



SOUTHERN PORTUGAL IN WINTER

January 7 - 19, 2027

A brand-new tour to tradition-rich Portugal promises marvelous wintertime birding with touches of cultural highlights.

Charming Portugal is a country beloved for its cultural riches and enticing year-round climate. Not known to many, Portugal is also a premier country for winter birding where resident specialties are joined by thousands of birds from farther north. Like our popular spring and fall tours, this is a birding trip garnished with cultural highlights. Our itinerary includes visits to Portugal's most important birding areas and forays to several famous historical sites.

The Mediterranean climate that people find so irresistible in the summer months is equally agreeable to birds during the winter. While songbirds are in a more limited supply at this season, January is a time for avian spectacles when coastal wetlands and interior grasslands host thousands of waterfowl, cranes, raptors, shorebirds, pipits, larks, and buntings. Consequently, we anticipate encounters with a wonderful assemblage of birds. Graylag Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Garganey, Common and Red-crested pochards, and Tufted Duck and Spanish Sparrow; Reed Bunting; and more.

Around Lisbon we'll visit the famous Tagus Estuary and Sado Estuary nature reserves, Portugal's top birding sites for waterfowl and shorebirds. We'll explore the Castro Verde rolling plains and the Guadiana Valley Nature Park; the hills, escarpments, and Holm Oak and Umbrella Pine forests in the Alentejo region—the domains of bustards, vultures, eagles, and many passerines; and we'll journey to the coastal Algarve, a scenic region of bluffs, hills, lagoons, and beaches, home to protected wetlands, nature parks, and reserves where some of the most localized European species are found.

The country's rich cultural heritage is on display at different points along our route. At various times we'll be joined by licensed historians who will guide us through waterfowl highlights while wading birds are represented by White Stork, Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Spoonbill, Great Bittern, and Squacco Heron. Other high-profile species we'll seek are Golden, Spanish, Bonelli's, and Booted eagles; Red and Black-winged kites; Common Crane; Great and Little bustards; Purple Sandpiper; Pied Avocet; European Golden-Plover; Northern Lapwing; Black-tailed and Bar-tailed godwits; Audouin's, Slender-billed, and Mediterranean gulls; Black-bellied Sandgrouse; Common

Kingfisher; Bluethroat; Blue Rock-Thrush; Dartford Warbler; Iberian Green Woodpecker; Southern Gray Shrike; Iberian Magpie; Black Redstart;

In the historic districts of Lisbon, Évora and Mértola, we'll wander serpentine streets through historic plazas and squares en route to an array of castles, cathedrals, museums, Roman ruins, and promenades.

Complementing our days in the field will be numerous opportunities to sample Portugal's many culinary delights including its famous wines. With its multi-faceted approach, this program is designed to satisfy the needs of the serious birder while offering a look at a culturally rich European country.

Very good accommodations and food; light physical demands; mild winter conditions expected.

January 7 & 8: Days 1–2: Departure from home; arrival in Lisbon; late afternoon at Tagus Estuary

Flights from the United States on January 7 generally depart in the late afternoon or early evening, and arrive Lisbon, Portugal (Lisbon Portela Airport, airport code LIS) on the morning of January 8. Upon arrival, you will be met by our local ground operator who will provide transfers to our hotel. Lisbon is a major metropolitan city but our accommodation for the next several nights, *Hotel Praia do Sal Resort*, sits about 20–25 minutes outside the city center and is close to two major birding sites, the Tagus Estuary and Sado Estuary preserves.*

After settling in to our rooms, we'll spend most of the day relaxing and getting rested from the long international flight. We'll have lunch around mid-day in a local restaurant offering quality Portuguese fare and then take off for most of the afternoon. Late in the day, we'll gather for a short and easy excursion to the nearby Tagus Estuary for our first look at Portuguese birds. We will return to the hotel with time to freshen up before reconvening for a trip welcome and orientation followed by dinner.

* Anyone wanting more down time, or more time in Portugal than is included in the program, is encouraged to arrive a day or more early.

