

ITINERARY

Ecuador's Shiripuno Lodge: Heartland of the Waorani
September 20-29, 2018



The beautiful Spotted Puffbird is widespread in much of Amazonia, but it occurs in just a small portion of Ecuador. We'll watch for them along the trails at Shiripuno Lodge. Photograph by participant Max Rodel.

We include here information for those interested in the 2018 Field Guides Ecuador's Shiripuno Lodge: Heartland of the Waorani 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

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- 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

Field Guides has been visiting the Ecuadorian Amazon for decades; but in spite of having returned time and time again, we never seem to get enough. So we can understand a tour participant's exhilaration at experiencing that first (second, or even third!) fresh, warm breath of Amazonian air—the first hint of the unmatched (and at times) overwhelming diversity to come!

One of the reasons we continue to be fascinated by this (large) corner of the planet is that no two trips there are ever alike. There are so many birds and creatures that even the twentieth trip to a lodge that we know well will hold new surprises; Amazonian birding can reveal its treasures slowly, but rarely disappoints. The net result always seems to be the same: a mosaic, a quilt-like scape of birds where beautiful settings reign. The more we learn about the birds here, the more we have come to realize that with so many micro-habitats in the Amazonian biome, even the slightest reading

change on your GPS can have an important impact on what you will see. The one habitat, though, that we have always hoped to have easier access to is *terra firme*, forest that is not seasonally flooded and so has relatively rich soil with tall and diverse tree species. Transitional and swampy forest is the most common around many lodges here.

Enter Shiripuno Lodge. While it's not palatial like a number of the Amazonian lodges along the Napo—indeed rustic is a better description—it offers great birding right behind the lodge where there is a wonderful network of pretty easily walked trails. The flocks can be large and active, full of special *terra firme* species, like Ocellated Woodcreeper, Brown-backed Antwren (described in the 90's and generally pretty common here), Yellow-browed Antbird, and Slender-billed Xenops. Tough birds indeed to try and find along the Napo! Further in along the trails we will be on the lookout for the rare Wing-banded Antbird and Spotted Puffbird (great looks last year) as Yellow-throated Flycatchers call from above.

My good friend Fernando Vaca (co-owner and head biologist of Shiripuno Lodge) once told me that Shiripuno is everything that other, better known lodges are not, and he could not have been more right. Shiripuno is located south of the mighty Napo River in a remote region of the Ecuadorian Amazon where Orellana and Pastaza provinces meet. Until recently, some of this general region was considered mostly off-limits to tourists because of the native people living there. But in the past few decades many of these groups have recognized that one way to preserve their heritage is through tourism.

The Waorani Nation, which inhabits the area we'll be visiting, is divided into family units that still control substantially large tracts of untouched forest. Their traditional lifestyle would be classified as hunter-gatherer; they wander, disappear into the forest, set up temporary villages, and then move on, following animals and natural resources as needed. This is of course changing with many groups as they are now shifting more to lifestyles based out of a permanent village. Their language, according to some linguistic experts, is unlike any other and organized most like Chinese! The founders and owners of Shiripuno Lodge have established an alliance with one particular clan that, in an attempt to preserve their world, have reached out to the outside world in a way that we all hope will maintain the forest and local customs alike. As you might expect, the Waorani know a great deal about the forest, whether about medicinal plants, birds and their habits, or overall survival. And as with most native peoples, the Waorani have had a difficult time trying to maintain their traditional lifestyles against the pressure of the modern world, but it is Shiripuno Lodge's hope that this process can be slowed in the area as much as possible.



Spix's Guan is one of the inhabitants of the terra firme forests around Shiripuno. Photograph by guide Marcelo Padua.

About the Physical Requirements & Pace: Shiripuno Lodge is a wild place, where most birding on foot requires hiking along forest trails. We won't plan on lounging on the veranda at hummingbird or fruit feeders, because there aren't any! This last year however, we had some great birding right around the lodge in the early morning a few times thanks to Fernando's gardening techniques of planting fruiting bushes that attract tanagers and other species; this in addition to the large Cecropia tree that was in fruit all trip. There are also a few flowering, purple Vervain bushes that attract a few hummer species if one takes the time to monitor them. We will rise early each day and, after a pre-dawn breakfast, take trails or canoe rides away from the lodge. We'll usually return for lunch and some time off in the hot early afternoon before walking another trail near the lodge or taking a late afternoon canoe ride along the Shiripuno River. On one or two days we will take a box lunch and be out for much of the day; on several evenings we'll also try for nocturnal birds pre-dinner, though we usually do not venture out after dinner.

