance-tailed Manakin, Rufous-and-white Wren, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Golden-fronted and Scrub greenlets, Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrants, and Yellow-green Tyrannulet, one of Panama's ten endemic birds.

After returning to the Tower for lunch and some time off, we'll visit Miraflores Locks to observe the Canal in operation. An optional owling trip after dinner down Semaphore Hill may yield a Mottled, Crested, or Spectacled owl or a Great or Common potoo. We may also see Kinkajou, Olingo, a sloth or two, Night Monkey, and other nocturnal mammals.

**Day 5, Wed, 8 Feb. Pipeline Road.** We'll spend what is sure to be a wonderful morning on Pipeline Road, taking a picnic lunch with us from the Tower and managing to get farther out than we did on our day of introduction. This will enable us to pursue birds more frequently encountered in the low foothills, like Brown-hooded Parrot, Pheasant Cuckoo, Carmiol's (Olive) and Tawny-crested tanagers, some exciting raptors, a raiding army ant swarm, Streak-chested Antpitta, and perhaps a Rufous-vented Ground-Cuckoo! It will be one of the most exciting days of the trip.

**Day 6, Thu, 9 Feb. Canopy Tower, Pipeline Road.** On this, our last morning, we will remain flexible. We may wish to visit Pipeline Road once more to focus on species we've missed or check out the Old Gamboa Road a bit further. We'll return to the Tower for a nice lunch, after which we will visit an area dictated by our wishes and needs, perhaps the road down Semaphore Hill, the Ammo Dump Pond, or Gatun Lake.

**Day 7, Fri, 10 Feb. Departure.** After an early breakfast at the Tower (for those who have mid-morning or later flights), we'll transfer to the Panama International Airport for our flights home. For those being picked up before dawn for an early morning flight, we will have said our farewells after dinner the previous night! *Buen viaje!*

## About Your Guide

**Chris Benesh** grew up studying natural history in California, where he was inspired by his father to take up birding as a teenager. After earning a degree in zoology from UC Santa Barbara in 1987, Chris moved to Austin to join the Field Guides staff. Since then, his life has undergone a wonderful transformation. The intervening years at Field Guides have taken him to many corners of the world and across both the Arctic and Antarctic circles! Chris takes an interest in nearly anything that flies, and you might catch him sneaking a peak at a passing aircraft, or stopping to examine a butterfly or odonate. You might also notice him getting especially excited at the sighting of a rare or wonderful mammal (heck, he can get excited about a squirrel).

Chris's passion for education has led to his serving on the Arizona Bird Committee, leading the occasional workshop, presenting at birding conventions, and—we must add—thoroughly explaining in admirable detail the nuances of flycatchers to tour participants and colleagues alike. These days, a lot of his “down time” is spent at home in Tucson watching his two wonderful kids, Sean and Linnea, grow.

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

*“I would travel with **Chris Benesh** anywhere, any time. He is calm, pleasant, and good-humored. He is not only brilliant at finding and spotting birds, but equally brilliant at ensuring that every member of the group gets a great look at the bird...” B.M., Arizona's Second Spring*

**Your tour will be accompanied by a local Canopy Tower guide.**

## Financial Information

**FEE: \$4050 from Panama City**

**DEPOSIT:** \$400 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** August 8, 2022

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$1200

(Single rooms may not be available at the Tower. Please see the *ACCOMMODATIONS* section below.)

**LIMIT: 8**

**Special Note:** *We have opted to limit our Field Guides Panama tours to just 8 participants. In addition to the Field Guides staff leader, we will have a local Panamanian guide. We feel this provides the best overall experience, as some trails are narrow and a larger group will make it difficult for everyone to get good, satisfying looks at the birds. This has an impact on the tour fee, but we believe this intimacy and expertise are well worth a slight premium.*

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

We have published the itinerary and price for this tour with the understanding that during these uncertain times we are likely to encounter unforeseen changes. Some of our tours may incur higher costs due to increases in currency exchange rate fluctuations or COVID-19 related fees imposed by countries and/or suppliers. Travel and hospitality companies all

over the world have been adversely affected by the pandemic, and there is no guarantee that all of the lodging and transportation we have booked for this tour will still be available at the time of departure. We hope to maintain our services as indicated in our itinerary as well as our published tour fee. However, if changes are required, we will make every effort to maintain the quality of the itinerary as it is published with the most appropriate substitutions available. Should any necessary changes or other unforeseen causes result in an increase in service rates to us, we reserve the right to pass on those increases in fees to the tour participant.