NIGHTS: Aboard aircraft in transit to Lisbon (January 7)

Hotel Praia do Sal Resort, Alcochete (January 8)

January 9, Day 3: Tagus Estuary Nature Preserve

Today, our immersion in Portuguese birding commences with a full day at the nearby Tagus Estuary Nature Preserve, one of the country's best known and most productive birding locations.

The complex of habitats encompassed within the Tagus Estuary constitutes not only one of Portugal's most important nature preserves, but one of the most vitally important wetland areas in Europe. Established in 1976 to protect the estuary of the Tagus River, the preserve covers 34,500 acres of habitat ranging from mudflats to saltmarsh, reedbeds, salt pans, arable land, rice fields and Cork Oak woodlands. With a close outlet to the Atlantic Ocean, the estuary survives under the influence of water brought in by the tide, as well as by freshwater creeks which crisscross the area.

The Tagus Estuary presents marvelous birding opportunities year-round. In the winter the preserve hosts tens of thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl, while the fall and spring are fantastic times to view migrating shorebirds, a host of herons, egrets and spoonbills, birds of prey, and breeding landbirds. Among the areas we'll visit today are the Barroca d'Alva rice fields, salt pans of the Atalaya and Samouco, inter-tidal mudflats and salt marshes of Hortas, and other areas. The birding should be positively marvelous, and we anticipate accruing a high diversity of birds. A representation of the many species possible here includes Common Shelduck, Eurasian Wigeon, Greater Flamingo, Little Grebe, Water Rail, Merlin, Northern Lapwing, European Golden Plover, Kentish and Common Ringed plovers, Bar-tailed and Black-tailed godwits, Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin, Little Stint, Common Redshank, Spotted Redshank, Squacco Heron, Black-winged Kite, Eurasian Kestrel, Eurasian Wryneck, Song Thrush, Sardinian and Dartford warblers, Zitting Cisticola, Short-toed Treecreeper, Common Linnet, Spotless Starling, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, White Wagtail, and European Serin.

We will return to the hotel late this afternoon after what surely will have been a most memorable time in the field.

NIGHT: Hotel Praia do Sal Resort, Alcochete

January 10, Day 4: City tour of Lisbon

Today we'll turn our sights to Lisbon, Portugal's lovely capital and a city profuse with architectural and historical riches. Our plan for the day is a city tour of Lisbon. We will be joined by a licensed guide who will lead us on an interpretive walking and driving tour that visits a number of important sites that reflect over 800 years of varying cultural influences.

Lisbon is Portugal's largest city, with over half a million people, and takes its name from "Olissipo," which has its origins in the Phoenician words "Allis Ubbo," meaning "enchanted port." The municipality of Lisbon is divided into civil parishes, of which there are 53; however, most people recognize the districts of the city in terms of *bairros* (historic neighborhoods), each characterized by distinct landmarks and architectural styles. The famed *Alfama* district is one of the best known *bairros*.

Our exact itinerary is to be determined, but the morning tour will visit some of the city's most famous sites including:

Parque Eduardo VII and Avenida da Liberdade: Parque Eduardo VII is an ornamental park offering panoramic views of the city and Tagus River. From the park, the tree-lined Avenida da Liberdade leads to the Baixa district (downtown district) and features a towering statue dedicated to the Marquis of Pombal (the person responsible for the rebuilding of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake).

Baixa District (Pombaline Lower Town): This historic district encompasses Lisbon's downtown area and forms the heart of the city. Beautiful plazas, grand avenues, and fine restaurants are characteristic. Highlights include Rossio Square, Rua da Augusta—Lisbon's grandest avenue—and Terreiro do Paco, the eighteenth-century grand square that includes one of Lisbon's most iconic sites: the Rua Augusta Arch.

Alfama District: This, the oldest district of Lisbon, stretches from a high point of the city down to the Tagus River. Highlights include the Cathedral of Lisbon (Sé Cathedral), built in the twelfth century on the site of a mosque following the expulsion of the Moors; and a renovated historical quarter featuring winding streets, homes with small shops downstairs, restaurants, and tastefully remodeled buildings.



