

ITINERARY
SRI LANKA

October 26 – November 12, 2024



The Yellow-fronted Barbet is one of 34 endemics found in this small island nation. We'll look for them near Kitulgala. Photograph by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Sri Lanka tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited
- 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 Field Guides checklist for preparing and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen

The teardrop-shaped island of Sri Lanka, located less than 100 miles off the coast of southern India, provides a delightful introduction to Asia's birds—with the added bonus of more than 30 endemic species and a host of endemic subspecies, some of which undoubtedly deserve elevation to species status themselves. But it's not just the locals that will attract our attention; the island shares roughly three-dozen regional endemics with nearby India, and serves as a winter home to some highly sought-after species from both the subcontinent and the Himalayas.

Our tour visits all of the country's main habitats, beginning with the lush rainforests of Kitulgala and Sinharaja, which are home to many of the island's endemics, including the Serendib Scops-Owl (only described to science in 2004), the tiny White-throated Flowerpecker, and the spectacular Sri Lanka Blue-Magpie. We'll also visit the scrubby grasslands of

Udawalawe, where Asian Elephants reign supreme, and the teeming mudflats and salt pans of Yala and Bundala national parks, where thousands of wintering shorebirds and herons gather. Then, after a visit to the forests and tea plantations of the central highlands and the remote high plateau of Horton Plains, we'll end our stay in the dry forests around Sigiriya. Over the course of the trip we should have an excellent chance of seeing all the endemics—and then some!

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

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (up to 3 miles per day), mostly along gravel or dirt roadsides, usually on flat ground, though in some areas we will be on narrow, steep, sometimes slippery trails (walking sticks recommended).
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We have several longer drives on this tour. Road conditions vary but may include rough stretches of dust, mud, and potholes. Participants must be able to step up (and step down) 10-12 inches to get into and out of our bus and may need to climb a short ladder to get into and out of the 4-wheel drive vehicles we use in several of the parks. We will spend much of some days on our feet. If you find standing in one place for long periods difficult, you may want to bring along a folding stool to allow you to sit in comfort.
- **PACE:** After an early breakfast (typically 5:00-6:30 a.m.), we'll bird until lunch time. On some days, we have a boxed lunch while birding or traveling, but typically, we return to our lodging for lunch. On several days near the coast, we may depart as early as 4:30 a.m., taking a picnic breakfast with us, in order to get to our birding locations before it gets too hot. On some days, we'll have an afternoon break followed by an optional session of birding; on others, we'll travel to our next destination during the afternoon.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the 50s (higher elevations) to 90s F. Rain showers are a distinct possibility. Humidity will be high for much of the trip.
- **ELEVATION:** Sea level to 7500 feet; no lodging higher than 6200 feet.
- **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:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on many sections of this tour's route.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations (as we do often on this tour).

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 your guide for the tour.

About the Birding Areas

Kitulgala—The area around the riverside town of Kitulgala is a mix of wet lowland rainforest, second growth, and agricultural fields. Though perhaps a bit less pristine than some of the country's larger protected areas, the Makandawa Forest Park still contains many of the island's endemics, some of which are easier to spot here than elsewhere. This was where Deepal Warakagoda first heard the Serendib Scops-Owl, which was only described to science in 2004, and we'll make a concerted effort to locate this distinctive species. Many of the island's other endemics are also found here, and species we'll be watching for include Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Spot-winged Thrush, Layard's Parakeet, Sri Lanka Drongo, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Green-billed Coucal, Orange-billed and Square-tailed babbler, Asian Emerald Dove, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Forest Wagtail, Yellow-fronted and Coppersmith barbets, and Black-headed Cuckooshrike. Our hotel's gardens may hold Jerdon's Leafbird and Brown-breasted Flycatcher, and Stork-billed Kingfisher is possible along the river. Brahminy Kite, Crested Serpent-Eagle, and Black Eagle can be found over open areas. If it has been wet, leeches are possible along the forest trails, so be sure to wear your leech socks!



