NORTHWEST ARGENTINA

A Birding Bonanza

November 29–December 13, 2027

This exciting tour focuses on the special birds of Argentina's most ornithologically diverse region, the spectacularly scenic northwest. Alongside many more widespread South American species, we'll enjoy a number of endemic and near-endemic birds, plus a fine selection of rarities.

This fascinating region is dominated by the Monte Desert and the vast expanse of the Chaco, a desert-like region stretching from southeastern Bolivia across western Paraguay and into the heart of northwest Argentina. The Chaco avifauna is particularly rich, and many of the special birds found here are still little-known to most birders. Among the large number of highly sought-after species in these habitats are the Black-legged Seriema, Spot-winged Falconet, Chaco Owl, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Blue-tufted Starthroat, and the recently described Monte Yellow-Finch. Desert salt flats are also home to the Salinas Monjita, a strikingly beautiful large flycatcher found nowhere else on earth.

To those who have visited the Sonoran Desert of the American Southwest, much of the Chaco and Monte Desert will have a familiar feel, with many plant genera occurring in both, including Saguaros. The sheer abundance of birdlife here also recalls the Sonoran Desert.



Olive-crowned Crescentchest © Andrew Whittaker



Rufous-throated Dipper © Andrew Whittaker

We will also bird Laguna Mar Chiquita, an entirely different set of habitats where thousands of flamingo's stride among impressive numbers of wintering shorebirds, terns, and waterfowl including Coscoroba Swans and maybe even the odd Black-headed Duck. Reedbeds and lakeside scrub are home to the poorly known Dinelli's Doradito and the rare Dot-winged Crake, both species high on many birders' wish lists.



Argentina's immense size and its more than 1,000 bird species make it impractical to explore the entire country in a single outing. With that in mind, we offer another exciting adventure, January 5–20, 2027, on the rich Pampas and in delightful Patagonia during the austral spring. In combination, our two Argentina trips offer a complete cross-section of this extraordinary country's varied habitats, incredible scenery, and spectacular wildlife.



Tucuman Mountain Finch© Andrew Whittaker

November 29, Day 1: Departure from USA

Most flights leaving the US this afternoon will arrive the next morning, November 30, at Buenos Aires's Aeropuerto Internacional Ministro Pistarini (more commonly known as Ezeiza, pronounced *eh-ZAY-za;* airport code EZE).

NIGHT: Aboard aircraft

November 30, Day 2: Arrival in Buenos Aires

After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground operator for the transfer to our hotel, where a room will be reserved for you in your name. The morning and afternoon are yours for resting or exploring. There is a restaurant in our hotel.

This evening, you will meet your leaders, Andy Whittaker and Julián Vidoz, in the hotel lobby for introductions and an overview of the tour before we enjoy our first dinner together as a group.

If you are concerned about the travel time to Argentina and you would like more time to recover before starting the tour, the VENT office will be happy to help you make arrangements for an early arrival in Buenos Aires; participants who arrive before November 30 can take a taxi to our hotel, or we can arrange a private transfer for you at an additional charge.

NIGHT: Hotel Madero, Buenos Aires

December 1, Day 3: Morning flight to Córdoba, and the East Slope of the Andes

After breakfast, we will make the short drive to Buenos Aires's domestic airport for the 90-minute non-stop flight to Córdoba, the capital of the province of the same name and the second-largest city in Argentina. From here we will drive to the Pampa de Achala, a picturesque area 7,000 feet above sea level. Easy birding right along the road will be an excellent introduction to the wildlife and habitats of the eastern slope of the Andes. This may well be the best spot in the world for close encounters with the huge Andean Condor, sometimes seen right on the roadside. On past tours, condors have soared to within just a few yards of us, looking us straight in the eye; roosting birds are also often easy to find, offering great studies of this beautiful and much sought-after vulture.