Alfama District, Lisbon © Shutterstock

In the late morning we'll make our way to Belém. At the far west end of Lisbon, Belém is the location of the old harbor from which ships departed for voyages across the Atlantic in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries during the Age of Discovery. After lunch we'll stop to view the iconic Torre de Belém (Tower of Belém), followed by a visit to the Monument to the Discoveries. The tour will conclude with a visit to the Jerónimos Monastery, a masterpiece of gothic architecture and the burial place of Vasco da Gama.

Upon conclusion of our tour, we will return to our hotel. Time permitting, we may make a late stop or two at the Tagus Estuary.

NIGHT: Hotel Praia do Sal Resort, Alcochete

January 11, Day 5: Tagus Estuary Nature Preserve

The greater ecosystem of the Tagus Estuary is large enough that we can't possibly cover it all in one visit, which is why we will spend a second day here. We'll want to take advantage of the cool

morning hours to be out in the field early, visiting a host of other interesting sites including the open fields, rice fields, reed beds, freshwater lagoons, intertidal mudflats, and salt marshes of the Ponta da Erva area, and the Cork Oak woodlands of Pancas. Exploring these dynamic ecosystems, there will be excellent opportunities to observe Graylag Goose, Little Bustard, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Black-bellied Plover, Whimbrel (European subspecies), Eurasian Curlew, Ruff, Common Snipe, Green Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Great Bittern, White and Black storks, Glossy Ibis, Eurasian Marsh-Harrier, Hen Harrier, Eurasian Jay, Carrion Crow, Eurasian Penduline, Crested and Long-tailed Tits, Black Redstart, Rock Sparrow, numerous species of finches, and Corn Bunting.

NIGHT: Hotel Praia do Sal Resort, Alcochete

January 12, Day 6: Travel to *Alentejo* region: historical tour of Évora; the rolling plains of Castro Verde

One of the many attractions of traveling in Portugal is that distances are not great. The entire country covers approximately 35,600 square miles, which places it on a par with the U.S. state of Maine. With our travel limited to the southern half of the country, a compact route means less time in transit.

Departing the Lisbon area this morning, the next stage of the tour begins as we transfer into the *Alentejo*, a rural and highly scenic region spanning the south-central part of the country. The origin of the name literally translates to “across the Tagus,” as it is the namesake river that divides this broad region from the rest of the country. Stretching from the Atlantic Ocean south of Lisbon east to the border with Spain, the *Alentejo* is a land of high topographic variability. It is perhaps best known for its expansive landscapes, namely the rolling plains of Castro Verde, typified by gently contoured hills and vast stretches of “pseudo-steppe” covered in a mix of grasslands, farmlands, and groves of Olive trees and Holm and Cork oaks. Elsewhere, especially in the vicinity of the border, the Guadiana Valley is more rugged, granite bearing country where the landscape of scrub covered hills is etched by ravines, gullies, and rocky rivers. The *Alentejo* is also a major food-growing area and is sometimes referred to as the “breadbasket of Portugal.” The municipality of Évora is a prominent center of human activity in the *Alentejo* and boasts world-class historical and archaeological sites.

Our destination this morning is Évora, situated across the Tagus River a mere one-hour drive from the hotel. We will spend the first part of the day in the company of a local guide enjoying a tour of the city's best-known landmarks.

Branded as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Évora is the proud owner of a rich heritage that spans every period in Portuguese history. Our tour will start from Praça do Giraldo in the heart of the city, from which we'll wander through the narrow cobblestone streets to the Cathedral of Évora, the largest medieval cathedral in Portugal, dating



Roman Ruins, Évora © Birds and Nature

from the 12th century A.D. We'll then visit the Roman Temple, the most prominent structure in town, before heading on to the beautiful Portas de Moura (gates of Moura), the church of São Francisco and the remarkable Capela dos Ossos (Bone Chapel).

After lunch in the city we'll head southeast to the pretty town of Mértola, overlooking the scenic Guadiana River. On the way to Mértola and before we check-in at the *Hotel Museu*, our home for the next three nights, we shall cross the rolling plains of Castro Verde, providing the first opportunity to see open country birds such as Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Great Bustard, Eurasian Skylark, and Calandra Lark.