Sinharaja Forest Reserve—The 35-square-mile Sinharaja reserve is home to most of the island’s endemic birds—as well as many additional species. If possible, we’ll hire vehicles to take us up the steepest part of the hill behind our hotel into the heart of the park, and we’ll spend our days walking the flatter trails there. The park provides our best chance for Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Serendib Scops-Owl, Red-faced Malkoha, Sri Lanka Blue-Magpie, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Chestnut-winged Cuckoo, Lesser Yellownappe, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Ashy-headed Laughingthrush, Sri Lanka Myna, White-faced Starling, and the very elusive Sri Lanka Thrush; we’ll also search for White-throated and Pale-billed flowerpeckers, Sri Lanka Junglefowl, Malabar Trogon, Crimson-backed Flameback, and Sri Lanka Gray Hornbill. In more open agricultural areas around our hotel, we’ll look for Layard’s and Plum-headed parakeets, Slaty-legged Crake, Brown Shrike, Crested Treeswift, and Crimson-fronted Barbet. This is another spot where leech socks will prove invaluable if there has been rain.

Udawalawe National Park—Established in 1972 to provide shelter for animals displaced by the creation of nearby Walawe reservoir, Udawalawe is a 119-square mile park comprised mostly of grasslands interspersed with marshy areas and riverine forest. We’ll take a several-hour jeep safari along some of its unpaved tracks, searching for the many species found there. In addition to Asian Elephant, species we’ll watch for include Malabar Pied-Hornbill, Orange-breasted Pigeon, Banded Buttonquail, Jerdon’s Bushlark, Indian Peafowl, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Alpine Swift, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Coppersmith Barbet, Blyth’s Pipit, White-browed Fantail, Tawny-bellied and Yellow-eyed babbblers, Ashy, Jungle, and Plain prinias, Zitting Cisticola, and Indian Silverbill.

Bundala National Park—The tidal lagoons, mudflats, mangroves, and scrubby thickets of Bundala National Park provide shelter to more than 100 species of birds, roughly half of which are winter visitors to Sri Lanka. We’ll visit the area in specialized jeeps early in the day, accompanied by park guides who know where best to search for the park’s specialties. This is among the best spots on our tour route for White-tailed lora, which was only recently found to occur in Sri Lanka. Among the many species we’ll be searching for are Watercock, Ruddy-breasted Crake, Lesser Whistling-Duck, Garganey, Little and Indian cormorants, Black-headed Ibis, Asian Openbill, Painted Stork, Great and Eurasian thick-knees, Oriental and Small pratincoles, Oriental Skylark, White-winged Tern, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Blyth’s and Clamorous reed-warblers, and lots of wintering shorebirds.

Yala National Park—Located along the island’s southeastern flank, Yala National Park is Sri Lanka’s second largest, covering more than 378 square miles of forest, grassland, wetlands, and lagoons. It is of particular importance for overwintering shorebirds and waterfowl, and more than 200 species—including Brahminy and Rosy starlings, the stealthy Blue-faced Malkoha, Booted Eagle, Gray-headed Fish-Eagle, Pied Cuckoo, Lesser Adjutant and the rare Black-necked Stork—are possible. The park is also well known for its healthy Leopard population, which gives us a reasonable chance of encountering one or more, and both 2016’s and 2018’s tours were lucky enough to encounter the very rare Sloth Bear here.

Horton Plains National Park—The cool heights of Horton Plains National Park lie at 6900-7500 feet, considerably higher than other locations we visit on this tour. The mix of grassland and subtropical montane forest (dominated by a handsome red rhododendron, which may still be flowering at this time) is home to a number of species which can be difficult to find elsewhere, including Sri Lanka Whistling-Thrush, Dull-blue Flycatcher, Yellow-eared Bulbul, Sri Lanka Woodpigeon, Sri Lanka Bush-Warbler, Pied Bushchat, Kashmir Flycatcher, Himalayan Buzzard, Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Black-throated Munia, Hill Swallow, Indian Blackbird, and the enigmatic Jerdon’s Baza. It also provides another opportunity to

search for a handful of species we may have missed at lower altitudes, including Crimson-backed Flameback, Sri Lanka Scimitar-Babbler, and Spot-winged Thrush.

Sigiriya—The massive stone monolith at Sigiriya, crowned by its ancient castle and fortress, is surrounded by a mix of dry lowland forest, ponds, and agricultural fields. Here, we have our best chance for wintering Orange-headed Thrush, as well as Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Sirkeer Malkoha, Black-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher, Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike, Sri Lanka Woodshrike, Golden-fronted and Jerdon’s leafbirds, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Thick-billed Flowerpecker, White-rumped Shama, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, the distinctive “Shaheen” subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon, and White-rumped Munia. We’ll have the opportunity to make a couple of forays after dark to search for the region’s nightbirds, including Jerdon’s and Indian nightjars, Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl, and Oriental Scops-Owl.