Most reasonably fit people should be capable of the majority of the hikes we do. We generally walk 2-3 miles per day, and while the ground is often uneven (as in almost any forest), for the most part there is little up and down; the exception to this being a hilly *terra firme* forest trail that has some very steep sections that are more challenging. To do this trail

justice we tend to stay out for most of the day, having a lunch brought in to us by the lodge staff; this helps lighten our load quite a bit, but nevertheless it is a more tiring day on the legs as we will be on the move over more rugged terrain during much of the day. All in all much of our time will be spent standing in one spot watching for birds and/or trying to tape them in, and when we do move, it will usually be at a birder's pace (in other words, not very fast). It is important to remember that we will spend much of every day of the tour on our feet, and some people find the cumulative effect of a week's worth of this kind of activity quite tiring. Fortunately, Shiripuno lends itself well to taking time off, and the lodge is a comfortable place to relax and catch up on rest, with inviting hammocks strung up in a few spots. While the tour should not be considered an "easy" tour, by carefully choosing the activities in which to participate, it can range from easy to rigorous. We will always discuss the following day's plans the evening before.

The terrain varies from flatter trails nearest the lodge to hillier on the north side of the Rio Shiripuno, and all of the trails can be muddy and/or slippery but are usually firm underfoot with a few muddy or watery sections (depending on recent rains in the area). All of the trails near the lodge are well maintained but still have numerous, large protruding roots and stumps, as well as the occasional fallen tree trunk. Trails north of the Shiripuno are less well maintained but are still in mostly good shape. A few of the paths cross permanently wet areas, and we'll have to cross these on narrow bridges with the help of either handrails or poles stuck in the mud. These require a decent sense of balance. The boat that we use while on the Rio Shiripuno is a wide metal motor canoe; keep in mind that it is not covered, so raingear is always desirable. Boarding and disembarking is from a stable wooden dock but require good balance and a helping hand.

One of the many advantages of birding out of a single site is the flexibility afforded birders who would like to skip a planned group activity or do something (or nothing) on their own. This is certainly a happy option at Shiripuno.

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

About the Birding Areas



Terra Firme Forest—This is the Shiripuno's greatest strength and what we are here for. Getting into prime, tall, terra firme forest at Shiripuno is a breeze. There's no need to paddle across an oxbow lake, trek along a kilometer-long boardwalk, motor down-river 30 minutes, and then hike in... it's all right here. Most of the land area above the old river terrace is covered with primary *terra firme* forest. This upland rainforest lies above the levels of the highest floods and is the single richest habitat in the world—for birds as well as for many other organisms. By way of example, the highest diversity of trees in North America is found in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where an expanse of about half a million acres and an altitudinal gradient of more than 5000 feet contribute to a total of around 170 species of trees. Working in the Amazonian rainforests of northeastern Peru (not far from Shiripuno), botanist Al Gentry found the highest tree diversity in the world—an astounding 603 species per *hectare* (two-and-one-quarter acres)! Other Amazonian rainforest sites in Peru and Ecuador, where a great deal of fieldwork has been focused over the past decade, have shown bird species diversities of more than 500 species per site. Shiripuno's birdlist hovers around 450 species, but given its overall lack of extensive blackwater and *varzea*, this is impressive.

