BRANT
nature tours

WHAT TO EXPECT

What to Expect on a BRANT Tour

Pace & Focus

All of our tours are different, each offering different challenges and rewards depending on the terrain, logistics, etc. To help you decide which tour is right for you we have developed an easy key on each tour page to articulate the feel and pace for each individual trip. Additionally, if you have any specific questions all you need to do is shoot us an email or give us a call. Generally our tours are designed to maximize the diversity of bird species seen in a given region while also allowing for time to explore and enjoy the culture, plants and other wildlife. In other words, these are birding trips but we don't neglect other enjoyable aspects of travel. We also do our best to develop active, engaging tours that do not over exhaust our clients, it is your vacation after all. And of course all our tours are safe. We never travel to regions where we feel are dangerous or where we wouldn't bring our own families.

Accommodations

Accommodations vary greatly depending on the country visited but in general we are staying at comfortable lodges and hotels. None of our chosen accommodations would be considered rustic, nor would they be considered especially fancy. In other words, you will be very comfortable and safe and you don't need to bring a fancy suit or a dress for dinner. We do our best to frequent locally owned and sustainably operated facilities whenever possible.

Rooming Arrangements

All participants registering for a trip must fill out a Participant Information Form. In doing so you will be asked if you would prefer single or double occupancy. What does this mean?

Single Occupancy - You would like to room by yourself. Note that you may be charged more for single occupancy. Single occupancy is not always available on every tour, please ask us about pricing and availability.

Double Occupancy - You would like to share a room with another person. If you know who you would like to room with we will ensure that you are placed in a room with that person. If you do not have a preference for a roommate but would like to share the cost of a room we will assign you a roommate. If you choose double occupancy and for whatever reason you do not end up with a roommate, you will not be charged for single occupancy.

Transportation

Transportation varies widely from tour to tour. We use everything from large tourism busses to small rental cars and everything in between. Sometimes we have local drivers and sometimes

your BRANT guides will be your drivers. In all cases we are sure to use safe and comfortable vehicles with plenty of room for everyone and our gear. We don't cram people into uncomfortably tight seats. It is important that participants are able to easily and comfortably get in and out of the tour vehicle. If you have motion sickness or mobility issues please be sure to let us know on the Participant Information Form.

Food

Food is an important part of the travel experience. We do our best to frequent locally-owned, sustainable restaurants and cafes. We love food and for that reason we like to incorporate local cuisine into our tours as much as possible. We always make sure to choose reputable eateries to avoid any health concerns. And finally we are almost always able to accommodate any dietary restrictions you may have as long as you let us know before hand (include this in your Participant Information Form).

What's Included

Included in your payment is the cost for all your lodging, accommodations, in-country transportation, meals (including gratuities), entrance fees, and guide fees for the tour from the moment we pick you up at the point of arrival to the moment we drop you off. The only things NOT included are flights to and from the point of arrival/departure, alcoholic drinks, medications, laundry, gifts and souvenirs, extra snacks, etc. For nearly all tours the point of arrival is the airport where the tour starts. If this is not the case that will be clearly stated in the tour information.

Guides & Gratuities

We do our best to offer a high participant-to-guide ratio to ensure you have a great tour. As a general rule we aim to have one guide per 6 participants. All our guides are experienced in both bird guiding and customer service and are happy to help you with whatever you need, whether it's getting on a bird or picking the right dish at dinner. At BRANT we value our guides' experience and expertise and do everything we can to compensate them appropriately. We do not expect you to tip them, and they do not expect a tip, however, if you feel as though they have gone above and beyond to help make your trip exceptional and wish to tip your guides, they would be more than happy to accept. At the end of the tour please present your tip to the lead guide at the appropriate time and they will make sure to distribute the tips fairly to all the guides. There is no standard tip, but $5-10 is normal.

Registration & Deposits

To register for a trip simply fill out and submit the online registration form. If you have any issues with the online form give us a call. Once the form is submitted we will send you a confirmation along with an invoice for your deposit and a Participant Information Form. Your space on the trip is not secure until we have received your deposit in full. Deposits are generally about 25% of the total cost of the tour. Payments can be made by check or credit card. If the trip you are trying to register for is full we are happy to place you on a wait list.

Confirmation

Unless otherwise stated tours will be confirmed 90 days prior to the departure date if the minimum number of participants has been reached. Once a tour is confirmed the trip is guaranteed to run. At that time we will send you the following documents:

Tour Preparation Sheet - A document outlining the specifics of the tour, what to bring, and what conditions to expect.

Checklist - A pdf version of the tour specific checklist. Note that you will also receive a printed copy of this document once the tour begins.

Contact Sheet - This document will have all pertinent contact information on it for BRANT personnel as well as hotels and any other important contact info for the trip. It will also include the names of your fellow travelers and, for those that elected to do so, their contact information. This document should be shared with your emergency contact prior to departure.

Flight itinerary Form - This document will include any special instructions on making airline reservations (eg, appropriate times to arrive/depart) as well as space for you to fill out your travel information. This needs to be completed and returned to us as soon as your flights are purchased. If you need help making these arrangements please give us a call. We recommend not purchasing flights until after the tour has been confirmed. We are not responsible for any fees associated with canceled flights for any reason. See Trip Insurance section below.

Final Invoice - Final payment is due as soon as the tour is confirmed. We will send out final invoices at this time.

Liability Waiver - A liability waiver will need to be completed and returned to us as soon as possible. Liability waivers are required for participation on a tour. Waivers can be printed, signed, and mailed back or scanned and emailed.

Cancellations

If circumstances cause you to cancel, refunds are issued as follows: If cancellations are made 90 days prior to the tour departure date your deposit and any other payments made, less any credit card processing fees, will be refunded to you. If cancellations are made less than 90 days prior to departure we cannot issue any refunds.

In case of cancellation by BRANT, all deposits and other payments made for the tour or tour extension will be refunded. Participants should note that the cancellation of a pre-tour or post-tour extension does not apply to the main portion of the tour. Please note as well that BRANT reserves the right to cancel all or part of a tour at any time if we feel that the health and/or safety of our participants is at risk. If BRANT has to cancel or alter a tour we are not responsible for any penalties incurred from companies or persons you have paid separately from BRANT.

This includes flights, rental vehicles, and hotels that were not included in the cost of your tour.

Travel Documents for International Trips

If you are registering for an international trip you will need a valid passport. It is always a good idea (and in some cases the law) that your passport be valid for at least 6 months past your planned return date. If you need to apply for or renew your passport please do so as early as possible as it sometimes is a time intensive process. On some trips you may be required to obtain special visas. We will be sure to let you know and advise you on this process when it is necessary.

Trip Insurance

We can not stress enough how important it is to purchase trip insurance! Trip insurance is inexpensive and will save you a lot of money in the case that you or BRANT must cancel a trip. Please trust us when we say that trip insurance comes in handy more often that you might think and is a life saver. There are many options when purchasing insurance and we have found that our clients highly recommend purchasing insurance from insuremytrip.com, AARP, and AAA just to name a few. Make sure you read your policy and know what it does and does not cover. Coverage for medical emergencies and evacuations, flight cancellations, and tour cancellations due to family emergency are important things to look for. Also, do not delay on purchasing insurance. Do it now! If you wait too long you will no longer be eligible to purchase insurance.

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