

ENGLAND: BRITISH BIRDFAIR & COASTAL NORFOLK

AUGUST 19-28, 2021

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The British Birdfair is a great place to learn more about all those destinations you've always wanted to experience. © Rick Wright

Now more than thirty years old and going stronger than ever, the British Birdwatching Fair (known simply as Birdfair) attracts more than 20,000 visitors each August to the RSPB reserve of Rutland Water. With breeding Osprey, migrant Ruff and Wood Sandpiper, and resident European Goldfinch, Greenfinch, and Chaffinch among the common feeder visitors, Rutland is a fine birding destination unto itself, but the real draws at Birdfair are the almost endless exhibits of booksellers and optics companies, the huge range of entertaining and informative programs, and lectures by world-famous birders and conservationists. More than just a lot of fun, though, this annual event has now raised more than six million dollars for research and wildlife preservation projects around the world.

After our day at Birdfair, we will move to the coast of Norfolk, where estuaries, dunes, and beaches host an impressive array of breeding and migrant birds, from elegant Pied Avocets to dashing Western Marsh Harriers. Shorebird migration can be very good in August, and we hope to see a good selection of waterfowl, too, perhaps including Garganey, Eurasian Wigeon, or Red-crested Pochard. Among the passerine specialties we will be looking for are Cetti's Warbler, Wood Lark, and the incredibly beautiful, incredibly weird Bearded Reedling.



Though most of our time will be spent in Norfolk's wild habitats, we will also take the chance to visit one of the area's flint churches, some of which date back to the time before the Norman invasion of 1066; a peculiar characteristic of many of these ancient buildings is a tall round tower, a shape determined by both tradition and the properties of the stone used in their construction.

August 19, Day 1: Departure from Home. Participants should arrange to arrive at London's Heathrow airport (code LHR) no later than August 20. Most flights from the United States and Canada will depart on August 19, arriving in London the following morning (August 20). On request, the VENT office will be happy to assist early arrivals with hotel arrangements.

NIGHT: In transit (overnight flight)



A European Greenfinch slips in to the feeders at Rutland Water. © Rick Wright

August 20, Day 2: Arrival at Heathrow and on to Rutland Water and Oakham. We will assemble early this afternoon at a designated meeting point, then meet our van for the 2-hour drive north to Rutland Water, in England's East Midlands. Almost 3,000 acres of the reservoir and its surroundings are recognized as regionally important under the Ramsar Convention; the habitat mosaic here comprises open water, marshy wetlands, and mature woodland, with a correspondingly rich diversity of birdlife. Most famous for its breeding Ospreys, Rutland also hosts internationally important numbers of waterfowl, in late summer often including Red-crested Pochard and Garganey.

After checking in to our hotel, we may have a little time for a quick birding walk; otherwise, we will take a short break before assembling for our first dinner together, a chance to get to know each other and to discuss our plans for the days to come.

NIGHT: Barnsdale Hall Hotel, Oakham

August 21, Day 3: Rutland and Birdfair. Early risers have a chance at running across any of the common birds of the English countryside, from European Robins to a range of colorful tits and finches. But our focus today will be less on birds than on birding, every single aspect of which is on glorious display at Birdfair. From its modest beginnings in 1987, when it was styled The Wildfowl Bonanza, Birdfair has exploded into the most successful event of its kind in the world, with nearly 500 exhibitors and more than 20,000 visitors each August. Everything a birder could dream of is here: books, art, optics, and an incredible suite of lectures and programs presented by well-known figures in birding and conservation worldwide. Often copied and never even remotely matched, there is nothing like Birdfair, anywhere. Not just entertainment, in the 35 years of its existence, the event has raised well more than six million dollars for bird and habitat conservation, an unparalleled record.



The handsome Red-crested Pochard is one of the special waterfowl for which Rutland Water is famous.

© Rick Wright



It has to be seen to be believed, as almost 25,000 visitors to the Birdfair learn each August.

©Rick Wright

We'll plan on spending most of our day here, with breaks for lunch on your own and to check the edges of the lake for shorebirds such as Ruff and Wood Sandpiper; thoughtfully placed feeders attract European Greenfinches, Common Chaffinches, and European Goldfinches, along with Great and Blue tits and, in some years, the increasingly rare Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Our finely calibrated goal is to return to our hotel and set out for dinner just before it all gets to be overwhelming.

