



# NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA

&

# NAMIBIA

Walvis Bay Pre-Trip

*August 11 - 28, 2026*

*August 8 - 12, 2026*



*Crimson-breasted Gonolek (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia—these little-known countries offer some of the greatest wildlife viewing on the African continent. They are huge in size and sparsely populated, with large areas little disturbed by man. We will divide our time between them, contrasting the arid hills and plains of Namibia with the lush swamps and woodland of Botswana’s Okavango Delta region. We will focus on two major areas: Etosha National Park and the Okavango Delta. The tour ends in Livingstone, Zambia, affording participants the opportunity to see Victoria Falls, a roaring wall of water that is one of the great sights of Africa.

These areas of southern Africa, with their great mammal herds still intact and an impressive variety of birdlife, provide a glimpse of Africa as it was fifty years ago. Elephant and Lion are common, Black Rhino

and Cheetah still occur, and the bird species include such spectaculars as Goliath Heron, Slaty Egret, Saddle-billed Stork, African Pygmy-Goose, Secretarybird, Martial Eagle, Blue Crane, Kori Bustard, White-quilled Bustard, Pel's Fishing-Owl, Southern Carmine Bee-eater, Monteiro's Hornbill, Bare-cheeked Babbler, Crimson-breasted Gonolek, and Violet-eared Waxbill, plus an endemic thrush in every habitat. Photographic opportunities are excellent and ample time is taken for photography. This is an altogether incredible slice of Africa!

The coastal strip of Namibia is regarded as one of the oldest, and most arid, desert regions in the world—the Namib Desert; and it is characterized by a surprising number of uniquely adapted plant and animal species. On the optional pre-trip, we will explore this fascinating region and look for many of the endemic species that manage to survive in such a harsh environment. Swakopmund, our base for this pre-trip, has a strong German colonial history and character dating back to the days of German South West Africa.



*Monteiro's Hornbill (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 11-12, Days 1-2: Travel to Walvis Bay via Johannesburg

Participants will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 11 and arrive in Johannesburg on August 12 in time to connect to a mid-morning commercial flight to Walvis Bay (flight details to be announced). Upon arrival and clearing customs, you'll be met by our local agent and transferred to Swakopmund to join the pre-tour group. The garden of our hotel offers Orange-River

White-eye and White-backed Mousebird, both birds we won't see on the rest of the trip, while a short walk through the town to the coast offers the chance of seeing some of the coastal species like Crowned Cormorant, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls that we will also not see again on the rest of the tour.

Participants are strongly encouraged to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group by choosing to arrive into Johannesburg or Walvis Bay on August 11 and spending the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

**NIGHT (August 12):** Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

## August 13-14, Days 3-4: Erongo Mountains

Today we head by vehicle for the Ondudu Safari Lodge, stopping at various spots along the way to search for the host of endemic and near endemic birds that occur in this rugged scenery. The Lodge puts food out, and many of our target birds are habituated and are easily seen in camp. We will spend two nights at Ondudu, giving us a chance to explore the diverse habits and rugged mountain scenery. Karoo Long-billed Lark, White-tailed Shrike, Herero Chat, Rüppell's Parrot, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Violet-backed Starling and Carp's Tit's are all possible, and we will hopefully have added many of them by the time we depart

**NIGHTS:** Ondudu Safari Lodge, Erongo

## August 15, Day 5: Okaukuejo Area; Western Side of Etosha National Park

We depart this morning on a long drive to the Okaukuejo area in the western portion of Etosha National Park, typically reaching the park in time for a late lunch. After settling in, we will bird around camp, spending time observing the procession of game and birds coming to drink at the waterhole next to camp. The scenes at the waterholes in Etosha are so incredible that they should not be seen hurriedly. Typically, we will spend the better part of each morning at one waterhole, returning to camp for lunch and a break before an afternoon game drive. The turnover of animals is phenomenal, as various species have a favorite time to drink. It may be like this scenario from a past tour:



*Common Zebra and Blue Wildebeest (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