Among the many other exciting birds we can hope to find here are two species found nowhere else in the world, the stunning Sierran Meadowlark (to be split from the Long-tailed) and the Córdoba Cinclodes; another cinclodes, the Olrog's, is nearly endemic to the area. Other noteworthy finds here might include the dazzling Red-tailed Comet, Campo Flicker, and Spectacled Tyrant.



Andean Condor © Andrew Whittaker



An adult male of the endemic Sierran Meadowlark © Andrew Whittaker

Late afternoon will find us descending into the more diverse Chaco habitat, where bird density is higher. We will check into our lovely hotel for the next two nights, wonderfully situated in pristine habitat, with all of our most wanted birds just outside the door. We may have time for a cooling dip in the hotel's pool before dinner together.

NIGHT: El 44 Reserva Natural de Tiempo Libre, Capilla Del Monte

December 2–3, Days 4–5: Birding the Chaco

We will devote these two days to exploring the tremendous diversity of the Chaco, with a break planned for the hottest hours of each day. “Chaco” is the Guaraní name for the semi-desert region stretching from southern Bolivia and western Paraguay to central Argentina. The Chaco has no mountains and only a few major rivers; even so, it is not as dry here as to the west, and the slightly wetter climate attracts different bird species. Our stay will provide us with a fantastic introduction to Chaco birds, both common and rare, along with some species typical of more forested habitats. The dawn chorus is one of the best anywhere, starting with the loud duets of the Brown Cachalote, which give way to the zipping vocalizations of White-tipped Plantcutters and the raucous calls of Scimitar-billed Woodcreepers.

Among this wealth of birds, we will be searching for such low-density near-endemics as the ground-dwelling Crested Gallito, the Spot-winged Falconet, and the impressive, Black-bodied Woodpecker. Whatever the precise results, both days’ bird lists are sure to be gratifyingly long.



Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper © Andrew Whittaker

The Chaco’s distinctive birdlife includes representatives of a wide variety of scrub, steppe, and woodland habitats. Among the species we may find here are Blue-crowned and Monk parakeets, Guira and Ash-colored Cuckoos, and the stunning Olive-crowned Crescentchest. We can also hope to encounter such colorful birds as the Glittering-bellied Emerald, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Ultramarine Grosbeak, and Blue-and-yellow Tanager.



White-tipped Plantcutter © Andrew Whittaker

Tyrant flycatchers make up an important part of the Chaco avifauna, and we may meet with the Fulvous-crowned Scrub-Tyrant, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, and Southern Scrub-Flycatcher. Among the many other passerines here are the Golden-billed Saltator, Red-crested Finch, and Black-and-chestnut Warbling Finch.

Against the backdrop of the area's awesome sunsets, we will enjoy our driver/cook Gabi's famous Argentine barbeques, accompanied by fresh salad, an assortment of cheeses, and cold beverages. With some luck, we may witness the amazing Scissor-tailed Nightjar's search for a meal as we partake of our own.

NIGHTS: El 44 Reserva Natural de Tiempo Libre, Capilla Del Monte

December 4, Day 6: Laguna Mar Chiquita

After breakfast, we will drive east to Laguna Mar Chiquita, the "Little Sea." This is the largest natural saline lake in all of Argentina, covering, depending on water levels, between 770 and 2,300 square miles. This is a true birder's paradise, hosting more than half a million migrant shorebirds each year and large flocks of flamingos; most will be Chilean flamingos, but we have chances at both the

Andean and the James as well. The range of waterbirds here is virtually endless, and we should see Coscoroba Swans, three species of coot, and Rosy-billed Pochards. Black-headed Ducks are present here, too; females of this species lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, especially those of the abundant Gray-headed Gull. We will carefully search lakeside vegetation for the poorly known Dinnelli's Doradito and the gorgeous but secretive South American Painted Snipe. With luck, we may even observe the rare Dot-winged Crake.