NIGHT: Barnsdale Hall Hotel, Oakham

August 22, Day 4: To Norfolk. The coast of Norfolk is about two hours east of Rutland, and we will set out after breakfast to this Mecca of British birdwatching. Occupying the northern half of East Anglia, Norfolk, with its county seat at Norwich, faces Europe and Scandinavia across the North Sea, making it an irresistible landfall for autumn migrants. The county's extensive salt marshes, massive muddy estuaries, reedbeds, heathlands, and fens are as attractive to birders as they are to breeding and wintering birds, and excellent year-round coverage of the many fine wildlife preserves means that Norfolk's ornithological bounty is uniquely well known and uniquely accessible.

This afternoon will give us a first taste of what awaits us on our explorations over the next several days. Striking while the avian iron is hot, we will make a special effort to see any reported rarities before checking in to our hotel and enjoying dinner together.

NIGHT: The Lawns Hotel, Holt

August 23-27, Days 5-9: Norfolk. Without the need for travel, packing, or tiresome hotel changes, we can devote these days entirely to leisurely exploration, visiting many of the sites that have made Norfolk Britain's top birding destination. Part of the excitement is the unpredictability of early autumn, but we can reasonably hope to encounter such truly special birds as the Montagu Harrier, Eurasian Hobby, Green Sandpiper, European Stone Curlew, Pied Avocet, Spotted Redshank, Temminck Stint, Tree Pipit, and Ring Ouzel. Seawatching can be productive, too,

England: British Birdfair & Coastal Norfolk, Page 4

with Manx Shearwaters, Northern Gannets, and Black-legged Kittiwakes commonly seen from land in some years. Northern Fulmars are increasing as breeders on the few sea cliffs in the area.

We will always operate on the hopeful assumption of good weather, but it is always possible that we will be driven indoors on the odd rainy morning or afternoon. Happily, Norfolk is almost as rich in history and culture as in wildlife, and if the weather happens to turn bad, there are plenty of options available. The most famous peculiarity of the region's architecture is the use of flint, especially prominent in religious buildings constructed in the Middle Ages; as Walter Rye put it, "there are so many magnificent churches in the county that it is a work of the greatest difficulty to pick out any for special mention without drawing on one the wrath of those who have made particular buildings their special study." Rye goes on to tally nearly four dozen can't-miss medieval structures—though we won't visit them all, we will be sure to take in one or two of the best.



The dapper Pied Avocet, symbol of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, returned to Norfolk in 1941 after disappearing from the UK entirely in the nineteenth century. © Rick Wright



**A Black-legged Kittiwake soars past the English coast.
© Rick Wright**

NIGHTS: The Lawns Hotel, Holt

August 28, Day 10: Return to London; Departure for Home. We will leave early this morning for the three-hour trip to London's Heathrow airport, with an expected arrival no later than 11:00 a.m. Departure flights should be scheduled for any time after 2:00 p.m.

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 8 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Rick Wright and Stuart Elsom



Rick Wright is a widely published author and sought-after lecturer and field trip leader. A native of southeast Nebraska, Rick studied French, German, Philosophy, and Life Sciences at the University of Nebraska before making a detour to Harvard Law School. He took the Ph.D. in German Languages and Literatures at Princeton University in 1990, then spent a dozen years as an academic, holding successive appointments as Assistant Professor of German at the University of Illinois, Reader in Art and Archaeology at Princeton University, and Associate Professor of Medieval Studies at Fordham University. His numerous scholarly publications include two books on the Latin animal literature of the later Middle Ages. Among Rick's recent books are the *ABA Field Guide to Birds of New Jersey* and the *ABA Field Guide to Birds of Arizona*; his *Peterson Reference Guide to American Sparrows* was

published in 2019. He is also the co-author with Sanford Sorkin of *Watching Birds in Montclair* and *Watching Birds in the New Jersey Meadowlands*. Especially interested in the history and culture of birding, he is hard at work on a study of hummingbird collecting in France from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In his spare time, he teaches Latin courses online for the Paideia Institute. Rick lives with his family, Alison Beringer and Avril Huang, in northern New Jersey, where he offers private birding tours to the marshes, woodlands, and ocean beaches.