***“Just as we arrived a Lioness was walking away from the waterhole to join other members of her pride sleeping under a tree. A Tawny Eagle perched atop another tree and soon afterward forty guineafowl came to drink. Minutes later a herd of over a hundred Zebra appeared from our right. Soon the lead Zebra were up to their knees in the water as thirsty members of the herd pressed in from all sides. Suddenly, a Lanner Falcon swooped past and caught a dove. A little later Gemsbok, Wildebeest, and Black-faced Impala moved in to drink. Finally, a pair of Greater Kudu approached the water with extreme caution, but just as they started to drink, one of the Lions raised its head and the Kudu bolted.”***

The Okaukuejo area is drier than eastern parts of the park. Arid shortgrass plains border the pan, but most of the area is covered in acacia scrub. Southern Oryx (Gemsbok), Steinbok, Bat-eared Fox, and Yellow Mongoose are animals seen more frequently here, and the birds include Lappet-faced Vulture, Pale Chanting-Goshawk, Bateleur, Double-banded Sandgrouse (they drink at dusk at the camp waterhole), Double-banded Courser, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, various lark species, Kalahari Scrub-Robin, Barred Wren-Warbler, Chat Flycatcher, Red-headed Finch, and Yellow Canary. The immense, almost

unbelievable nests of the Sociable Weaver can be seen in this area, and Shikras and Gabar Goshawks are often seen dashing through the hordes of seed-eating birds. Night-time viewing at the floodlit waterhole at the edge of camp is justifiably famous, and sightings of all the major mammals are possible.

**NIGHT:** Okaukuejo Camp, Etosha National Park

## August 16, Day 6: Western Side of Etosha National Park

We will spend the day continuing to explore the western side of Etosha, visiting a number of waterholes in search of the immense variety of birds and animals that occur in this region. Among the special birds on the plains are the Common Ostrich, Blue Crane (one of the most elegant members of that stately family), Kori Bustard, the handsome White-quilled Bustard (or Korhaan), Secretarybird, Greater Kestrel, Double-banded Courser, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Cape Crow, Gray-backed Sparrow-Lark, Southern Anteater-Chat, and the gorgeous Violet-eared Waxbill. We have another chance to enjoy the variety of mammals coming in to drink at the floodlit waterhole on the edge of camp.

**NIGHT:** Okaukuejo Camp, Etosha National Park



*Double-banded Courser (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 17, Day 7: Central and Eastern Etosha

Today we will head east through Etosha, calling at a number of new waterholes before reaching the central camp—Halali. Moving from west to east in Etosha, the rainfall increases and the woodland becomes more extensive and varied; the animal and birdlife are also somewhat different. The central area around Halali is characterized by dense mopane woodland and offers a number of new bird species including rollers, shrikes, hornbills and owls.

**NIGHT:** Halali Camp, Etosha National Park

## August 18, Day 8: Namutoni Area

After a walk around camp, we will continue heading east through Etosha towards Namutoni—spending time at a number of waterholes en route. In addition to the constant procession of mammals at the waterholes, the birdlife is especially diverse and conspicuous in the Namutoni region. Burchell's Sandgrouse drink at the waterholes mid-morning, large raptors like the Martial Eagle and Black-chested Snake-Eagle are sighted regularly, and Crested and Swainson's francolins skulk in the thickets. The grounds of the camp are great for small birds and a typical mixed-flock might include the Pied Barbet, Chestnut-vented Warbler, Burnt-neck Eremomela, Crimson-breasted Gonolek, Brubru, Mariqua Sunbird, and Southern Cordonbleu. Other birds of this region include Red-necked Falcon, Kori and Red-crested bustards, Meyer's Parrot, Common Scimitarbill, White-crowned Shrike, Rattling Cisticola, and Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver.

**NIGHT:** Namutoni Camp, Etosha National Park

## August 19, Day 9: Namutoni Area

We will continue to explore the eastern side of Etosha, visiting some of the tall woodland growing on the deep red Kalahari sands and spending time at the various waterholes in this region. Predators are common and we will search for Leopard, Lion and possibly even Cheetah in this area. Birds— including near-endemics such as Burchell's Sandgrouse and Fawn-colored and Eastern Clapper larks—are also

targets during our exploration of this fascinating part of Etosha. We will wrap up our time in Etosha with a guided night drive after dinner which gives us a chance of seeing smaller nocturnal mammals such as Small-spotted Genet and African Porcupine as well as birds such as Spotted Thick-knee, Spotted Eagle-Owl and Barn Owl. The larger predators are also active after dark and sightings of Lion or Leopard are also possible.

