

ITINERARY

URUGUAY: Birds & Wines of the Land of the Gauchos 2024
November 23-December 5, 2024



Black-and-white Monjita is a rare species found in the marshy grasslands of eastern Uruguay. We'll look for these lovely birds at Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve. Photograph by participant Robert McNab.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Uruguay: Birds & Wines 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 Field Guides checklist for preparing and noting the birds we see
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Uruguay, or "river of painted birds", as it was christened by early inhabitants, is a country where few birders have gone. A small nation, Uruguay has a wonderful assortment of habitats—grasslands or "Pampas" dotted with wetlands, thorn forest mingling with riparian gallery forest, and palm savanna and shrubby, rocky "sierra" highlands. We use the term highlands in the broad sense here, as Uruguay is not a country with true high elevation. The wine industry is as effervescent as some of the great sparkling wines we will sample, but the production of wine in the country is so small that you will rarely see these wines in large retailers. Nevertheless, Uruguayan wines have been collecting awards and the prestigious Wine Spectator magazine recently awarded Garzon winery with the title of "best winery in the New World".

We'll bird the Pampas from rural estancias and comfortable hotels where we'll get a feel for the land, the people, the birds and the delicious food that we will pair with some of the iconic wines from the country. Classic birds of the Pampas include Greater Rhea, Spotted Nothura, Southern Screamer, Firewood-gatherer, Great Pampa-Finch, and Brown-and-

yellow Marshbird. But among the many classics, we could also find a dizzying assortment of the less common, including various seedeaters such as the Cinnamon, Dark-throated, and Marsh. Other notable finds could include Straight-billed and Curve-billed reedhaunters and perhaps the unusual Saffron-cowled Blackbird foraging cooperatively with the range restricted Black-and-white Monjita. The freshwater wetlands abound with birds—this is South America's duck factory. Black-necked and Coscoroba swans mingle with oodles of dabblers, including Red Shoveler and the gorgeous Silver Teal, while the rare and sneaky brood-parasitic Black-headed Ducks trick Red-fronted, White-winged, or Red-gartered coots into becoming foster parents for their chicks.

These grasslands were once the wintering grounds of Eskimo Curlew, and many of its relatives still spend their winters here. We'll gain a new appreciation for such "familiar" birds as American Golden-Plover and Upland and Buff-breasted sandpipers, species as dependent on the pampas as the gauchos themselves. And after full days of birding, we'll return to our estancias, feast on asado (mixed grill) cooked in true Gaucho fashion and pair it with a glass (or a few glasses!) of Tannat, the country's iconic red grape, and listen to tales of the gauchos, still the soul of this country as the cowboy is to the American West.

Much of Uruguay is coastline where cold water from the south mixes with warm from the north, making for a varied coastal and marine avifauna as well as unspoiled coastal dune ecosystems, rich with flocks of gulls and terns, including the Kelp, Brown-hooded, and Gray-headed gulls and the fantastic Snowy-crowned Tern, and great concentrations of shorebirds. We'll enjoy these sights, all while sampling some of the best seafood the Atlantic has to offer combined with fresh and vibrant white wines coming from vineyards that benefit from a coastal breeze.

A few other sites we'll visit include the Humedales del Este Biosphere reserve, where we should encounter Short-billed Pipit, and the oddball Ombue trees where we'll look for Diademed Tanager and other specialties. Each ombue in the forest has its own wonderful shape with thick, twisting roots spreading out over the ground; some of the trees are over 500 years old. The Quebrada de los Cuervos (Vulture Ravine), the southernmost outpost of the Atlantic Forest, is a gorge cut into the rocky northeastern hills. Seventy per cent of Uruguay's native flora and a great diversity of bird species, including Red-rumped Warbling-Finch, Red-winged Tinamou, Chestnut-bellied Seed-finch, and three species of vulture are found here. We will spend some good time in the Valle del Lunarejo area in northernmost Uruguay in hopes of seeing forest birds like Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Glaucous-blue Grosbeak, and Chestnut-backed Tanager—maybe even a nice Long-tufted Screech-Owl, or Crane Hawk— and other goodies. In more open sites, we may find Red-legged Seriemas, White Monjitas, Crested Black-Tyrant, and Hellmayr's Pipits. In the far west of the country, we will visit a Ramsar Wetland known as Esteros de Farrapos, named a National Park only recently!