## Other Things You Need to Know

**TOUR MANAGER:** The manager for these tours is Ruth Kuhl. Ruth will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The guest rooms at the Canopy Tower are on the second and third levels, the dining room on the fourth level, and the observation deck one further level up. **There is no elevator, so participants should be able to manage these flights of sturdy stairs.** If you are a light sleeper, you may want to bring earplugs since birders come and go at different hours, occasionally while you are trying to sleep! While there is no air-conditioning at the Tower, there are fans in every room and the temperature is usually quite comfortable in the evening and at night.

Single rooms may not be available at the Canopy Tower. The single supplement would allow you to occupy a larger double room with a private bath as a single participant. Should an alternative "guide room" that now has private bathrooms be available, you may be able to occupy it as a single (no single supplement would be due). These restrictions are due to the small guest capacity (7 regular guest rooms) of the Tower. Please contact your tour manager to check availability.

**DOCUMENTS:** US Citizens traveling by air to and from Panama must present a valid passport when entering or re-entering the United States. You will be issued a tourist card by the airline to be filled out before arrival.

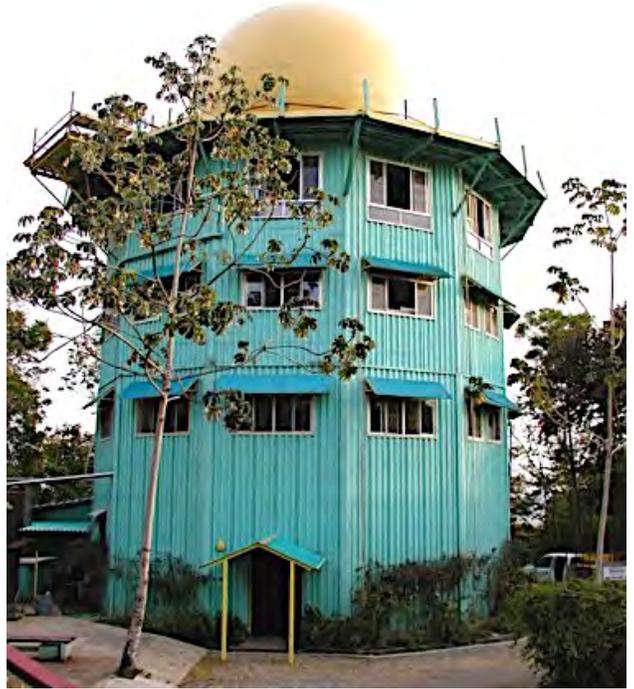
If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Panamanian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of 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 call our office for the best fare from your home. 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 Canopy Tower is a very unique accommodation! Guest rooms are on the second and third levels, and there is an observation deck on the top.  
Photo by guide John Rowlett.*

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 \$4050 for one person in double occupancy from Panama City. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 6, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 7, all ground transportation, 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 Panama, 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** is \$1200 to occupy a double room with a private bath as a single participant. Single rooms may not be available at the Canopy Tower. Should a single room be available, no single supplement will be due. These restrictions are due to the small guest capacity (7 regular guest rooms) of the Tower.

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

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

Please mail your **deposit of \$400** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by August 8, 2022**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

Please note that if you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will require **proof of travel insurance**. Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

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

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

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

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

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. If you are traveling on a tour **outside your country of domicile** (for example, outside the US for US residents), we will **require proof of travel insurance**. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs within 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 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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