**NIGHT:** Namutoni Camp, Etosha National Park

## August 20, Day 10: To Nxamaseri

This morning we will travel to Nxamaseri Island Lodge on the banks of the Okavango River in far northwestern Botswana. After a charter flight to a bush strip near Bagani in Namibia's Caprivi Strip, we will complete our trip to the lodge by road and boat—driving through the majestic baobab woodland and floodplains of the Mahango Nature Reserve en route. Both birding and game-viewing are spectacular in this reserve and excitement levels are usually extremely high by the time we reach Nxamaseri. Fed by rains in the Angola highlands, the Okavango River drains into a vast shallow basin in the Kalahari, never reaching the sea. Clumps of palms dot the islands of higher ground, tall trees line the riverbank, and dry brush is encountered just back from the water. Amidst this variety of habitats are found most of the African waterbirds and a number of rarely seen species such as Pel's Fishing-Owl, Rufous-bellied and Black herons, Slaty Egret, African Pygmy-Goose, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Bradfield's Hornbill, Gabon (Swamp) Boubou, and many smaller birds. **Note: this is a long travel day—with a charter flight, a game drive, a road transfer and a short boat trip before we reach Nxamaseri.**

**NIGHT:** Nxamaseri Island Lodge, Ncamasere

## August 21-22, Days 11-12: Nxamaseri Island Lodge

We have two full days to enjoy the birder's paradise that is the "Panhandle" region of the Okavango Delta. The camp resounds with bird song from before dawn to well after dark. Banks along the river attract many hole-nesters, including colonies of White-fronted Bee-eaters; plus Giant, Pied, and Malachite kingfishers; Little Bee-eater; and Plain Martins. The fruiting trees in the stretches of riverine forest bring in flocks of

starlings, Gray Go-away-birds and Meyer's Parrots. The calls of three species of barbet are often heard (including the colorful Black-collared), and passerines roam through the trees in mixed flocks.

Pride of place amongst Okavango birds must go to the huge Pel's Fishing-Owl, a magnificent bird that feeds on fish caught by night. We will search for this species around camp and also on our boat trips out on the river. These boat trips will enable us to see a fantastic array of waterbirds, with every bend of the river seeming to offer a new surprise. We may find a sandbar with nesting African Skimmers or a group of colorful Southern Carmine Bee-eaters scouting for a suitable place to start excavating their nests. Hippos and crocodiles plunge into the river at our approach and late in the afternoon we may catch a glimpse of the strange Sitatunga, a swamp-dwelling antelope.



*Pel's Fishina-Owl (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

Nxamaseri is located close to the Tsodilo Hills World Heritage Site—home to over 4,000 individual rock paintings dating back, in some cases, over three thousand years. Our lodge offers an optional half-day visit to this intriguing site and, depending on the level of interest in the group, individual participants or possibly the whole group may opt for this excursion. **Note:** In cases where only part of the group is interested in making this excursion, the leader will remain with the majority.

**NIGHTS:** Nxamaseri Island Lodge, Ncamasere

## August 23, Day 13: Nxamaseri to Xakanaxa Camp

After breakfast we'll travel into the heart of the Okavango Delta. From the air we will see the immense size of this wilderness, one of the largest bodies of pure water in the world. We land at Xakanaxa Camp, situated amidst a variety of habitats from inundated grassland to park-like groves of big *Acacia*, apple-leaf, and mopane trees. A small river channel flowing near the camp attracts both mammals and birds, including the rare Slaty Egret and the Saddle-billed Stork, Spur-winged Goose, Long-toed Lapwing, and the endangered Wattled Crane.