The Chestnut-backed Tanager is an Atlantic Forest specialty found in Uruguay. We'll look for these gorgeous birds at Valle del Lunarejo in the north. Photograph by guide Marcelo Padua.

We'll return home with fond memories of flamingos, canasteros, and monjitas, and of vast open vistas, friendly Uruguayans, a colorful and vibrant culture, and a craving for Uruguayan wine that will not be easy to appease. So, don your gaucho beret, drink your yerba mate, and let's ride off into the sunset in search of Scissor-tailed Nightjars and whatever else comes our way.

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:** Light to moderate amounts of walking, much of it on paved roads or well-groomed tracks or trails. No single walk exceeding 2 miles, most much shorter. We will keep to mostly flat terrain and easy trails, but a few trails may require a bit more care, and walking shoes with some support are recommended. Some trails can be a bit muddy at times, so be prepared for that possibility.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** Meals will have a lot of meat, and not as many vegetable options as some might want. There will be some 3-4 hour drives on the tour and one day where we will drive most of the day to cross the country.
- **PACE:** Breakfast time will range from 6:00 to 8:00 with some pre-breakfast outings. When possible, we'll have time for afternoon siestas or swims.
- **ELEVATION:** Uruguay's highest point is 1700 feet so there are no significant altitudinal changes.
- **WEATHER:** Climate in December is relatively mild, with temperatures ranging from mid-50's to the mid-80's F. Rain is not common but some rain should be expected.
- **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:** There are no indoor restrooms on some of our excursions, so participants must be prepared to make comfort stops in nature.
- **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.



Straight-billed Reedhaunter is a wren-like furnariid we'll seek in wetlands. Photograph by participant Robert McNab.

Other considerations: We plan to bird some of Uruguay's finest natural spots on this tour and also to see a wide cross section of the country, both its scenery, habitats, and people. Note also that Uruguay is about the safest and mellowest country in all of South America. It is an uncomplicated and relaxing place to bird.

The style of this tour is to stay at simple but comfortable ranches, which will give us a true feel of the country and comfortable hotels. We will have rooms with private baths, but the rooms themselves may not all be the same size, style, or décor. Our meals will sometimes be prepared by the owner or family that runs a estancia, giving a homey feel to the food while others will be in world class high end restaurants with carefully picked wines to match. Note that Uruguayans eat a lot of meat, often asado or grilled, which is typical of gaucho culture.

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



About the Birding Areas

Esteros de Farrapos—At the extreme western edge of the country, along the Uruguay River which is the border with Argentina, this Ramsar Wetland site is still being discovered by birders, even by Uruguayan birders. Here, we will find a mix of grassland, marsh, gallery forest, and thorn scrub. The diversity of habitats allows for a wonderful diversity of birds—from such widespread species as Spotted Nothura, Giant and Gray-cowled wood-rails, Nacunda Nighthawk, Spix's Spinetail, Rufous-capped Antshrike, Rufous-bellied Thrush, Red-crested Cardinal, and Epaulet Oriole, to the less common such as Crane Hawk, Scissor-tailed Nightjar, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Short-billed Canastero, White-Browed Warbler, and Black-and-rufous and Gray-throated warbling finches, among others. The area is also a hotspot for seedeaters: Cinnamon, Dark-throated, and Rusty-collared could occur. There are many other species possible here that are unlikely in the rest of the country, and surprises in this little-known area are always possible.