We'll try to spend as much time as we can scouring these terra firme forests for their special bird flocks and rarities. Our target list is, well, a long one, and since indicator species are present in their near original, healthy numbers, there is a realistic possibility that we might see Salvin's or Nocturnal curassows or even a large eagle such as a Harpy or Crested. We can hope to stumble across some of the outrageous rarities that have been seen here recently, such as Gray-bellied Hawk, Rufous Potoo, or Fiery-tailed Aowlbill. And while we'll all have our own targets, there will just be a lot of birds to look at, common or rare, some of which include Bartlett's Tinamou (sings sometimes right behind the lodge), Black-faced Hawk, Spix's Guan, Yellow-billed Jacamar, Brown Nunlet, Pearly and Undulated antshrikes, Long-winged Antwren, Black Bushbird, Banded, Lunulated, and White-plumed antbirds (this place can be great for antswarm followers), Ochre-striped

Antpitta (tough, but gettable here), Ash-throated Gnatcatcher, White-crested Spadebill (at an often quite reliable territory), and Western Striped, White-crowned, and Blue-backed manakins.

Depending on current trail conditions and weather, it may even be possible to visit a natural, interior-forest clay lick that often attracts Scarlet Macaw, Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet, and Orange-cheeked Parrot.



We'll watch for the Bare-necked Fruitcrow in the varzea habitat zone. Photograph by guide Mitch Lysinger.

River-created Habitats—The river has generated a mosaic of different habitats that lend richness and species diversity to Amazonia. While not one of the strengths of the Shiripuno area, permanent swamp forest, often dominated by *Mauritia* palms, is found in low-lying areas of poor drainage, such as those right along the Shiripuno River edge. At one such spot various large macaw species often come to feed and roost in the evening, and this will certainly be a spectacle that we will want to witness. It is here that such specialties as Striped and Straight-billed woodcreepers, Sulphury Flycatcher, Black-capped Donacobius, and Moriche Oriole are found, as well as various aquatic species such as Green-and-rufous Kingfisher and Rufescent Tiger-Heron.

Seasonally flooded *varzea* or transition forest is found adjacent to streams and on somewhat higher ground that has poor drainage. With its tall trees, it looks much like *terra firme* forest to the casual observer but has a lower, less diverse tree-species component that favors those plants which can tolerate being inundated for weeks, or even months, at a time.

As one might expect, the bird diversity of *varzea* forest is centered in its canopy, as the understory is sometimes underwater for long periods. Many fruit-eating species favor *varzea*, including a variety of parrots and macaws and the bizarre Bare-necked Fruitcrow. In the darker understory along the edges of flooded forest, we'll seek such specialties as Dot-backed, Spot-backed, Silvered, and White-shouldered antbirds, Rufous-tailed Flatbill, and the secretive Agami Heron. On one afternoon we plan to pay a visit to an oxbow lake—a type of blackwater lake once connected to the river—not far from the lodge where we could encounter birds associated with these habitats, such as White-lored Antpitta, Long-billed Woodcreeper, and Chestnut-headed Crike.

Itinerary for Ecuador's Shiripuno Lodge

Day 1, Thu, 20 Sep. To Quito. When you arrive (usually between 9:00 and 11:00 p.m.), a BirdEcuador representative will meet you just outside the baggage claim. If you are arriving tonight, be sure to check for a message from your guide at the hotel front desk with any additional information you may need for tomorrow. There is a complimentary bottle of drinking water in your bathroom; bring any excess with you tomorrow, along with your canteen or water bottle. Quito lies at 9300 feet and has a cool, pleasant climate year-round. But don't overdo it when carrying heavy bags off the plane at this elevation; it usually takes a night or so to adjust to the altitude.

If you have the time, we suggest arriving a day early. We can help you make arrangements for an English-speaking guide if you like. Night in Quito.

Day 2, Fri, 21 Sep. To Shiripuno Lodge. Our breakfast time and venue will depend on the flight schedule; last year the flight was very early so it worked out better to transfer to the airport for our flight to Coca straight away. After the flight, a hearty breakfast buffet was waiting for us at a comfortable hotel in Coca; here too we can use restrooms and regroup a bit before the journey. Sometimes though, we have a chance to do some birding around the gardens before heading to the airport, but again this all depends on the airlines. Our thirty-minute flight takes us from the inter-montane highlands of the Quito valley across the eastern cordillera of the Andes. On a clear day you can see snow-capped Volcan Cayambe to the north, gorgeous Volcan Antisana, and in the distance to the south the perfect crater of Volcan Cotopaxi. As we descend to Ecuador's Oriente, we'll see some nice expanses of undisturbed forest where the eastern foothills spill into the Amazonian lowlands before we arrive at Coca, frontier oil town and jumping-off point for Amazonian exploration in Ecuador. We will travel dressed for birding (rubber boots not required), as we'll be birding on the river en route to the river landing and the lodge upon arrival. (Our luggage will be transported by lodge staff so that we can be comfortably

unencumbered.) The weather should be cool in Quito and warm and humid in Coca and for the duration of our stay in Amazonia.