*The Sri Lanka Gray Hornbill is an endemic that is widespread on the island, so we’ll have multiple chances to see them.
Photograph by participant Merrill Lester.*

Itinerary for Sri Lanka

Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, 26-27 Oct. Depart from US. For North American travelers, it will take multiple flights—through either Europe or Asia—to reach Sri Lanka. Most international flights will originate in the evening hours of Day 1 and will arrive in Colombo either late on Day 2 or in the early morning hours of Day 3. Whenever you arrive, you’ll be met at the airport by our ground agent (look for someone carrying a sign with “Field Guides” and/or your name on it) and transferred to our hotel. ***If you plan to change money, the airport is the best place to do so; exchange booths will be open regardless of your arrival time. Exchange rates at our hotels may be significantly poorer, and we’ll have limited access to banks for much of the tour.*** Night of Day 1 in flight; night of Day 2 at the Vivanta Airport Garden.

Day 3, Mon, 28 Oct. Arrive in Colombo, Sri Lanka. We’ll have much of today to recover from our journeys. Unless you get a message from your guide indicating otherwise, we’ll meet in the hotel lobby at 4:00 p.m. for a walk through the hotel’s considerable grounds. We should get our first looks at White-breasted Waterhen, Red-wattled Lapwing, Brown-headed Barbet, Yellow-billed Babbler, Black-hooded Oriole, Purple-rumped and Loten’s sunbirds, White-bellied Drongo, House and Large-billed crows, and more. Bring water, your flashlight, and your insect repellent, as we’ll stay out until dark to try for Brown Boobook and Indian Scops-Owl. Night at the Vivanta Airport Garden.

Day 4, Tue, 29 Oct. Drive to Kitulgala; birding around Makandawa village. We'll leave the capital area this morning and head for the island's interior. Our journey to Kitulgala will take 3.5 to 4.5 hours, depending on birding stops and the amount of traffic on the country's narrow, winding roads. After lunch at our hotel, we'll venture across the Kelani River on a "canoe ferry"—double canoes with a platform between them, capable of transporting 4–5 people at a time. If it's been raining, you'll want to wear shoes that can get completely wet (i.e. water shoes, Texas or rubber boots), as the loading/unloading zone for the ferry may be underwater! We'll spend a bit of time exploring the more open areas near a small village on the far side (often good for Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot, Indian Pitta, Jerdon's Leafbird, Orange-billed Babbler, Orange Minivet, and Spot-winged Thrush). Some of the trail beyond the village is a bit steep and it can be rocky and uneven underfoot; if you use walking sticks, you'll want to have them with you this afternoon. If it has been wet, this is an area where you'll want to have your leech socks; be sure to carry plenty of water as well. Night at Kitulgala Rest House.

Day 5, Wed, 30 Oct. Full day birding in and around Makandawa Forest Park. We'll start our birding this morning with a pre-breakfast outing to a nearby second-growth area in Kitulgala, where our primary targets will be the endangered Green-billed Coucal and the endemic Chestnut-backed Owlet. After breakfast, we'll head to the bigger trees of the Makandawa Forest Park for the morning (and we may go there for the afternoon as well) to continue our search for the many species found there; see the Kitulgala section in the "About the Birding Areas" listing above for more details of what we'll be searching for. *Trails in the park are narrow and rough in places, with a slippery, crumbling rock pathway for some of the climb up a quite steep hill to start and the possibility of one or two wet stream crossings; this will be the toughest walking of the trip.* If we've been successful across the river, we may do some exploring in a forested area near our hotel this afternoon instead. If it has been wet, don't forget your leech socks! Night at Kitulgala Rest House.

Day 6, Thu, 31 Oct. Drive to Sinharaja Forest Reserve. After breakfast, we'll make the five-hour drive to our next location—the fabulous Sinharaja Forest Reserve. Though the journey isn't particularly long distance-wise, the roads are narrow and traffic is often heavy. After lunch at our hotel, we'll venture into the park for the first of several days' exploration. See the Sinharaja section of the "About the Birding Areas" listing above to learn more about what we'll be seeking. Our hotel here will be rather simple (and lacking in air conditioning) but puts us right at the edge of this wonderful forest. Night at Sinharaja Rainforest Edge.