NIGHT: Hotel Museu, Mértola

January 13-14, days 7–8: Guadiana Valley Nature Park and rolling plains of Castro Verde

We will spend two full days exploring the countryside from the Guadiana Valley to the rolling plains of Castro Verde. Taken as a whole, this region is arguably the single greatest birding area in

Portugal, where storks, sandgrouse, bustards, raptors, and a broad array of seasonal and resident birds signify the early days of autumn. On the first day we will visit the Guadiana Valley Nature Park before redirecting our explorations to the Castro Verde region where we will spend the following day.

Situated in close proximity to the Spanish border, the Guadiana Valley is a scenic and bird-productive natural reserve typified by rolling hills punctuated by bluffs, rocky outcrops and occasional rivers. This country is not as gentle as the landscapes to the west, but it is this slightly rugged terrain that supports a range of very special birds. Raptors are common and conspicuous here while the brush-covered hills and ravines host a range of Mediterranean and Iberian specialty birds. Some of the birds possible here, even likely, are Red-legged Partridge, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Northern Goshawk, Stock Dove, Iberian Gray Shrike, Eurasian Jackdaw, Thekla Lark, Eurasian Crag-Martin, Cetti's Warbler, Blue Rock-Thrush, Gray Wagtail, and Rock Bunting. When not scouring the surrounding vegetation, we'll keep an eye to the sky as we are likely to spot Cinereous and Eurasian Griffon vultures, and Golden and Bonelli's eagles—the latter species always a treat to see as it has declined broadly across much of its European range.

To the west of Mértola, the Castro Verde region is one of open “pseudo-steppe” peppered with small towns and villages. Much of the countryside is a mix of native grasslands, pasturelands, and farms spread over approximately 220 square miles. So important is this area that it is classified as a Special Protection Area for birds. It is not hyperbole to refer to the birdlife here as amazing. White Storks nest atop the numerous power poles during the breeding season, and a few individuals will start to occupy the nests; Iberian Magpie is a common roadside bird; Great and Little bustards thrive in the rolling countryside; and the skies are patrolled by Eurasian Griffon and Cinereous vultures. The Spanish



Iberian Magpie © Faísca

Eagle is also found here, and we'll likely have good opportunities to study this resplendent bird of prey. Until the last decade, the Spanish Eagle was a bird in dramatic decline and had all but disappeared from Portugal. Thanks to intensive conservation efforts, the bird's slide has been

halted, and it is now seen in Portugal again in increasing numbers. Another charismatic bird not to be missed is the Common Crane, which we should see in good flocks, feeding on the Holm Oak acorns.

We'll also anticipate an array of regional specialty birds among the more widespread species. Some of these are conspicuous and easily seen while others will require considerably more effort to find. A sampling of some of the higher profile birds we'll seek includes Great Crested Grebe, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Eurasian Thick-knee, Little Ringed Plover, Red Kite, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Little Owl, Eurasian Hoopoe, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Iberian Gray Shrike, Wood and Calandra larks, European Stonechat, Spanish Sparrow, Meadow and Water pipits, and Hawfinch.

NIGHTS: Hotel Museu, Mértola

January 15, Day 9: Historical tour of Mértola; Guadiana Valley; travel to *Algarve* region: birding the Tavira area

We'll leave the *Alentejo* today for the *Algarve*, the next major administrative region to the south. Before departing, however, we will enjoy a sightseeing and historical tour of Mértola.

The ancient city of Mértola has been inhabited from time immemorial. Situated at the head of navigability of the Guadiana River, Mértola was for many centuries a site of vital strategic importance, offering control of Mediterranean trade routes and access into the interior. Iberians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, and Moors all had their time here.

Our walking tour (about a two-and-a-half-hours) will take us first to the Mother Church (the former Mosque), then to the acropolis and Islamic quarters. From there we'll ascend to the castle, then on to the old blacksmith's forge before concluding with visits (time permitting) to the Islamic Art Museum.

Depending on timing, and birds still to seek, we may include a final visit to Guadiana Valley Nature Park or other nearby areas to the south of Mértola before continuing on to the *Algarve*.