Valle del Lunarejo—With rocky canyons, creeks of crystalline water, and nice stands of gallery forest interspersed with grassland and ranchland, this is a scenic part of the country. The gallery forests here are some of the southernmost extensions of the Atlantic Forest, and they can be surprisingly birdy. We can expect a wide variety of birds from Long-winged Harriers, Snail Kites, and maybe Red-legged Seriemas and Mottled Piculet, to many songbirds, such as Stripe-crowned Spinetail, Buff-browed Foliage-Gleaner, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet, Cliff Flycatcher, Gray and White monjitas, Golden-crowned Warbler, Fawn-breasted, Diademed, and Chestnut-backed tanagers, Wedge-tailed Grass-finch, Green-winged Saltator, Yellow-rumped Marshbird, and Glaucous-blue Grosbeak. Various wetland species are also possible, including Plumbeous Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, egrets, and Southern Screamer! Interestingly, we can dip into Brazil here without a passport; the border is entirely open and there is a village with half on the Brazilian side and half on the Uruguayan and no border checkpoints anywhere!

Bañados del Este—The lakes and marshes of the Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve are a naturalist’s paradise. Here we will visit various marshes and lakes, looking for the great diversity of birds to be found. In addition to being one of the most important wintering sites for Buff-breasted Sandpiper and American Golden-Plover, the spectacular marshes of Bañado del Indio are a good spot for the rare Marsh Seedeater. Other species we’ll look for include Stripe-backed Bittern, Ringed Teal, Aplomado Falcon, and Spotted and Plumbeous rails. (Rails in this part of the world are still not completely understood, and hopefully we’ll come up with some unusual rail species somewhere! The Red-and-white Crake is always a possibility.) Pectoral Sandpipers and both yellowlegs may mingle with Stilt Sandpipers and other migratory shorebirds in the wet fields of the area. We also have a good chance of seeing the rare Black-and-white Monjita, as well as the Saffron-cowled Blackbird and the more common, but amazing-looking Scarlet-headed Blackbird—a stunner if ever there was one! From Tropical Screech-Owls, to Grayish Baywings, to Bay-capped Wren-Spinetails, to Black-necked Swans, to Maguari Storks and Chilean Flamingos—this area has a lot of birds. Fortunately, birds here are usually in the open and should give us great views.



Guide Marcelo Padua has carefully scouted the country of Uruguay to find some of the best wines produced there, in addition to some wonderful birding areas. Photograph by guide Marcelo Padua.

About the Wine Growing Areas

Montevideo – The country’s capital but also a department (the Uruguayan equivalent of a state), Montevideo is a vibrant and captivating city that is home to 40 percent of the country’s population. It was this proximity to the capital of the country that prompted the birth of some wineries in the late 1800’s. The quick access to the Montevideo markets paired with some relatively poor soil to the north of the city fueled an expansion of the wine industry here, and today there are several well established wineries within a very short driving distance from the Capital.

Canelones – Responsible for almost 60% of the countries production of wine, Canelones’ wavy landscape is influenced heavily by the cold trade winds coming in from the Atlantic. These winds keep the temperatures within a tolerable limit in the summer, but cools things off considerably in the winter, causing the vines to have a slower growth and the grapes to mature slowly, bringing out the aromas of the wine. Rains are abundant and great care goes into keeping the grapes healthy, but the erosion from the rains also benefits the wine as the vines are planted in areas where a lot of rock has been exposed and the roots have to go much deeper to seek out nutrients.

Colonia – This UNESCO World heritage site preserves a historic city that incorporates both Portuguese and Spanish influences. Although the Portuguese and Spanish battled for the control of this strategic area on the Rio de la Plata, both were fervent Catholic societies that were deeply connected with the wine making culture. As a result, the first wineries of

the country were established here and even though the area does not present the best climate of the country for wine production, there are interesting examples of red wines of the Cabernet Sauvignon and Tannat varieties that come from here.

Maldonado – This region in the southeastern edge of the country is largely responsible for putting Uruguay on the radar of the international wine community. The eroded granite soil paired with a favorable climate are quickly making this one of the most prominent wine regions of the country and some of Uruguay’s best wines come from here.



The Greater Rhea is a symbol of the pampas, the great grasslands that cover much of Uruguay and Argentina. We'll no doubt see these giants on the tour. Photograph by guide Marcelo Padua.