NIGHT: Hotel Boutique Roseus, Calle Croacia Miramar



Chilean Flamingo © Andrew Whittaker

December 5, Day 7: The Chaco and Salinas Grandes

Biogeographers believe that dry conditions have prevailed in the Chaco from the Pleistocene to the present. Most of the vegetation we'll see is low thorn-scrub, largely dominated by two mesquite species, *Prosopis alba* and *P. nigra*. Cutting for charcoal, firewood gathering, and cattle grazing have altered the Chaco in many places, resulting in an abundance of cacti and terrestrial bromeliads. Where the soil is slightly less salty, the mesquites give way to handsome, slightly taller quebracho woodland, characterized by *Aspidosperma quebracho-blanco* and *Schinopsis quebracho-colorado*, trees of considerable economic importance for their beautiful wood.

This morning, we will concentrate first on finding anything we may have missed in the lagoon and on getting better views of some of the shyer species as we enjoy the abundant waterbirds, including Snowy-crowned and Gull-billed terns and Stilt, Baird's, White-rumped, and Upland Sandpipers. We will then drive on to Salinas, where we will check in to our comfortable hotel with time for a few hours of well-earned rest.

As time allows, we hope to be back out in the late afternoon for a first look at the excellent habitat around our hotel. The eighty-five square miles of massive salt desert here is home to many unique organisms, but our main objective will be to find the stunning endemic Salinas Monjita.

NIGHT: Salinas Gran Hotel, San Jose de Las Salinas



The endemic Salinas Monjita © Andrew Whittaker

December 6, Day 8: Salinas Grandes, Reserva Natural Provincial Los Sosa, and on to Tafí del Valle

We will spend the first hours of the day looking for some less common and sometimes elusive Chaco species such as the Black-legged Seriema, Crested Hornero, and Lesser Shrike-Tyrant. We also have the possibility today of seeing the rare Cinnamon and Ringed warbling finches or the range-restricted, Black-crested Finch. This is also one of the best areas to find the Spot-winged Falconet.



The superb Spot-winged Falconet © Andrew Whittaker

As the day grows warmer, we will set out on the drive to Tafí del Valle, a small city set in a valley of productive agricultural fields and pastures. Our approximately six-hour drive takes us from the vast salt desert through rolling green countryside and up into the wooded foothills of the Andes, where we will enjoy a noticeably cooler climate and a full range of new bird species.

Crystal-clear, boulder-strewn streams in the picturesque foothills are home to the charming Rufous-throated Dipper, an uncommon bird found only in northwestern Argentina and adjacent Bolivia. As they move through the bubbling water between boulders, the dippers bob up and down and flick their wings to expose the usually concealed white patches; this striking behavior is probably meant to startle potential prey. We will also have a chance to admire Torrent Ducks and playful Black Phoebes on these lovely rivers.



Female Torrent Duck © Andrew Whittaker

We will arrive at our delightful hotel in quaint Tafí del Valle in the late afternoon. As we pass through the hotel's rose garden, we may well be welcomed by the lovely songs of an Andean Slaty Thrush or Chiguanco Thrush. The view from our rooms out over the gardens and surrounding hills is spectacular, and the birding can be the same: in past years, the hotel's gardens have been visited by stunning Red-tailed Comets and rare Slender-tailed Woodstars.

NIGHT: Hotel Waynay Killa, Tafi del Valle

December 7, Day 9: Los Sosa Provincial Natural Reserve

As weather permits, we will spend this morning exploring the nearby cloud forest, dominated by alder and pino del cerro; from there, we will move on to visit the laurel woodlands of Los Sosa Provincial Natural Reserve. We have good chances of seeing a number of species found only in Argentina and Bolivia, among them the Yungas Guan, Brown-capped Redstart, and Yellow striped Brushfinch. This is another opportunity to look for the dipper should we have missed it on our first attempt.



Male Dot-fronted Woodpecker © Andrew Whittaker

Later, we will ascend to montane grasslands and rocky valleys at elevations from 6,500 to 9,800 feet. Here we will look for Ornate and Andean tinamous, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Andean Flicker, and the attractive Subtropical Doradito. Red-tailed Comets can be common. Endemic to this area is the Tucuman Mountain Finch, Bare-faced (Moreno's) Ground Dove, and one of the most beautiful of Scytalopus tapaculos, the White-browed.