The *Algarve* is Portugal's southernmost administrative region. It is one of the most economically prosperous regions of Portugal, due in large part to a beautiful coastline that draws millions of people a year. Beyond tourism, the *Algarve* is a major source of food production, especially for seafood and agricultural products. Away from the more touristy facilities, the *Algarve* contains extensive natural areas and considerable scenic beauty. The Tavira area on the southeastern coast, where we'll spend three nights, is home to a complex of canals, saline flats, and salt pans, all of which often teem with birds.



Acropolis at Mértola © Birds and Nature

We'll arrive in Tavira sometime in the afternoon and proceed directly to the hotel for check-in. Time permitting, we'll spend the late afternoon exploring the multitude of habitats and ecosystems in the nearby area. Wetland birding will be an obvious theme, and a variety of shorebirds, gulls, and terns are possible. Mediterranean, Audouin's, and Slender-billed gulls are likely while Yellow-legged, Lesser Black-backed, and Black-headed gulls can be numerous. Gull-billed, Caspian, and Little terns are also present. Pallid Swift, a specialty bird of southern Europe, is the most numerous swift in the region.

NIGHT: Hotel Vila Galé Albacora, Tavira

January 16, Day 10: Ria Formosa Natural Park

The coastal settlement of Tavira dates to the 1st century B.C. following the Roman conquest. Its proximity to the sea was the primary reason for its development, where fishing and fish-salting stoked a rapidly growing economy. Much later, in Moorish times, Tavira grew into one of the biggest towns in the *Algarve*. During the Christian "Reconquista," starting in the 13th century,

Tavira reached new heights, becoming the primary port that provided support for Portuguese garrisons overseas.

Based in Tavira, we will spend the next two-and-a-half days visiting a variety of locations in this, the southernmost region of Portugal. Our travels will take us east to the border with Spain and south and west to the Atlantic coasts, allowing for an immersive experience in the birds and landscapes characteristic of the area.

A short distance to the west of Tavira lies the Ria Formosa Natural Park. This is another of Portugal's top birding areas and a wonderful place to spend a full day.

Ria Formosa is a coastal nature preserve close to the city of Faro. The park covers over 30 miles of coastline from Tavira in the east to Ancão and includes within the park boundaries the majority of the estuary of the Ria Formosa. The park consists of a narrow strip of land separated from the sea by vast sand dunes, behind which lies a labyrinth of lagoons and small sand islands, inter-tidal mudflats, salt marshes, salt pans, reed beds, and canals, while a short distance away lies tracts of pine forest.

The birding, while always good, can be incredible depending on weather and tidal conditions. A major reason why birders are attracted here is the opportunity to see breeding specialty birds in shared company with passage migrants. Among the many possibilities are Red-crested and Common pochards, Tufted Duck, Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Western Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet and multitudes of other shorebirds, Audouin's, Slender-billed and Little gulls, White Stork, Northern Gannet, European Shag, Little Bittern, Eurasian Spoonbill, Common Kingfisher, and Crested Lark.