*The Sri Lanka Junglefowl is found over much of the island, but we've gotten our best views near Sinharaja.
Photograph by participant Ed LeGrand.*

Days 7-8, Fri-Sat, 1-2 Nov. Sinharaja rainforest. We'll have two full days to explore the Sinharaja Forest Reserve. Though it measures only 21 by 7 kilometers (about 13 x 4.5 miles), the park is home to 20 of the island's 34 endemics, plus a multitude of other species. If it has been wet, this is another site for your leech socks! Nights at Sinharaja Rainforest Edge.

Day 9, Sun, 3 Nov. Drive to Udawalawe; birding at Udawalawe National Park. After breakfast, we'll head for to our next hotel, which is located only minutes away from Udawalawe National Park, birding along the way. After a bit of a break, we'll head out for an afternoon jeep safari through the park, staying out until after sundown. Don't forget your flashlight – but you can leave your leech socks behind! Night at Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort.

Day 10, Mon, 4 Nov. Drive to Tissamaharama (Tissa); birding at Bundala National Park along the way. Taking a boxed breakfast with us, we'll head south very early toward the coast for a morning's jeep safari in the scrubby forest and extensive wetlands of Bundala National Park. After lunch and a break at our hotel, we'll venture out into the field again in the late afternoon, visiting some area "tanks"—the local term for reservoirs—to look for Cotton Pygmy-Goose, Black Bittern, White-naped Woodpecker, Jungle Owlet, Streaked Weaver, and more. Night at Oak Ray Wild Yala.

Day 11, Tue, 5 Nov. Yala National Park. We'll leave our hotel early again this morning, taking a boxed breakfast with us as we head into Yala National Park for another jeep safari, hoping to find a variety of species including the rare Lesser Adjutant and—possibly—Leopard or Sloth Bear. After lunch and a break at our hotel, we'll have another afternoon to explore the area's many tanks. Night at Oak Ray Wild Yala.

Day 12, Wed, 6 Nov. Drive to Nuwara Eliya; afternoon visit to Victoria Park. This morning, we'll head north into the hill country around Nuwara Eliya with some birding stops along the way to search for Brown Wood-Owl, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Indian Blackbird, Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher, Sri Lanka Woodpigeon, and Sri Lanka White-eye. In the late afternoon, we'll visit Victoria Park in the center of Nuwara Eliya in search of Pied Thrush, Kashmir Flycatcher, Forest Wagtail, Indian Blue Robin, Cinereous Tit, and Yellow-eared Bulbul. Night at Hotel Blackpool.

Day 13, Thu, 7 Nov. Horton Plains National Park. This morning we'll drive the 20 miles to Horton Plains National Park, leaving before dawn so as to be one of the first vehicles into the park (thereby increasing our chances of locating a Sri Lanka Whistling-Thrush). Temperatures in the park itself are likely to be considerably cooler than at lower elevations; though daytime temperatures may reach the low 80s F, the average temperature is only 55 F and rainy, misty, or overcast conditions are possible. Night at Hotel Blackpool.



Rose-ringed Parakeets are quite common on the tour; we'll probably see some on the grounds of our hotel near the Colombo airport. Photograph by participant Kristine Wallstrom.

Day 14, Fri, 8 Nov. Drive to Kandy; birding on the extensive grounds of our hotel. We'll drive to Kandy this morning, then have the afternoon to explore near our hotel, which is a few miles north of the city itself. The forested grounds of the hotel are very birdy; its many species include Crimson-fronted and Yellow-fronted barbets, Common Hawk-Cuckoo, Lesser Hill Myna, Yellow-browed Bulbul, and Tickell's Blue Flycatcher. Black-backed Dwarf-Kingfishers are sometimes found in the garden, and Brown Fish-Owl is a regular evening visitor. We'll also walk to a small tea plantation a few minutes from the hotel's entrance, where we may find Sri Lanka Hanging-Parrot, Layard's and Alexandrine parakeets, Large and Black-headed cuckooshrikes and various raptors, and an evening walk just outside the gate may yield a Brown Wood-Owl or two. For those who are interested, we'll offer a before-dinner outing to the fantastically appointed Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, an old Buddhist temple that holds what is reputedly part of the Buddha's jawbone. The temple is open to the public from 6:30 – 8 p.m. The trip in to the Temple takes about 30 minutes. Night at Tree of Life Nature Resort.