**NIGHT:** Xakanaxa Camp, Moremi Game Reserve

## August 24, Day 14: Xakanaxa Camp

We have a full day to explore the environs of Xakanaxa. The numbers of game animals in this area vary a great deal, but usually present are such water-loving antelope as Red Lechwe, waterbuck and reedbuck. We will explore the mosaic of woodland, grassland and floodplain habitats from open game-drive vehicles, enjoying the great variety of herons, egrets, waterfowl, kingfishers, swallows and other avian inhabitants found here. Elephant sightings are typically excellent and cats are also well represented. Sightings of Lion, Leopard and even Cheetah are possible.

**NIGHT:** Xakanaxa Camp, Moremi Game Reserve



*Leopard (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 25, Day 15: Xakanaxa to Livingstone

This morning, after a short game drive, we fly to Kasane to clear immigration and then fly to Livingstone in Zambia. After settling into our hotel, we will visit the world-famous Victoria Falls. These falls have rightly been considered one of the “Seven Natural Wonders of the World” and we will spend some time appreciating the immense spectacle of the Zambezi River plunging 300 feet into the gorge below. The continual spray from the falls has created a verdant rainforest and we will undoubtedly find some interesting birds here. These may include Trumpeter and Crowned hornbills; Schalow’s Turaco; Bearded Scrub-Robin; African Paradise-Flycatcher; Yellow-breasted Apalis; various sunbirds including Amethyst, Collared and Purple-banded; Black-backed Puffback; Tropical Boubou; and Red-winged Starling. Livingstone is also one of the meccas for purchasing traditional African art and crafts, and we will have time to browse through the markets, which offer a wide range of carvings (in both wood and stone), kitchen utensils and basket-ware.

**NIGHT:** Royal Livingstone, Livingstone



*Schalow's Turaco (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 26, Day 16: Livingstone Area

We will have all day to explore this fascinating area and our activities will include a boat ride above the Falls, where we have the opportunity to visit some of the islands nestled in the Zambezi River. Here we may find Malachite, Pied, Giant and, if we are lucky, the scarce Half-collared kingfishers; White-headed (-crowned) Lapwing; the gorgeous Rock Pratincole; and, if we are very fortunate, Pel's Fishing-Owl or an African Finfoot.

In the afternoon we will visit Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, located on the banks of the Zambezi River above the Falls. The area is generally good for many of the small seedeaters, as well as raptors and many bush birds. On past tours it has given us stunning views of the usually secretive Collared Palm-Thrush. It also gives us a good chance of sighting White Rhino.