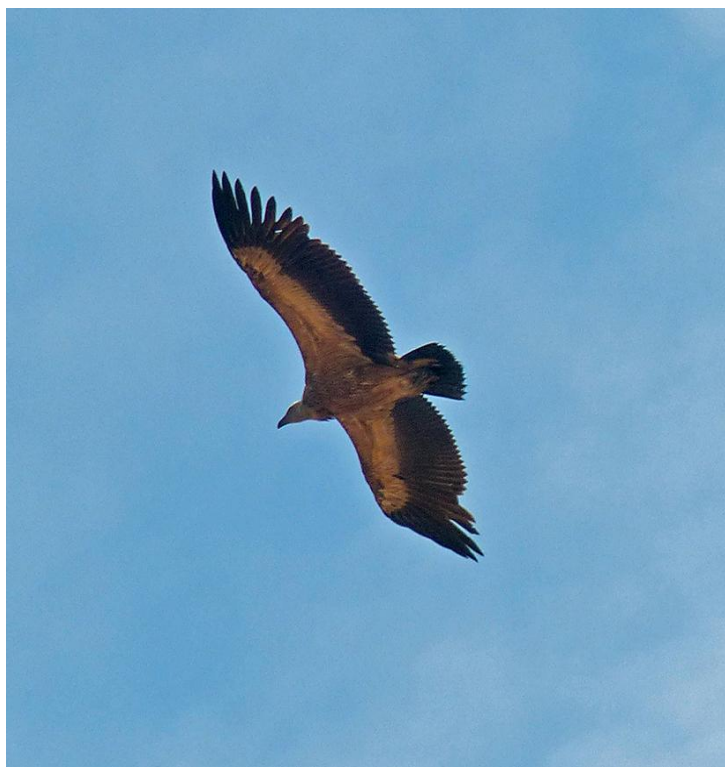
NIGHT: Hotel Vila Galé Albacora, Tavira

January 17, Day 11: Sagres, Cape St. Vincent, and Salgados Lagoon

This morning we'll head due west from Tavira for a full day of activities along the Atlantic Coast. Our day will begin with a trip to Sagres and Cape St. Vincent at the southwestern tip of the

European mainland, while in the afternoon we'll spend time at the bird-productive Salgados Lagoon before returning to the hotel late in the day.

Situated about an hour-and-a-half west of Tavira, the community of Sagres is a place of considerable geographic and historical importance. Due to the town's elevated position above the sea, Sagres and nearby Cape St. Vincent together form the single-most important location in Portugal to observe migrating birds in the fall, particularly soaring birds. Here, raised headlands are bounded on both sides by the Atlantic Ocean, causing birds to concentrate before they continue south across the water toward wintering grounds in Africa. The rocky shores here provide good opportunities to find Purple Sandpiper. And this area is also the only place in Southern Portugal to see the charismatic Red-billed Chough.



Eurasian Griffon © Brian Gibbons

From atop the cliffs at Cape St. Vincent, we may see an array of seabird species that often fly close to shore. Common Scoter, Manx, Cory's and Balearic shearwaters are all possible, as are Razorbill, Great Skua, and Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers.

On the historical front, Sagres is where, in the fifteenth century, Prince Henry the Navigator lived for years and developed his famed School of Navigation. Time permitting, we may be able to include a short visit to the Fort of Sagres, constructed by Prince Henry to protect the coastline and shipping routes.

On the return to Tavira, we'll spend a couple of hours at Salgados Lagoon, another coastal wetland home to shorebirds and wading birds. Many of the birds we encounter will now be like familiar friends, but birding at this season could produce any number of surprises and Ferruginous Duck, a very uncommon waterfowl species in Portugal, is possible in this area.

NIGHT: Hotel Vila Galé Albacora, Tavira

January 18, Day 12: Morning at Castro Marim Nature Preserve; return to Lisbon

Our last day together in Portugal will commence with a visit to the Castro Marim Nature Preserve, near the border with Spain, and conclude with an afternoon transfer back to Lisbon.

After breakfast we will head east of Tavira toward the Spanish border, where we'll enjoy several hours of birding in the Castro Marim area. As with other cities and towns in the southern *Algarve*, Castro Marim dates from the Roman period when the site, with its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea and the Guadiana River, was recognized for its economic and defensive importance. Castro Marim boasts another of Europe's best wetland sites, Castro Marim Nature Preserve, where Little Bustards, flamingos, Audouin's Mediterranean and Slender-billed gulls, terns, storks, spoonbills, Bluethroat, Lesser Short-toed Lark, and a great many other birds occur.

Following lunch in Tavira, we'll embark on the return journey to Lisbon. The transfer will take about three hours, with a late afternoon arrival expected. This evening, we will gather for a final checklist session and dinner to celebrate our experiences and bid farewell.

NIGHT: Hotel Lisboa Plaza, Lisbon

January 19, Day 13: Departure for home

We will organize a group transfer to the airport this morning, but participants are free to depart Portugal at any time.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 7 tour participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space is available

TOUR LEADER: This tour is led by **João Jara**.