After a full morning's birding, we will return to our hotel by midafternoon, then, as time allows, visit a nearby lake that has turned out to be a top migrant trap. On past visits, we have found migrating Snowy-crowned Terns, Andean Gull, Yellow-billed Pintail, Slate-colored Coot, Great Grebe, and Green-barred Woodpecker. This is a place where virtually anything could turn up.

After reviewing the day's bird list, we will enjoy dinner in a fine restaurant nearby.

NIGHT: Hotel Waynay Killa, Tafi del Valle



The endemic White-browed Tapaculo © Andrew Whittaker

December 8, Day 10: Cuesta del Los Cardones, and on to Cafayate

After an early breakfast, we will drive up to spectacular El Infiernillo Pass, at an elevation of 9,980 feet, before descending into the rain shadow of the mountains, where cardon cactus and Saguaros grow 30 or 40 feet tall; some of these giants are hundreds of years old.

Here in this stark Monte Desert, we will be looking for our first Burrowing Parakeets and perhaps a Giant Hummingbird or Andean Hillstar. As Andean Swifts hawk insects in the sky above, we will be searching particularly for such endemics as Steinbach's Canastero and the Monte Yellow-Finch, the latter first described by one of our colleagues as recently as 2012. Other passerines may include the Patagonian Mockingbird, Straight-billed Earthcreeper, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant, and D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant.

We will continue to the interandean desert, the sandy home of the endemic Sandy Gallito and the near-endemic White-throated Cacholote. We expect to check in to our plush hotel by lunchtime. Set in the famous vineyards of Cafayate, the lodge offers a lovely sauna, spa, and pool for the hotter part of the afternoon. Once temperatures have begun to fall, we will make the short drive to the marvelous sandstone formations known as Las Conchas.



Monte Desert and Saguaro Cactus © Andrew Whittaker

After dinner, we will offer an owling excursion on the hotel grounds, where we have a chance at the rare and near-endemic Chaco Owl.