*The brilliant Orange Minivet is common in the forests around Sigiriya.
Photograph by guide Megan Edwards Crewe.*

Day 15, Sat, 9 Nov. Birding on our hotel grounds; drive to Sigiriya. We'll start our day with another walk on the grounds of our hotel, looking for anything we might have missed yesterday. Then we'll head north to Sigiriya, arriving at our hotel in time for lunch. If the weather is conducive, we'll stop along the way at a spice garden for a leg stretch, bathroom break, and short tour (with massage!) After a break, we'll venture out this afternoon in search of some of the area's specialties; depending on the weather, we may have a chance to search for several nightbirds—including Indian and Jerdon's nightjars, Oriental Scops-Owl, and Spot-bellied Eagle-Owl—this evening. Night at Hotel Sigiriya.

Day 16, Sun, 10 Nov. Full day birding around Sigiriya. We'll spend all day birding in the dry forest around the impressive stone monolith of Sigiriya, a magma plug which houses a castle and fortress complex that dates back to 477 A.D. (For those who are interested, we can arrange a guided visit; the entry cost is \$36, and the cost of a site guide could be split among interested participants.) The shallow pools around the base of the rock may hold Black Bittern, and we'll search for Ashy and Greater Racket-tailed drongos, Large Cuckooshrike, Fork-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Orange-headed Thrush, and more in the surrounding woodlands. If we're still looking for any of the area's nightbirds, we'll have another chance to search for them this evening. Night at Hotel Sigiriya.

Day 17, Mon, 11 Nov. Birding around Sigiriya; return to airport. We'll have one final morning to bird the area around Sigiriya before returning to our hotel for lunch. Then, in a completion of our nearly full circle around this lovely island, we'll return to Colombo for the final night of our tour. Night at Vivanta Airport Garden.

Day 18, Tue, 12 Nov. Depart for home. You are free to make flight arrangements for any time today; check with your tour manager for the best schedule and fares from your home city.

About Your Guides

Megan Edwards Crewe has been birding since childhood, when she discovered she could have her father all to herself (rather than sharing him with her brother and sisters) if she was willing to get up very early on Saturdays and tromp around the woods in search of birds. After graduating from Purdue University with a degree in biology, she sampled an impressive variety of jobs before discovering Field Guides. Since joining the company in 1997, Megan—who brims with information and enthusiasm—has delighted in sharing the wonders and adventures of birding and the natural world with tour participants. One unexpected bonus of the job was meeting her husband, Mike, with whom she co-led a trip to France in 2000. After living in Cape May for a number of years, they have returned to England, where they live in the East Anglian county of Norfolk, at the edge of the North Sea. Megan has led all of our previous Sri Lanka tours.

*"This was our third tour with **Megan**. As always, she was a wonderful trip guide. She is so good about getting everyone on a bird. She is relaxed, patient, handles the group dynamics well, and we love her sense of humor. **Udi** is a fantastic local guide."*
T. & K. C., Sri Lanka

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

Uditha Hettige is one of the foremost birders in Sri Lanka. He has been birding for more than 25 years and been leading bird and other natural history tours in Sri Lanka and Southern India for more than 18 years. While his primary focus is birds, he is also a gifted observer of snakes, reptiles, and other wildlife and is widely considered by his peers to be the most knowledgeable all-round naturalist in the country. He is an accomplished wildlife sound recordist and bird and wildlife photographer, with photos published internationally in many magazines, journals, wildlife guides, and multimedia bird guides. He too has led all of our previous Sri Lanka tours.

Financial Information

FEE: \$6095 from Colombo

DEPOSIT: \$600 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: April 29, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$875

LIMIT: 9

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

Other Things You Need to Know

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

DOCUMENTS: A current **passport** valid for six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Sri Lanka; you will also need an eVisa. We will provide instructions on applying for the eVisa at the appropriate time.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Sri Lankan consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some

countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Field Guides is a full service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients may 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 \$6095 for one person in double occupancy from Colombo. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 17, all meals from breakfast on Day 3 through dinner on Day 17, 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 Colombo, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers or guides, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$875. 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, the guide in training will be taking a seat in the van or bus. 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 \$600** 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 April 29, 2024**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

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

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

4/26/24 – MEC

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