João Jara was born in Lisbon and studied biology at the Faculdade de Ciências de Lisboa, where he developed his professional career in the pharmaceutical industry as senior manager and director of various multinational companies. With more than 40 years of field experience, João has an intimate knowledge of the birds and birding in Portugal. He has travelled extensively in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas with birding as the main objective. João was a member of the board of SPEA (Birdlife in Portugal) and was a voting member of the Portuguese

Rarities Committee from 2005 until 2011 and chairman of the committee from 2007 until 2011. Author and co-author of articles about birds, João is also co-author of the book *Where to Watch Birds in Southern Portugal*. In 2008, he launched the first Portuguese company totally dedicated to the organization of birdwatching tours. João manages the company and guides some of its tours. Besides birds, he has an active special interest in amphibians, reptiles, and fish. João is fluent in English, French, and Spanish.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: \$10,970 per person based on double occupancy or **\$11,910** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from lunch on Day 2 through dinner on Day 12, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does **not** include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes 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.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. 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 (include date) prior to the tour departure date.

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 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:

- **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

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. **For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through **Medjet** and its **MedjetAssist** plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

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 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: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

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:

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Lisbon is required.

VISAs: Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of May 25, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: As this trip combines birding with interpretive walking tours, you should consider bringing a mix of clothing that prepares you for all activities.

- **Pants:** A couple pairs of pants are essential. Denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable.

- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **Shirts:** Consider bringing several long-sleeved. Other styles include flannel shirts and long-sleeved button-downs.
- **Hat:** Essential for protection from the sun.
- **Sweaters and Coats:** Come prepared for cold mornings and nighttime temperatures. Please bring a fleece or warm coat or jacket. In the event we encounter rain, you'll want to have a water repellent jacket as well.

FOOTWEAR: For footwear we recommend a good trail-walking shoe or hiking boot when in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions. A good walking shoe, such an athletic shoe may be preferred when on our historical walking tours.

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well-prepared:

- Backpack – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- Notebooks and pens
- Travel alarm clock
- Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection
- Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions
- Personal toiletries
- Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries
- Collapsible walking stick – A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking
- Tissue packs

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.

Destination Information & Local Conditions

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Winter in Portugal is a time of varying conditions, with sunny days alternating with cool, cloudy days and times of precipitation. Conditions also vary by region. All of our time will be spent in the southern half of the country where our tour route will range from Lisbon on the Atlantic Coast, to the dry interior, and then to the southern Atlantic Coast in the Algarve region. Historically, daytime temperatures average in the 50s (°F) but could rise into the 60s. Sea-breezes have a mild effect along the coast with milder temperatures than the interior where temperatures are expected to be several degrees colder during the night and warmer during the day. Night and morning temperatures may drop to around 40s. In January it is possible to have some rain, but normally it doesn't have a big impact on birding. On average, the southern coast is dryer and warmer than the west coast.

CONDITIONS: our trip to Portugal will be a full travel experience in which birding activities are combined with a few guided tours to famous archaeological sites and historic landmarks. While our program includes plenty of time in prime birding areas, it also incorporates a bit of exploration of Portugal's rich history, and participants should strongly consider this point before registering. People occasionally ask us to frame the breakdown of birding activities to cultural excursions in terms of percentages. Our time will be spent as follows: 85–90% birding; 10–15% history and culture.

Most days will be dedicated purely to birding and natural history pursuits while several other days will contain a mix of birding and sightseeing. For our sightseeing endeavors, we will be joined by licensed local guides who will provide expert interpretation. Depending on one's abilities, physical demands will be easy to moderate. In particular, our city tour of Lisbon may involve a lot of walking and standing. In all cases, cities and towns are ancient and characterized in many places by uneven streets and sidewalks, cobblestone streets and paths, and staircases. All walking will be done at a moderate pace. Please take these points into account prior to registering to make sure that this tour is appropriate for you.