NIGHT: Grace Cafayate Hotel, Cafayate



The amazing sandstone of Las Conchas © Andrew Whittaker

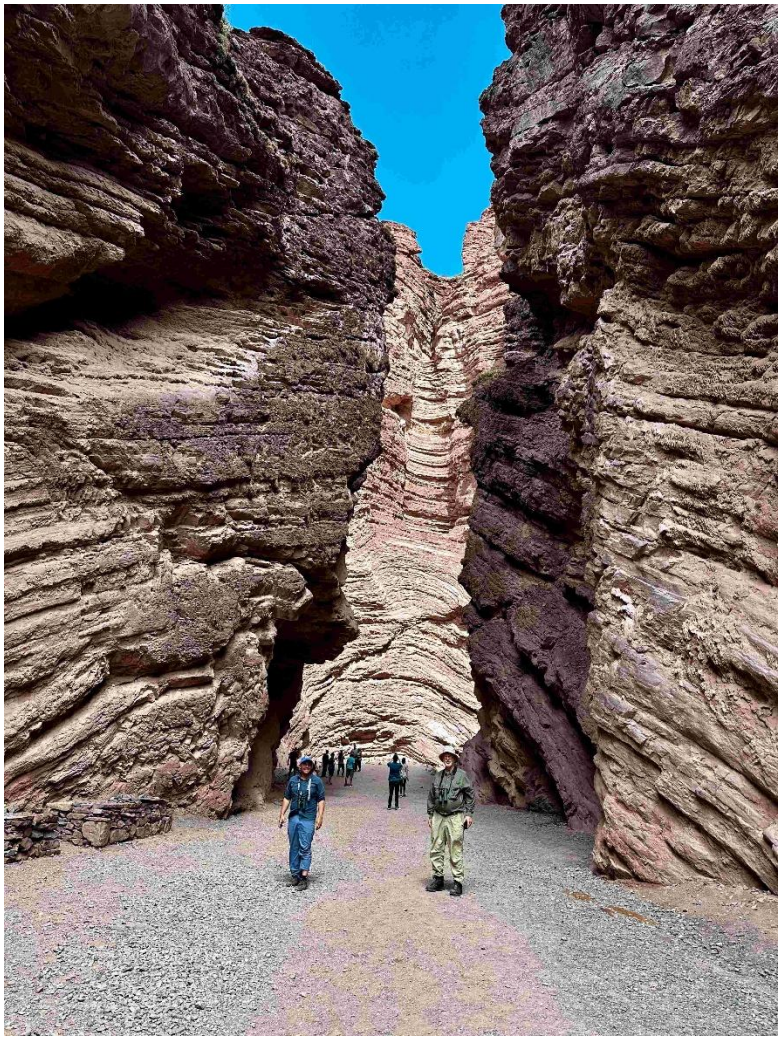


The rare and sought-after Chaco Owl © Andrew

December 9, Day 11: Salta and Cuesta Del Obispo

After an early breakfast, we will set out on the approximately four-hour drive to Salta. The scenery along the river valley here is truly spectacular, red and white sand mountains in a mesmerizing variety of shapes and colors. We will be sure to stop at the famous Garganta del Diablo, the “Devil’s Throat.”

As we near the provincial capital, we will observe a dramatic transition to lush forests. The higher-elevation habitats here are nothing short of magical: above 5,000 feet, the vegetation becomes noticeably scrubby, and a thousand feet higher, we enter a portion of the valley that lies in the rain shadow of the Andes. The high canyon walls, scattered with large columnar cactus, are a mosaic of ochres, reds, and greens, a scene inviting comparison to the American Southwest.



Garganta del Diablo © Andrew Whittaker

Birding the cool grassy slopes of Cuesta Del Obispo should produce several new species, including the Paramo Pipit, Zimmer's Tapaculo, and Scribble-tailed and Maquis Canasteros. Between 6,500 and 9,500 feet, open fields and grasslands alternate with patches of shrubs, a landscape favored by Huyaco, Andean, and Ornate tinamous. Other species we can hope for here include Black and Hooded siskins, Long-tailed Meadowlark, and Ash-breasted, Gray-hooded, and Plumbeous sierra finches. Roadside tree tobacco flowers are visited by the incomparable Red-tailed Comet.

Lunch today will be at a simple restaurant offering tasty local dishes and a magnificent view. In the past, we have found nesting comets here, and Andean Condors and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles are regularly seen; we will be watching the skies for both of those and for the poorly known Rothschild's Swift. Other key species to look for here are the lovely Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager and the near-endemic Tucuman Mountain Finch.



Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager © Andrew Whittaker

Arriving in Salta in the late afternoon, we will have some time to rest up at our hotel before another wonderful dinner.

NIGHT: Hotel Las Moras, Salta

December 10–11, Days 12–13: Yungas Forest, Montane Forest, and Scrubland

Salta will serve as our delightful base for two days of birding and exploration. Restricted to central and southern Bolivia and Argentina at elevations between 1,300 and 6,500 feet, the Yungas is a seasonal cloud forest, receiving heavy rainfall for only part of the year. The trees here are festooned with epiphytes, but this forest does not attain the mossy lushness of its wetter equatorial counterparts. Common epiphytes here include *Tillandsia, Bromelia, Ichomes*, and *Rhipsalis*, a lovely dangling cactus.

Several of the birds found here occur almost nowhere else, while other species typical of more northerly forests reach their southern limits here. A long road provides good access to this spectacular habitat and its splendid birdlife. I'm an antbird fanatic, and we have a great chance here to meet up with the top antbird of all, the enormous Giant Antshrike, along with both Rufous-capped and Variable Antshrikes.



A male Giant Antshrike © Andrew Whittaker

Over these two exciting days, our long list of sightings may also include the Bicolored Hawk, Purple-throated Euphonia, and White-browed, Fulvous-headed, and White-striped brushfinches. Near-endemic species found here include the Red-faced and Yungas guans and Rusty-browed and Rufous-sided warbling finches.



