

Our Approach to Fun but Prudent Travel

Walking Adventures International

2022 Tours

Below are general procedures we propose for traveling together, as well as our current position on Covid-19 testing and vaccines.

Our overriding goal is to present reasonable expectations for prudent and sensible interaction while traveling together. A secondary goal is to place travelers in a primary place of personal responsibility. WAI guides will check with you throughout the tour, but the responsibility to monitor your health is your own. WAI guides will simply provide a sense of our common health goals as they relate to a successful walking adventure together.

Additionally, we hope to foster an environment of tolerance and respecting one another while we travel. Not surprisingly, the turbulence of this present age has produced a proliferation of differing points of view and a barrage of data from various sources that could be used to support any one of those views. As Mark Twain famously stated, “There are lies, damned lies, and statistics!”

Further, our purpose in providing this list of procedures is not to espouse a particular point of view; we simply want to provide a reasonable framework that travelers can consistently follow.

As the knowledge base about COVID-19 continues to change, we will review these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis, and will, of course, notify you of any updates as we approach the departure date of your tour.

Group size and vehicles

- For groups of 15 to 22, we use motorcoaches with a seating capacity of 40+ seats. For groups of 6-7, we use a 12 pax van. Vans are driven by WAI guides. Van transport requires an increase in tour price of approximately \$50 per person per day.
- Seating on vehicles will be arranged to allow maximum distance between travelers.
- The traditional WAI seat rotation plan is suspended to reduce spending time in space previously occupied by another.
- The vehicle is regularly cleaned and disinfected. Travelers are responsible for the cleaning and hygiene of their immediate area of the vehicle. Cleaning supplies will be available, or the traveler can bring their own from home.
- Motorcoach air filtration systems are robust—more so even than those found on modern aircraft.

Distancing and masks

- **In a vehicle:** Face coverings, while not without controversy, are still required apparel while in the vehicle. We understand the restrictive nature of masks and encourage travelers to take advantage of rest stops to unmask and breathe deeply when off the vehicle.
- **Indoors:** WAI takes no responsibility for mask protocol off the bus. We suggest you adhere to the policy of the establishment you are in. Of course, if you prefer to wear a mask when not required, that is your choice.
- **On the trail:** Guides do not encourage the use of masks when walking. Chance of virus transmission is nominal to nil out of doors in natural settings with low density of walkers on the trail. However, travelers are encouraged to be sensitive to others and avoid crowding each other.

Hygiene & Health

- We've all become sensitized to hygiene habits and non-contact interaction. Practicing these new skills while traveling is always a good idea, Covid-19 or not.
- We strongly recommend following an immune system boosting protocol, especially when traveling. Check with your doctor, but many regimens include Vitamins C and D, Zinc, and Quercetin.
- Over the past two years, we've become more aware of the importance of mental and spiritual well-being. Positivity, healthy eating, meditation and prayer, and prioritizing sleep are just a few behaviors that always help maximize a travel experience.

Health monitoring on tour

- The WAI guide will ask travelers about their health and log it on a clipboard each morning before boarding the vehicle.
- If a traveler experiences cold or flu symptoms, they should let the WAI guide know. A traveler with symptoms should take extra precautions to stay clear of others until their status can be determined or symptoms subside. When possible, the back few rows of the vehicle will be set aside for such isolation. Roommates or spouses of the affected traveler should adopt the same behavior and procedures as the affected traveler.
- In the unlikely event that a tour member tests positive for coronavirus during the tour, the tour will follow all directives from local authorities. This may include suspension of all further planned services and/or a quarantine of the tour member or the group; we will work with local authorities and services to ensure your needs are met.

Covid-19 testing and vaccines

Testing

- Contrary to a December 2021 announcement, WAI will not require test results prior to departure for 2022 tours. Initial plans to do so have been altered as a result of further research.
- We learned that some test may have ingredients that can be harmful in certain situations. We also learned that travel insurance companies do not accept most at-home tests, creating an unreasonable burden on the traveler to obtain a back up diagnosis from a doctor within the "3 days of departure" window in order to submit an insurance claim.
- As a result, WAI will return to our 2021 policy of "health monitoring on tour" described above. During 2021, twelve tours serving about 180 travelers were offered with no incidents of virus infection.

Vaccines

- WAI's position is that receiving an inoculation constitutes a personal health decision that is a personal choice. We do not believe that travel, or other liberties enjoyed in a free society, should be reserved only for those who are vaccinated. Vaccination is a condition of participation, however, when required by host countries or airlines.
- In other words, WAI does not require the traveler to be vaccinated, but if authorities in the travel destination do require it, vaccination becomes a condition for participation.
- As a practical matter, most foreign nations currently require evidence of vaccination, while travel in the USA is currently open to everyone, regardless of vaccination status.
- Furthermore, WAI applies HIPAA rules of medical privacy to the vaccination status of our travelers. We do not collect or store information on vaccination status unless it is required on an international tour by the host country. However, interaction with travelers indicates that presently the vast majority of those currently traveling are, in fact, vaccinated.

- Regardless of vaccination status, as stated above, we strongly recommend following an immune system boosting protocol, especially when traveling. Check with your doctor, but many regimens include Vitamins C and D, Zinc, and Quercetin.

WAI is obviously not a medical authority, and it is possible, even likely, that the above statements are in some way flawed or dated. This only reinforces the point that travelers need to do their own research and talk to their own trusted medical advisors and come to travel decisions with which they are comfortable.

WAI has operated tours for over 30 years, and we are well practiced in adapting nimbly to evolving circumstances. Our ongoing commitment is to respond consistently to unforeseen events with professionalism, compassion, and competence. Thank you for being part of the Adventure!