We emphasize that no one will be subjected to physical demands that exceed their capabilities. All walking will be done at a slow pace. Travel will be aboard one nine-seat vehicles, or a bus with a driver.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: Your trip to Portugal includes most necessary expenses. You will want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as taxi rides, gifts, gratuities, meals on your own, and personal items. It is best to carry small denominations of cash as places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. While U.S. dollars may be accepted in more populous areas, it is always convenient to have a supply of local currency. It is best to acquire local currency before leaving home, or at the airport or a bank upon arrival in Lisbon. Many, if not most, businesses accept major credit cards.

Should you extend your vacation in Portugal beyond what is offered in the program, you'll want to obtain local currency. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

The official currency of Portugal is the Euro (EUR). You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE-The World's Favorite Currency Site" at: <http://www.xe.com>

ELECTRICITY: The electrical current in Portugal is 220-240V (110-120V in the U.S.). Electrical outlets are one of the two European standard socket types: the "Type C" Europlug and the "Type E" and "Type F" Schuko. All of these outlets are ungrounded with openings for two round pins. You will need an adapter to plug in your appliances as well as an all-purpose transformer if your appliances are not suitable for higher voltage.

LANGUAGE: Portuguese is the primary language spoken in Portugal. All of our local guides speak English.

TIME: Portugal and Spain are on West European Summer Time (WEST) and are 5 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available for an extra charge at all four of the hotels where we stay during the tour; however, you should bring enough clothing to get you through the trip in the event laundry service is unavailable.

Health & Safety

HEALTH: 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. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: 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 which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds

Killian Mullarney, Lars Svensson and Dan Zetterstrom. Birds of Europe. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2023 (third edition).

This is the most important natural history book for this trip. It is probably the best all-around field guide to the birds of Europe.

Mammals

MacDonald, David and Priscilla Barrett. Mammals of Europe. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2002.

Reptiles and Amphibian

Speybroek, Jeroen, Wouter Beukema, Bobby Bok and Van der Voort, Jan. Field Guide to the Amphibians Reptiles of Britain and Europe. Bloomsbury Nature Guides. Bloomsbury Wildlife Publishing: London, 2016.

Insects

Smallshire, Dave and Andy Swash. Europe's Dragonflies: A field guide to the damselflies and dragonflies. Wild Guides. London: Princeton University Press, 2020

Tolman, Tom and Richard Lewington. Butterflies of Europe. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 2002.

Botany

The following titles all ably cover the wildflowers species we could expect to see on this trip, although autumn is not the best season for flowers. The Moelsworth book is an older title, but still relevant, while the Blamey guide is comprehensive and certainly covers the scope of this trip. The Schoenfelder book is a brand-new resource and thus most likely to reflect updated taxonomy.

Allen, Betty Moelsworth. *Wildflowers of Southern Spain*. Mirador Books. 1993

Blamey, Marjorie and Christopher Grey-Wilson. *Wild Flowers of the Mediterranean: A Complete Guide to the Islands and Coastal Regions*. A & C Black Publishers, 2004.

Schoenfelder, Peter and Ingrid. *Wild Flowers of the Mediterranean*. John Beaufoy Publishing, 2017.

History, Philosophy & Culture

Birmingham, David. *A Concise History of Portugal (Cambridge Concise Histories)*. Cambridge University Press; third edition, 2018. A member of the highly regarded “Concise” series, this book offers a comprehensive overview of the rich history of Portugal without subjecting the reader to massive amounts of information. Very “readable.”

Crowley, Roger. *The Conquerors: How Portugal Forged the First Global Empire*. Random House: New York, NY, 2015.

Molesky, Mark. *This Gulf of Fire: The Great Lisbon Earthquake, or Apocalypse in the Age of Science and Reason*. Vintage Books: New York, NY, 2016 (reprint edition).

Novels

Mercier, Pascal. *Night Train to Lisbon*. Grove Press: New York, NY, 2008 (reprint edition).

Saramago, José. *The Stone Raft*. Mariner Books: New York, NY, 1996.

Wilson, Robert C. *A Small Death in Lisbon*. Berkley Books: New York, NY, 2002.

CLO Apps

eBird. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. Highly recommended.

Merlin Bird ID. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." For this trip, please download the pack Europe. Highly recommended.

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 May 22, 2026, 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.

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