**NIGHT:** Royal Livingstone, Livingstone



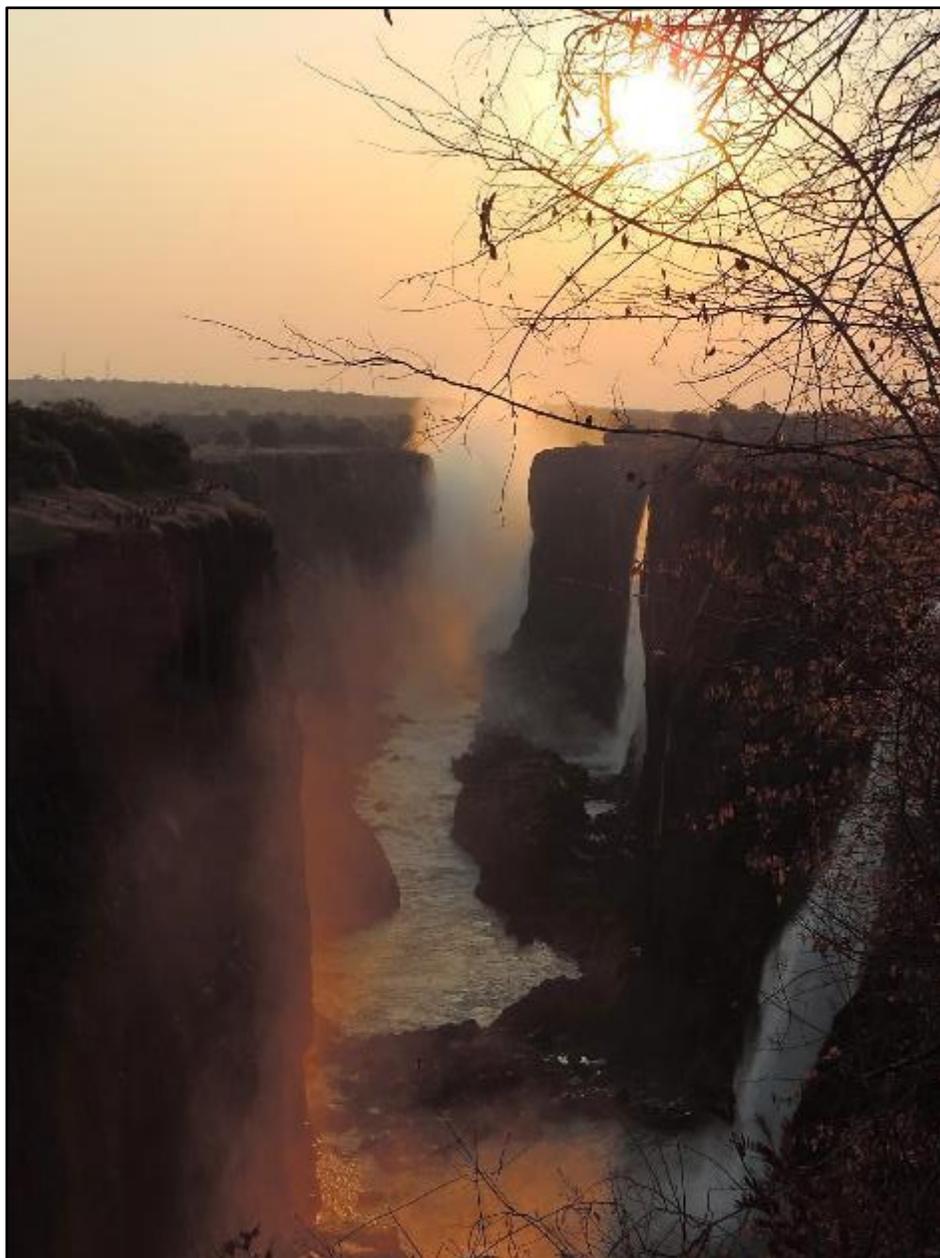
*Square-lipped (or White) Rhinoceros (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 27-28, Days 17-18: Livingstone to Johannesburg; Departure for Home

On our last morning, we will again visit the Falls to enjoy the spectacular rainbows created by the spray flung up by the torrents and to look for any of the local specials that we might have missed. After a leisurely breakfast and check-out, we will enjoy birding from the sundowner deck on the river in front of the hotel until our transfer to the airport for an afternoon flight (details to be announced) to Johannesburg which will connect to various overnight flights, which will arrive at their destinations on the morning of August 28 in time for homeward connections.

## NAMIBIA: WALVIS BAY PRE-TRIP

AUGUST 8–12, 2026



*Sunset over Victoria Falls (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 8-9, Days 1-2: Travel to Walvis Bay via Johannesburg

All participants will need to depart on overnight flights from various cities on August 8, which arrive in Johannesburg on August 9 in time to connect to a mid-morning commercial flight to Walvis Bay (flight details to be announced).

Upon arrival, we'll be met by our local agent and plan to bird the extensive Kuiseb Delta region in search of the endemic Dune Lark and other desert species before transferring to our hotel in Swakopmund. The bush along the Kuiseb Delta is home to species such as Dusky Sunbird, Cape Sparrow and White-backed Mousebird, as well as Spotted Eagle-Owls.