After meeting with the Shiripuno staff, and probably the need stock on a few supplies, we travel south from Coca for about two hours either by bus or pick-up trucks along the Auca highway to the Shiripuno River boat launch. Bathrooms are available at both the airport and the boat dock, and we will be issued a box lunch before heading downriver. We'll pass through mostly disturbed habitats and communities where the birding is pretty uneventful - especially when compared to what we are headed for - but time allowing we might have the luxury to make a stop or two in some remnant forest patches that can be very productive! Upon reaching the Shiripuno River dock, we'll transfer to a metal-hulled, motorized canoe for the five-hour trip down the Shiripuno River to the lodge; keep in mind that depending on water levels, this trip can either be a little shorter or longer... we will hope for higher water levels so as not to have to zig-zag around fallen tree trunks. Our canoe will have comfortable seating, but beware that it is not covered, so you will need to be prepared with all of your raingear in the event we encounter any showers...or downpours; we sometimes find that large plastic bags to store backpacks during a rain can really come in handy. Real birding opportunities will begin once we set off downriver. We'll hope for a clear afternoon—don't forget sunscreen!—and we'll get our first looks at Blue-throated Piping-Guan, Blue-and-yellow and Scarlet Macaws, White-throated Toucan, Black-capped Donacobius, Orange-backed Troupial, Magpie Tanager, and others. It's a long ride, and we'll have to move steadily so as not to arrive too late, but you know how we birders are! Upon arrival, we'll pull up to the lodge dock—dry, we hope—and settle into our rooms. The lodge itself is set in a clearing just up from the river, so there are no long hikes between the canoe and our rooms. We'll meet for a candlelight dinner that will taste great after the long travel day.

While the lodge itself is not up to the luxurious standards of some of those along the Napo, it offers the comforts of good food and plenty of it, alluring hammocks strung up for your lounging pleasure, and (usually) pleasant nights in an amazingly insect-free environment and well-screened rooms. Meals are served in a central, open-air dining area by candlelight, only a short trot from the rooms. Fresh-pureed juices from tropical fruits of the region are provided at breakfast, so you will probably sample more than a few that haven't had before. Shiripuno does not stock alcoholic beverages, so you might want to consider planning ahead if you like to enjoy a drink in the evenings; we will do our best to have some beer and wines, as well as Coke available. Bottled drinking water is furnished in the dining room, and you should get in the habit of bringing your canteen with you to meals to refill from the filtered water supply. The small generator operates during certain hours of the day for re-charging batteries, so lighting in the cabins is by candle, but we strongly recommend bringing along a couple of flashlights to be strategically placed around the cabin for better lighting; such flashlights also save the day when it comes to list time. The lodge also supplies each room with an inflatable, solar powered light that you can conveniently place as you like around the room. Just remember to leave it out in an open area so that it can recharge while we are out birding. We should sleep tonight to the songs of frogs, insects, and the tooting of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. Night at Shiripuno Lodge.

Days 3-8, Sat-Thu, 22-27 Sep. Shiripuno Lodge. We'll start early each morning to take advantage of the precious first hours of maximum activity, but we will have some time for resting (during the heat of midday or the occasional rain shower) and individual exploration near the lodge as well. Much of our birding will be on foot on forest trails. As with all rainforest birding, calf-high rubber boots and raingear will be essential. Not only are there likely to be muddy areas on the trails and shallow stream crossings, but rubber boots provide foot and lower leg protection against briars, insects, and other trail hazards. Some downed trees across trails are inevitable.