Itinerary for Uruguay: Birds & Wines in the Land of the Gauchos

Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, Nov. 23-24. Flights from the US to Montevideo. Flights from the US to Montevideo are usually overnight, arriving in the city early in the morning. You will be met by our representative holding up a sign with your name or “Field Guides”. We plan to hit the ground running and go straight to Artesana Winery. A small winery in the Outskirts of Montevideo where we will have lunch paired with their wines and start seeing some common birds to start getting acquainted with Uruguay’s bird life. We will then settle into our bus and make a three-hour journey to the town of Colonia del Sacramento where we will have a walking tour of this historic town. Night at Plaza Mayor lodge.

Note: Montevideo is a vibrant and safe city that is fun to explore, we highly recommend that you come a day or two early and take some time to explore the city and acclimate.

Day 3, Mon, Nov 25. To Estancia La Paz. We will start our day with a pre-breakfast bird walk along the Rio de la Plata looking for species such as Wren-like Rushbird, Great Pampa-finch and several other common species. We will return to the lodge for breakfast, after which we will pack up and bird our way north towards Bodega Bodega Cordano, a small family run winery, where we will have lunch and learn about the early days of wine making in Uruguay.

We will spend much of the rest of the afternoon driving north towards Estancia La Paz. The drive will take approximately four hours. We'll bird near and at the Estancia in the afternoon. We may encounter our first Greater Rhea, tinamous, and a variety of other landbirds and waterfowl today. Night at Estancia La Paz near Paysandú.

Day 4, Tue, Nov 26. Farrapos area. We will spend the morning exploring the Farrapos area. This is a little-birded site, but may turn out to be one of the most diverse spots for birds in the country, and we'll be part of the vanguard, enjoying first-hand the diversity present in this corner of the country. We'll be looking mainly for seedeaters, the scarce Little

Thornbird, Lark-like Brushrunner and gallery forest birds that we may not see elsewhere. We will then have lunch at a nearby Estancia that has an impressive roses collection. Farrapos was only recently designated a wetland of international significance (Ramsar) and a national park. Night at Estancia La Paz.

Day 5, Wed, Nov 27. Drive to Valle del Lunarejo. After a leisurely breakfast, we will pack up and we will embark on our drive of several hours to the northern outpost of Valle del Lunarejo. Along the way, if conditions allow, we will make brief stops to look for various open country birds. Among them will be wintering populations of Upland Sandpiper, a species seldom seen by North Americans on its wintering grounds. Short-billed Pipits will be about, as well as Fork-tailed Flycatchers, Firewood-Gatherers, Brown-and-yellow Marshbirds, and perhaps the Red-legged Seriema. We will reach Posada Valle del Lunarejo in the afternoon and have dinner followed by a brief Owling walk to try to find species such as Long-tufted Screech-owl and Scissor-tailed Nightjar. Night at Posada Valle del Lunarejo.

Days 6-7, Thu-Fri, Nov 28-29. Valle del Lunarejo. We will have breakfast early each day (6:30 in the morning) and explore Valle del Lunarejo on our safari vehicle to explore the seldom-traveled roads of Valle del Lunarejo, stopping at any good patch of habitat to bird. We have one day and a half to explore all the valley has to offer and take full advantage of the wealth of birds this corner of the country has to offer, on day 7 we will head to the town of Rivera to visit Cerro Chapeu, a lovely winery on the border of Brazil and we will have lunch and visit the winery. Nights at Posada Valle del Lunarejo.

Day 8, Sat, Nov 30. To Hotel Parque Oceanico. This will be a long but rewarding day as we will traverse the country (luckily it isn't a very big one!) making birding stops along the way to explore marshes and large seasonally flooded fields that create great habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and marsh-dwelling species. This is rice-growing country and we may see many waterfowl, perhaps rails and other marsh species if the water levels are right. While here, we will stop along various marshes and lakes in the region looking for the great numbers of pampas and marsh birds to be found in the area looking for gems like Spectacled Tyrant, Scarlet-headed Marshbird, Marsh Seedeater and several species of Ducks, Coots and grebes. We will break our trip with lunch and wine in the town of Melo and make it to Hotel Parque Oceanico on the coast late in the day for dinner by the sea. Night at Hotel Parque Oceanico.