Fulvous-headed Brushfinch © Andrew Whittaker

After dinner one evening, we will visit a pristine private reserve to look for such cool nocturnal species as the Common Potoo, Little Nightjar, and the amazing Scissor-tailed Nightjar—the male's incredibly long tail feathers have to be seen to be believed! Our primary targets, though, are two rarely seen owls, the Montane Forest Screech-Owl and one of my favorites, the very locally distributed and rare Buff-fronted Owl, which we have succeeded in seeing on our two latest tours.

NIGHTS: Hotel Las Moras, Salta



Buff-fronted Owl © Andrew Whittaker

December 12, Day 14: Morning birding and afternoon flight to Buenos Aires

After the final morning's birding, we will proceed to the airport for our flight back to Buenos Aires. On arrival, we will be meeting for the transfer to our hotel. Private transfers this evening will take you to the international airport for homebound flights. **Important: Your international flight from Buenos Aires should be scheduled for departure no earlier than 10:00 pm.**

If you would rather spend this night in Buenos Aires than connect to your homebound flight, our office will be happy to help book a hotel and arrange transfers for you.

Day room: Hotel Madero, Buenos Aires

NIGHT: Aboard aircraft, arriving in the US the morning of **December 13**.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 10 participants.

TOUR LEADER: This tour is led by **Andrew Whittaker**, with the assistance of an expert local birding leader



Andrew Whittaker was born in the UK and began his birding passion at the early age of seven (thanks to his parents) but resides in Brazil. Andy is also a true all-around naturalist with an innate fascination for all aspects of the natural world and simply loves sharing in the field his intimate bird, wildlife, and orchid knowledge in a fun and enthusiastic manner. A senior member of the VENT staff, Andy has led VENT tours worldwide since 1993 from dense South and Central American rainforests to the great White Continent of Antarctica, and throughout Europe to the deserts of the Middle East. More recently Andy can be found leading in the bird-rich rainforests of West Africa, the mammal-rich savannas of East Africa, or observing the cute Red Panda or exotic tragopan in the mighty Himalayas of Nepal. In 2024, 2025 Andy was able to show over 2,000 bird species to VENT clients on his tours! Andy is an excellent communicator and calm tour organizer who loves nothing better than hearing, finding, and sharing a rare poorly known skulker, or telling one of his many fascinating and fun birding and travel stories. His enthusiasm in the field is simply contagious, and a combination of these traits has made him a favored leader amongst participants. Although born in England, Andy considers himself Brazilian, having lived more than 30 years in this mega biodiverse country, first working for the Smithsonian Institution, studying Amazonian rainforest birds in Manaus, as well as leading expeditions to remote corners of the Amazon; he feels privileged to have worked with the incredible Kayapo Indians. Andy is widely considered an authority on Amazonian birds, having authored numerous technical publications on the region's avifauna. He is well recognized for his amazing hearing and intimate knowledge of South American bird vocalizations. This trait has enabled him to discover several exciting new bird species (such as the Cryptic Forest-Falcon in 2002), as well as rediscover others thought to be extinct such as the White-tailed Tityra while on a VENT tour in 2006! He loves recording birds, too, with over 800 hours of recordings housed in the British Library Sound Archive. Andy is a qualified ringer/bander trained by the late Dr. Clive Minton (fondly known as the father of shorebird studies). His lifelong fascination with bird migration has seen Andy working around the globe at several top bird observatories: Eilat, Israel; Long Point, Canada; and in the UK at Sandwich Bay and on Fair Isle, Scotland, as well as researching shorebirds in Borneo on their East Asian flyway. Andy had the honor of working with Sir David Attenborough in Brazil as a consultant for the prestigious BBC *Life of Birds* series. At present, Andy is working with Kevin Zimmer on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil to be published by Princeton University Press. Andy is