The Spectacled Owl is one of six owl species we might find near Shiripuno Lodge. These large owls are relatively common in lowland forests, but can be difficult to see. Photograph by participants Andrew and Rebecca Steinmann.

We will bird the river edges from dugout canoes handled by skilled native boatmen. Many birding hikes will begin with a canoe ride as well, as some trails are only reachable by boat. Birding hikes will mostly be conducted in the morning hours with a return for lunch, but we may arrange for a carry-along lunch to enable us to cover some of the more distant trails, especially across the Shiripuno.

We will have six full days to bird this rich zone, and the list of fabulous possibilities mentioned above is just the tip of the iceberg! Nights at Shiripuno Lodge.

Day 9, Fri, 28 Sep. Departure from Shiripuno; flight to Quito. Today we'll rise early and have breakfast before embarking for Coca and the (usually) mid-day flight to Quito, arriving there in time to reorganize before packing and our farewell dinner. Night in Quito.

Day 10, Sat, 29 Sep. Departure for home. International flights to the US generally depart in the morning and require an early check-in to arrive mid-day in time for connections home. Because of the varying departures, breakfast is on your own; if you prefer to eat before your flight, there's a casual restaurant beyond security in the airport. Vayan bien!

About Your Guide

Mitch Lysinger grew up birding his native Florida before moving to Ecuador to work at La Selva Lodge and then with Field Guides since 1997. Mitch is fascinated by bird sounds and has spent many years intensively birding and recording the birds of Ecuador and other Neotropical countries.

He is involved in conservation programs in Ecuador, working closely with the Jocotoco Foundation on land purchase in areas critically in need of protection. When not on tour, Mitch can often be found with his wife, Carmen, and their two children, Martin and Sara, at Cabanas San Isidro--their cloudforest lodge on the east slope of the Andes where they see to the needs of their guests and continue their conservation work. Mitch will be guiding tours in Amazonian Ecuador at both Sacha and Shiripuno lodges as well as tours to Ecuador's Southwest and to the east slope at San Isidro.

"Mitch Lysinger! He is amazing in his ability to spot and hear birds, to call them in, to accommodate to each individual, and to stay cheerful, patient, and energetic." D.S., Montane Ecuador

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$3575 from Quito

DEPOSIT: \$350 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 23, 2018

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$500

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: While the lodge itself is not up to the luxurious standards of some of those along the Napo—not why we are here, right?—it offers the comforts of good food and plenty of it; alluring hammocks strung up for your lounging pleasure; and (usually) pleasant nights in an amazingly insect-free environment. Each of the ten well-screened cabins has one full and one twin bed with a private bath (cold water only). Meals are served in a central, open-air dining area by candlelight, only a short trot from the rooms. Shiripuno does not stock alcoholic beverages, *so you might want to consider planning ahead (and communicating with your tour manager) if you like to enjoy a drink in the evenings.* Bottled drinking water is furnished in the dining room, and you should get in the habit of bringing your canteen with you to meals to refill from the filtered water supply. The small generator operates during certain hours of the day for re-charging

batteries, so lighting in the cabins is by candle light, and we strongly recommend bringing along a couple of flashlights to be strategically placed around the cabin for better lighting; such flashlights also save the day when it comes to list time. For your convenience the lodge provides surprisingly powerful inflatable solar powered lights that we need to recharge each day, so make sure to set them out in an open area while we are out in the field; they can offer up to about 6-8 hours of light.

DOCUMENTS: A **passport** valid for six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Ecuador. You will be issued a **tourist card** upon arrival; please keep this in a safe place, as you will need it to depart Ecuador.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Ecuadorian 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.

VACCINATIONS: Travelers to Shiripuno Lodge *may* be required to provide **proof of yellow fever vaccination** upon arrival at the airport at Coca. The vaccine is good for ten years; please consult with your physician about whether it is appropriate for you (there are contraindications for some individuals).

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.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is \$3575 for one person in double occupancy from Quito. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 9, the flights within Ecuador (Quito/Coca/Quito), 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 Ecuador, 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 \$500. 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, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$350** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by May 23, 2018. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

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

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

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

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

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

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

US citizens will receive from us a brochure 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, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. 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. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility 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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