Day 9, Sun, Dec 1. Bañado del Indio and onto Jose Ignacio. On the morning of Day 9 we will head out before breakfast to explore Bañado del Indio. This area is particularly good for seedeaters, especially Marsh Seedeater, which will be one of our main targets, as well as the rare Black-and-white Monjita and the gorgeous Saffron-cowled Blackbird. We may also visit a historically important Portuguese fort, which conveniently has some good birding around it, before continuing to our comfortable lodge by the sea. Night at Anastasio Beach Hotel.



We'll find the brilliant Saffron-cowled Blackbird in the marshes of Bañado del Indio. Photograph by participant Russ Cole.

Day 10, Mon, Dec 2. Laguna Rocha and Bodega Garzon. Today we will head north to Laguna Rocha which has a great number of wintering shorebirds as well as populations of grassland and wetland species such as Paraguayan (South American) Snipe, Bay-capped Wren-Spintail, and a host of waterfowl. Weather permitting, we will cross the laguna by boat and meet our vehicle on the other side before heading to inland to visit the ultra-modern Bodega Garzon, where we will have lunch do some birding, visit this outstanding winery and, then we will head back to our lodge and go out to dinner at a nearby restaurant. Night at Anastasio Beach Hotel.

Day 11, Tue, Dec 3. Rocha Department. Today we will bird other areas in the Rocha Department, particularly the Laguna Castillo where waterfowl can abound. We may visit the Bañado del Indio once again, as it is a great birding site. There are also palm forests in the area, and the interesting Ombu tree forests. We'll visit a mix of sites and return to our hotel after lunch to enjoy a siesta. We will then head out to a nearby Estancia to have our final dinner as a group. Night at Anastasio Beach Hotel.

Day 12, Wed, Dec 4. To Punta del Este and on to Montevideo airport. After a leisurely breakfast we will visit a nearby lake for some relaxed birding as we look for shorebirds. We will enjoy a fine lunch by the sea and return to the lodge for an afternoon siesta. Then we will make our way to Montevideo with plenty of time for dinner before our late flights home.

Day 13, Thu, Dec 5. Arrival in the US. Overnight flights are scheduled to arrive in the US or other connecting cities in the morning, allowing for connections to other places on the continent. *Safe travels home!*

About Your Guide

Marcelo Padua was born in Belem at the mouth of the Amazon River. Growing up he spent his free time at his uncle's farm in an Amazon rainforest reserve observing everything from insects to mammals and birds. Marcelo began studying English at an early age and attended high school in Middletown, Pennsylvania in a student-exchange program. He is remarkably fluent and even taught English for a couple of years back home in Brazil. Following university in Rio de Janeiro, Marcelo transferred to law school in Cuiaba, but working as an English-speaking naturalist guide during school holidays soon made it clear to him that birding was much more than a hobby! With just a year to go for his bar exam, he turned his back on the law to hang out his shingle as a birding guide.

Marcelo met Bret Whitney in 2005 and embarked on a full-time guiding career with Field Guides in 2010. With his great sense of humor, impeccable organizational skills, and love of seeing birds, Marcelo has quickly become a reference for birding in Brazil, spending over 200 days each year in the field. A warning: Watch out if he sees displaying manakins of any kind! Marcelo makes his nest at the crossroads of the Pantanal and the Amazon in Cuiaba with his wife, Ana.

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

*"I'd go anywhere with **Marcelo Padua** because I know the tour will be seamless, fun and we will get the birds."
D. N.; *Beyond the Ports of Portugal**

Financial Information

FEE: \$7925 from Montevideo

DEPOSIT: \$800 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: May 27, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$1025

LIMIT: 10

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: US citizens will need a current passport with at least one blank page available for the visa stamp to enter Uruguay. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change.

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

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

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

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$7925** for one person in double occupancy from Montevideo. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 12, all meals from lunch on Day 2 through dinner on Day 12, 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 Montevideo, airport taxes, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to maids at our hotels, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$1025**. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

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

Please mail your **deposit of \$800** per person, or see fieldguides.com/payment-options/ for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by May 27, 2024**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NCP 7/2020

MP 2/23; peg 6/23; 5/24