an associate researcher at the Museum Goeldi, Belem, an active conservationist, and loves bird photography and taxonomy. He is also an avid football/soccer fan of Birmingham City FC and Real Madrid due to its worldwide mega star Jude Bellingham coming from his home team. Andy lives near Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil with his partner, Jaqueline, and their many orchids.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: **$ $9,950.00** per person based on double occupancy or **$ $11,225.00** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from lunch on Day 2 through dinner on Day 19, accommodation as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare 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 at (512) 328-5221. The initial deposit for this tour is $1,000 per person. 180 days before departure (June 2, 2027), 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 (August 1, 2027) before the tour departure date. 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 before your departure date. We can easily make hotel arrangements, 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 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 impose 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 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 are **not** included, but it is customary to tip if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader $15 to $20 per day, or 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 before departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant with 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 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 of 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.

This itinerary includes internal flights in Argentina. Aerolineas Argentinas is strict about luggage limits and imposes a stricter weight limit on domestic flights than on international flights. **The domestic limit is currently 15 kilograms/person (35 lbs); hand-carried luggage is limited to 5 kilograms/person (about 11 lbs), but it is seldom weighed, and this limit can be exceeded a bit. The charge for overweight checked luggage amounts to a little more than a dollar a kilo.** Nevertheless, we ask that travelers limit their luggage as much as possible to the 15-kilo (35-pound) limit. Please do not bring large carry-on bags. Large 20" and 21" roll-ons will have to be checked. At present, small roll-ons (up to about 18" in height) are permitted, but these older jets have limited overhead space, and travelers with large carry-on luggage may encounter problems. In general, packing lighter is better. Excess baggage charges are the personal responsibility of each participant.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Argentina is required. You need at least 1 blank page in your passport for entry and exit stamps.

VISAS: Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination for stays of less than 90 days. 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 August 27, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we 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.

The following is now required to enter Argentina:

- Valid travel medical insurance for the duration of your stay.
- Return or onward ticket.

WHAT TO BRING

CLIMATE AND CLOTHING: December weather in Argentina is very pleasant, varying from sunny and hot to mild to very cold; we could experience some rain. In general, the Chaco desert region at the time of our tour is hot and dry, with temperatures in the 80s and low 90s F at midday, but pleasantly cooler at night. In the Yungas cloud forest, morning temperatures are cool to chilly (high 40s to low 60s), but it is much warmer during the day. The greatest temperature variability is at higher elevations in the Andes, where it can be cold; rain, wind, and brilliant sunshine are all possible in a single day here. You must bring layers of warm clothing, including a jacket or parka, gloves, and a hat to protect against sun. Good raingear and walking or hiking shoes (GoreTex or waterproof) are essential. **Please bring dull-colored, shirts, pants, and headgear for birding the Yungas cloud forest; we especially discourage white or brightly colored shirts, white T-shirts, and white or very light-colored hats here.** Elsewhere on this trip, we are in open terrain, where the color of one's clothing is less important.

A hat, sunglasses, and good sunscreen (minimum SFP factor of 30, or a zinc oxide sunblock) are recommended for protection from the sun, which is very intense at high elevations. Even on warm days, at high elevations you may want to wear light gloves for sun protection. Dress is casual throughout, including at our meals in Buenos Aires, but if you plan other activities in Buenos Aires, a dress or jacket for evenings may be appropriate.

FOOTWEAR: We recommend a good trail-walking shoe or sturdy hiking boot (waterproof or GoreTex) for wearing in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable, but they will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled in muddy conditions. A good walking shoe (such as an athletic shoe) may be preferred for down times or when we are traveling between destinations. Rubber boots are not necessary.