Participants are strongly encouraged to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group by choosing to arrive into Johannesburg on or before August 8 and spending the night at an airport-area hotel. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

**NIGHT (August 9):** Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund

## August 10-11, Days 3-4: Swakopmund and Walvis Bay

We have two full days to bird the local area including Walvis Bay, the Kuiseb Delta, the two large salt works located on the coast, and the gravel plains north of Swakopmund. Our targets will include endemic and near endemics such as Cape, Crowned and Bank cormorants; African Oystercatcher; Hartlaub's Gull; South African Shelduck; and Damara Tern. Large tern roosts are often found in the area and we will search these for rarities such as Royal Tern amongst the more numerous Common, Arctic and Black terns. We can also expect numbers of Greater and Lesser flamingos and Great White Pelicans, as well as a host of shorebirds. Our trip coincides with the arrival of large numbers of waders from the northern hemisphere and Curlew Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone and Bar-tailed Godwit, amongst others, are all likely. The area is home to between 90 and 95% of the world population of the gorgeous Chestnut-banded Plovers and also regularly attracts vagrant shorebirds. Almost anything is possible, even familiar American species such as Baird's and White-rumped sandpipers. Away from the coast we will look for endemics such as Bokmakierie and Orange River White-eye—all species unlikely to be seen on the main tour.

Away from the bays, estuaries and lagoons on the coast, we will be searching for the near-endemic Gray's Lark. This unusual passerine has adopted nocturnal displays, possibly to avoid the searing daytime heat in summer. Tractrac Chats and the nomadic Burchell's Courser are other possibilities in these apparently lifeless plains.

**NIGHTS:** Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund



*Greater Flamingos at Walvis Bay (photo by Geoff Lockwood)*

## August 12, Day 5: Swakop River; Begin Namibia, Botswana & Zambia Tour

We will begin this day birding the mouth of the Swakop River before greeting any newly arriving Namibia, Botswana & Zambia participants later this afternoon.

## Essential Tour Information

**TOUR SIZE:** Each section will be limited to 6 participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** Geoff Lockwood along with local guides familiar with the wildlife and birds of their areas.



**Geoff Lockwood's** interest and involvement with birds dates back to his early years at school and forms part of a wider interest in the biodiversity of the Southern African sub-region. After leaving school, he began a career as a bird artist, illustrator, and author. In 1981, he published *Garden Birds of Southern Africa* and later also contributed half the illustrations to the 5th and 6th editions of *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa*. Geoff is currently based at the Delta

Environmental Centre in Johannesburg where he acts as part-time manager and education officer, working to instill an environmental ethos in teachers and school groups that visit the Centre. For the past 30 years he has been involved with local birding organizations and has served on the Council of the Southern African Ornithological Society—now BirdLife South Africa, for most of that time. He travels widely in the region, presenting lectures, talks, and courses on bird identification, ecology, and behavior, and was also involved in the training of local bird guides as part of a BLSA initiative to give communities a vested interest in the conservation of their local birds. With 892 species listed within southern Africa, Geoff is amongst the region's top birders. He has led tours to many destinations in Southern and Central Africa, as well as Kenya and Israel.

**TOUR FEES:** The main tour is **\$24,775** per person based on double occupancy. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 17, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, internal charter flights and guide services provided by the tour leader. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city. The fee also excludes alcoholic beverages, laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the "TIPPING" sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

The pre-trip is **\$4,795** per person in double occupancy. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to lunch on Day 5, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, all park entrance fees and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It

does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city. The fee also excludes alcoholic beverages, laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the “TIPPING” sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS:** If you request single accommodations on the main tour, a single supplement of **\$3,295** will be added to your tour fee.

If you request single accommodations on the pre-trip, a single supplement of **\$250** will be added to your tour fee.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for each of the sections is **\$1,000** per person. A second deposit of **30% of the remaining tour fee** is due 180 days prior to departure (February 9, 2026 for the Pre-Trip; February 12, 2026 for the main tour). We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (April 10, 2026 for the Pre-Trip; April 13, 2026 for the main tour) prior to the tour departure dates.

**EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS:** Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed on to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**FUEL SURCHARGES:** Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TIPPING:** An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are **not** included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and **not** sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

## **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS**

### **CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT FOR MAIN TOUR:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

### **CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT FOR PRE-TRIP:**

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

**CANCELLATION BY VENT:** If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and

will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A **“Force Majeure”** event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

**SUGGESTED OPTIONS:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with **Redpoint Travel Protection** as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist®** plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

### **About Redpoint Travel’s Ripcord Plan**

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [Ripcord Travel Insurance](#); or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

### **About Medjet’s MedjetAssist Plan**

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company’s primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://www.Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

## **GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

**AIR TRAVEL:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**BAGGAGE:** is the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage to **forty-four pounds** IN TOTAL per person, packed in soft, crushable bags that will fit into the charter aircraft we will be using. Luggage pods on the aircraft are restricted in size and also have small hatch-openings. **Hard-shelled or framed baggage with wheels is therefore not suitable. If needed, a separate fold-down set of luggage wheels can be included, however.**

- A small day pack containing your binoculars, water, sunglasses, sunscreen etc. as well as a **small camera** (not a SLR camera with long telephoto lenses) can be carried in addition to the 44 lb. luggage limit.
- Anyone intending to bring along large quantities of photographic equipment will need to notify VENT well in advance and, if necessary, pay a weight surcharge for all charter flights. (See also the section on PHOTOGRAPHY.)

**It is important to note that the above restrictions are meant for your safety and that of the rest of the group and that pilots have the right to refuse to load luggage which exceeds given weight allowances. Also note that a less-than-fully-booked tour does not mean that participants can assume that it is safe to exceed luggage weight limits.**

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

**TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure with a sufficient number of blank pages is required for United States citizens for all four countries visited on this tour. A visa is NOT required for U.S. citizens traveling to South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. A tourist visa is not currently required by US citizens for travel to Namibia, providing their stay is shorter than 90 days. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their nearest consulates for instructions.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight field clothing will be sufficient in most cases. For part of the tour, we will be using an open-sided game viewing vehicle. Participants should bring warm clothing—hats, gloves and, in particular, a windbreaker for the possibly cold mornings (see CLIMATE & WEATHER below). Layers that can be put on (or shed) as needed are recommended. Bright colors **should be avoided for field wear**; beiges, grays, greens and browns are ideal for this tour. Sneakers and/or good walking shoes

will suffice, as there is very little walking on this tour; hiking boots are not typically needed unless participants have ankle problems. No rain gear should be necessary (although damp, foggy mornings are possible on the coastal pre-tour). Many of the camps we visit have swimming-, or plunge pools, and packing a bathing costume is a good idea. Dress is informal at all camps and lodges. Expect laundry service to be available at most locations.

**EQUIPMENT:** Items to bring should include a **good pocket flashlight or headlamp (lighting in many of the camps is rather low and you will need a good flashlight/headlamp to complete your checklist each evening)**, hat, sunglasses (to combat glare and dust), sunscreen, moisturizing lotion and lip balm, a small quantity of insect repellent, a washcloth and soap, all of your camera needs including batteries, personal medications, an alarm clock, and a water bottle. As a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, a change of clothing, toiletry items, medication, and travel documents in your airline carry-on bag.

**Binoculars:** We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

**Spotting Scopes:** Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

**Photography:** While photographic opportunities on this trip are exceptional and every effort will be made to allow participants to take great photos or videos, **this is not a personal photographic tour!** Keen photographers need to recognize and acknowledge the interests of all other participants and understand that the leaders may intervene should photography interfere unduly with the enjoyment of the tour by other participants. As on all tours, a measure of give-and-take is needed to insure that everyone enjoys their tour.

## **DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS**

**CLIMATE & WEATHER:** August and September mark the end of winter in Africa, and although the days are usually dry and sunny, there is a chance of very cold and windy conditions. Expect mostly sunny and mild weather with the extremes ranging from day-time highs of ninety degrees to early-morning lows of twenty-eight degrees. Frost is still a possibility on parts of this tour! Early mornings on the coastal pre-tour are often marked by cold, clammy fog but this usually burns off by mid-morning. We may experience dry, dusty conditions on part of the tour! We may experience dry, dusty conditions on part of the tour—particularly in Etosha, and people who are sensitive should bring a bandana or dust mask as a precaution.

**TOILET STOPS:** Please be aware that it is illegal to alight from our vehicle—other than in the camps or at one of the limited toilet stops in the Etosha National Park. This can result in some long stretches confined to the vehicle and participants need to plan accordingly.