Stu Elsom is a professional ecologist, tour leader, and wildlife photographer based in Cambridgeshire, England, where he runs his own consultancy, Stuart Elsom Ecology. Stu has been a keen naturalist from an early age and has had a lifelong interest in birds and insects, which has taken him to over 50 countries on six continents. He is an enthusiastic wildlife photographer and a member of the Royal Photographic Society Nature Group, through which he was awarded his Licentiate Distinction (LRPS) in 2012. Over 800 of his images have appeared in natural history journals, magazines, CD guides, and books. With 40 years of field experience, birds are Stu's main focus, but he also has a huge interest in insects, especially butterflies, moths, dragonflies, and damselflies, and he takes great delight in sharing his passion with his groups. He holds an MSc in Ecology, where his main study focus was hoverflies and barriers to

pollination. Stu has worked on several international conservation projects including the Champions of the Flyway in Israel and The Peru Bird Rally. He is actively involved with his local wildlife trust ecology group and serves as Hon. Programme Secretary for Bedfordshire Bird Club. In 2016, Stu won the annual Birdbrain of Britain quiz at the British Birdfair.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$4,925** per person in double occupancy from London. With the exception of lunch at Birdfair (Day 3), where a multitude of vendors offers a multitude of options, this includes all food from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 10, all lodging and ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to London and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$645**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

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 150 days prior to the tour departure date (March 22, 2021).

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS: Refunds are made according to the following schedule: If cancellation is made 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For your protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If you cancel:

180 days or more before departure date

179 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Your refund will be:

Your deposit minus \$500*

No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded

No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing. This policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside 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: 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 Resolutions as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™**. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most highly regarded travel insurance programs available.

Critical benefits of **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance** include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation and rescue services** from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; comprehensive travel insurance for **trip cancellation/interruption**, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available but must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" clause (must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit). Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.

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

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement 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 are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is impossible to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based on the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

AIR INFORMATION: 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. 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 responsible for any air ticket penalties.***

BAGGAGE: As a precaution, please pack your travel documents, optics, medications, basic toiletries, a change of clothes, and other essential items in your carry-on bag. Please check with your airline for restrictions and fees. Because security regulations change constantly, we recommend that you consult the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for information about permissible carry-on items:

<https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/all>

As we will be making the transfers between the airport and our birding destinations as a group, please limit your baggage to one piece of luggage and one smaller carry-on or daypack. Soft-sided luggage is recommended.

CLOTHING: The following items are recommended:

- **Pants:** A couple of pairs of pants are essential. Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim, though not as comfortable, is certainly acceptable in the field. On our visits to restaurants, churches, and museums, neater but still informal clothing will be best.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, yet durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **Shirts:** Several comfortable long-sleeved shirts in styles suitable for warm to cool weather or for layering under a sweater or jacket; short sleeves may work, though near the coast even the warmest days may turn cool after sunset.
- **Hat:** A hat for protection from the sun is essential.
- **Sweaters and Coats:** A sweater, fleece, or jacket and gloves will be useful for cool mornings and evenings. You should also bring a water-repellent jacket in case of rain.

FOOTWEAR: We recommend a good trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot when in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable, but will not keep your feet dry in rain or mud. If it rains on the grounds of the British Birdfair, the paths are quickly churned into a muddy morass; high rubber boots are the preferred footwear. A lighter-weight walking shoe may be preferred when not in the field and for evenings.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service may be available in our hotels, but it is always best to bring enough clothes to get you through the entire tour.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with the proper equipment. Be sure to bring

- Small daypack for extra clothing, books, supplies, and optics.
- Notebook and pencils.
- Alarm clock.
- Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection and high-SPF sunscreen.
- Lip balm and lotions.
- Insect repellent, if desired.
- Cameras, lenses, extra batteries, and memory cards (not always conveniently available in smaller towns).
- Telescoping walking stick – highly recommended for those who have trouble walking.
- Pocket packages of tissues.
- Folding umbrella.

BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES:

Binoculars – We strongly recommend good 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 binoculars. Do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like “minis” because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes – Your tour leader will have a scope available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

OTHER ITEMS: Bring your favorite field guide. We recommend the second edition of *Birds of Europe* by Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney, and Dan Zetterström. If you bring another guide, it should be in addition to, rather than instead of, Svensson et al.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: August is a pleasant time to visit the Norfolk coast, with average highs in the low 70s F and lows in the upper 50s. Rain is possible at any time, and can linger for a day or two; our schedule is flexible enough to accommodate being rained out of one or the other of our destinations.