EQUIPMENT: You should pack a pair of binoculars in good condition, along with a belt pack or daypack for books, sunscreen, extra batteries, etc. 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. Please note that much of this tour is conducted where long-distance viewing is the norm. Your leaders will have a spotting scope, but if you have a scope and would like to bring it, we encourage you to do so, as it will allow you more time and opportunities to view birds and wildlife. **PLEASE: If you plan on digi-scoping, please bring and use your own scope.**

Other items include

- A small flashlight **IMPORTANT FOR OWLING!**
- **Water bottle (please bring a wide-mouth water bottle, such as the type offered by Nalgene).** In order to reduce plastic waste, drinking water will be supplied aboard the buses in 2- or 3-gallon containers. The small water bottles sold in airports, etc., have small openings and are difficult to refill from large containers.
- A good alarm clock (essential)
- A daypack

Binoculars: We strongly recommend that you bring a pair of good 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 binoculars. 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

CONDITIONS: While birding will be heavily emphasized, this program encompasses other aspects of natural history including scenery, mammal viewing, stargazing, and doses of botany: it is spring, and the flowering plants are incredible.

We will travel in a small Sprinter bus.

Walking conditions are generally easy to moderate. In many of the areas we visit, we will be birding along flat roads and trails, though our localities in the Andes have some hills, gradients, and steps with some gradual climbs.

ELEVATION: The highest elevation on this tour's birding will be about 9,000 feet, for part of one day. No activities will take place above 9,000 feet in elevation; we have never had any problems with altitude sickness.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Excellent to very good throughout. Good wine is available at all of our lodgings.

FOOD and WATER: Drinking water quality varies widely outside of the major cities. We will always have bottled water available for you to refill your water bottle.

Meals and wine in Argentina are very good, especially steak, pasta, and seafood. Finding healthy snack foods in Argentina is difficult, though. The snacks available in convenience stores are invariably high in carbohydrates and sugar (cookies, crackers, cereal bars, etc.) or in salt and fat (potato chips, etc.). For a healthier selection, we recommend that you bring a good supply of your own, including dried fruits, trail mix, nuts, trail bars, etc.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: The Argentine Peso is the official currency of Argentina. For the current exchange rate, visit xe.com.

ELECTRICITY: 220 volts; European-type two-pin round plug, or three-pin flat plug with two of the blades angled. The two-pin round connector is more widespread, but both are in operation in most of the hotels we will stay in. A few hotels may have outlets that accommodate standard American-type plugs with two flat pins of similar size (but not plugs with one flat blade larger than the other).

INTERNET ACCESS: Wi-Fi is available at all hotels and lodges.

LANGUAGE: Spanish

TIME: 3 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Available at all hotels and lodges.

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 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.

At this time, no vaccinations are required for entry into Argentina. However, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta advises us that there is a risk of malaria, though that risk is low on this trip. The CDC also suggests that tetanus and polio immunizations be current and that travelers strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

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 regarding recommendations 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 ultraviolet-blocking, polarized sunglasses.

BITING INSECTS: Insects in general are not much of a problem on this trip, though we may encounter a few mosquitoes in the Chaco and perhaps in the Yungas cloud forest. Chiggers may be present

locally in the rainforest, but they have not been a problem on previous trips. We recommend the use of Cutters roll-on, OFF, or DEET roll-on.

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 is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to 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.

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 carry 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** specialize in ornithology and natural history books; **www.abebooks.com** can help with out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

BIRDING RESOURCES AND GENERAL NATURE

Pearman, M., and J. I. Areta. 2020. *Birds of Argentina and the South-west Atlantic*. Princeton: Princeton UP. Excellent plates and text in this first-rate reference to Argentina birds. Without doubt the best for Argentina, and essential for all visiting birders.

Hilty, S. L. 1994. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters. Useful background for Argentina, even though the focus is primarily tropical.

Kricher, J. C. 2017. *The New Neotropical Companion.* Princeton: Princeton UP. The focus is primarily on tropical birding, but offers great insight into the biology of birds, so travelers will find it very useful on this trip.

CULTURE

Leitner, G. 2001. *Travel Companion Argentina.* London: Hunter. This and the next guide (and there are others) may be of interest to travelers seeking additional information on Argentina.

McCloskey, E. Most recent edition. *Argentina*. Chesham, UK: Bradt Travel Guides.

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 Argentina. 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 September 21, 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.

View the complete Terms and Conditions on our website.

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