**INTERNET ACCESS:** Expect Wi-Fi to be available at all hotels and lodges except Nxamaseri Island Lodge and Xakanaxa Camp (limited service).

**ELECTRICITY:** 220/240 volts. Note that South Africa, Namibia and Botswana use a plug socket with three **round** pins and participants will need an adapter (**Type M**) in the countries visited on this tour. Zambia uses Types C, D and G. The Royal Livingstone will provide adaptors if needed.

**LANGUAGE:** English and other local dialects.

**TIME:** 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

**CURRENCY:** South African Rand (R) in Namibia, Pula in Botswana, and Kwacha in Zambia. USD cash is best converted to Rands in Johannesburg (for Namibia) but can be used in Swakopmund and Livingstone. **Note that Namibian \$ are not accepted outside of Namibia and given that Rands are legal tender (at a rate of 1:1) you should not convert US\$ to N\$.** USD cash can also be used in Botswana lodges, but rates are generally unfavorable. Visa and Master Card are widely accepted while American Express has limited use. USD cash can also be used in Botswana lodges, but rates are but rates are generally unfavorable. Visa and Master Card are widely accepted while American Express has limited use.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

**HEALTH:** Medical facilities are good in the urban areas and adequate in rural. Sanitary conditions are generally good at all stops on this tour and foodstuffs including salads, fruits, etc. are safe to eat. Tap water is safe in urban areas, but if in doubt, stick with pre-packaged or boiled drinks. Overall standards of hygiene in the safari camps and hotels are good. Although no vaccinations are required, it is recommended that your yellow fever, hepatitis, and tetanus protection be current. Malaria is present including the chloroquine-resistant strain.

VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying "Up to Date" with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

**SUN EXPOSURE:** The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very

painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

**INSECT REPELLENTS:** There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET:** (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone® (Permethrin):** is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

## **SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION**

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

## FIELD GUIDES:

### ***Birds:***

Allan, David. *A Photographic Guide to Birds of Prey of Southern, Central and East Africa*. London: New Holland Publishers, 1996.

Kemp, Allan and Meg. *Sasol Birds of Prey of Africa and its Islands*. London: New Holland Publishers, 1998.

Maclean, Gordon Lindsay, John Voelcker Bird Book Fund. *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town, 1993. This is more of a handbook, with extended information on behavior, breeding, diet, etc.

Chittenden, Hugh, Greg Davies and Ingrid Weiersbye. *Roberts Bird Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cape Town: John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, 2016

Newman, Kenneth. *Newman's Birds of Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Random House Struik Publishers, 2010.

Sinclair, Ian, Phil Hockey, Warwick Tarboton, and Peter Ryan. *Birds of Southern Africa*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Princeton Field Guides: Struik Publishers, 2011.

Smartphone App; Roberts Multimedia Birds of Southern Africa – a comprehensive field guide and handbook with photographs, field guide illustrations and sound recordings of all species recorded in the sub-region. A revised edition Roberts Birds 2 is available for iPhone.

**Mammals:**

Apps, P. *Smithers' Mammals of Southern Africa – a field guide*. Struik Publishers

Estes, Richard Despard. *The Behavior Guide to African Mammals*. University of California Press.

Kingdon, Jonathan. *The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals*. Academic Press/ Russel Friedman Books.

Stuart, C. and T. *Field Guide to the Mammals of Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

**General Social, Historical and Geographical Background:**

Bannister, Anthony and Peter Johnson. *Africa's Harsh Paradise: Namibia*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

Bannister, Anthony and Peter Johnson. *Okavango: Sea of Land, Land of Water*. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

Marshall, Elizabeth. *The Harmless People*. (Revised edition). Vintage Books: October, 1989.

Michener, James. *The Covenant*. (Reissue) Fawcett Books: 1987.

Owens, Mark and Delia. *Cry of the Kalahari*. Mariner Books.

Ross, Karen. *Jewel of the Kalahari – Okavango*. Southern Book Publishers/BBC Books.

## **TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.**, a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on December 31, 2025 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

P/GL/12/09/24

EL/SB/01/30/2026