CONDITIONS: Our days will be full, but our pace will always be easy and relaxed. Most of our activities are optional, and except when we are traveling between Stansted and the coast, it is always possible to simply take the day off on your own if you'd like. When we are birding, our walking will be restricted to paths and roadsides, and we are not likely to walk more than two miles at a time; all of our walking will be at a slow pace. Towns and villages often have uneven pavement, and of course some paths on the coast are rocky, damp, or sandy.

Mosquitoes and other biting insects can be an annoyance on calm days, especially in the morning and evening.

The physical demands of this trip are light to moderate, but please bear in mind that our outings may require a moderate amount of walking and standing. We emphasize that you will not be subjected to physical demands beyond your capabilities.

Participants with an interest in enjoying more of the United Kingdom should come early or stay on after the end of the tour.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS - A passport valid for at least six months after your return from the tour is required. If your passport expires earlier than that, you must get it renewed. Also make certain that you have at least one empty page in your passport for stamps.

If you need to obtain or renew a passport or request extra pages, you should apply well in advance of your trip departure. Passports can be expedited for an additional fee. In the United States, you can apply for a passport or renewal at passport offices, most post offices, and county clerk's offices. You can also visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html> for information about obtaining and renewing passports.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport and keep the copies in a safe place so that you have proof of identification if your passport is lost. Your passport should be signed and easily accessible at all times. You will need it to check in at airports and to clear immigration controls in Great Britain, so **do not pack your passport in your checked luggage**.

VISAS – At the time of publication, citizens of the United States and Canada do not need a visa to enter the United Kingdom for a stay of less than 180 days. Citizens of other countries should check with their local British consulate or embassy. Immigration requirements may change at any time, so please confirm your needs well in advance of traveling.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: Your tour payment includes most necessary expenses while you are in Great Britain. You will need cash to cover such personal expenses as taxi rides, gifts, laundry, gratuities, and snacks and meals on your own. It is best to carry small bills, as some of the places we visit may not be able to change larger denominations.

The official currency of the United Kingdom is the British pound; US dollars are not accepted in stores or restaurants. You can see the current exchange rate at www.xe.com. You can order pounds through your bank before leaving home, or withdraw them from ATMs at the airport or in towns. Please ask your bank or credit card issuer about the use of your ATM and credit cards abroad.

ELECTRICITY: Electrical current in Great Britain is 230V/50Hz; outlets accept three rectangular pins. Most newer electronic devices can be run without conversion, but if you have items that cannot, you will need a step-down transformer in addition to a Type G plug adapter.

TIME: Great Britain in August observes British Summer Time, which is 5 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time and 8 hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Time.

HEALTH: At the time of publication, no major shots or inoculations are required for entry into Great Britain. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with the “routine vaccines,” including influenza, chickenpox (varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT). Some health care professional also consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and B standard.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, 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.

Those who are not fit for light to moderate physical activity, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance, or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the trip.

Sun exposure – Prolonged exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays damages eyes and skin. Protect your skin, lips, eyes, nose, and ears whenever you are outdoors. We strongly recommend the use of high-SPF sunscreen and lip balm, along with ultraviolet-blocking, polarized sunglasses. Severe sunburn is very painful and will affect your enjoyment of the trip.

England: British Birdfair & Coastal Norfolk, Page 10

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html (click on Travel Health).

SUGGESTED READING: 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.

Birds

Mullarney, Killian, Lars Svensson, and Dan Zetterstrom. *Birds of Europe*. 2nd ed. Princeton UP, 2009.

Taylor, M., and J.H. Marchant. *The Norfolk Bird Atlas*. British Trust for Ornithology, 2011.

Mammals

MacDonald, David, and Priscilla Barrett. *Mammals of Europe*. Princeton UP, 1993.

Odonates

Dijkstra, K., and R. Lewington. *Field Guide to the Dragonflies of Britain and Europe*. British Wildlife Publishing, 2006.

Butterflies

Tolman, T., and R. Lewington. *Collins Butterfly Guide*. HarperCollins, 2009.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: 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. 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. Notwithstanding the foregoing, VENT will not provide any participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to any 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, when and to the extent such failure or delay is caused by or results from acts beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following force majeure events: (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 in effect on or after the date of the scheduled tour; (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.

If a participant cancels any tour or any portion of a tour, VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by any participant (see VENT Registration & Deposit policy and Cancellation & Refunds policy contained in the itinerary). Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on December 17, 2020, 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. If a participant is removed from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed 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.