

Walking Adventures International

Our Approach to Fun but Prudent Travel

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 travel behavior. 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 caring for 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 sometimes slanted data from a variety of sources that could be used to support any one of those views. As Mark Twain famously stated, "There are lies, damned lies, and statistics!"

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. Underlying these procedures are the hope and assumption that we will be tolerant and respectful of each other, whatever our differences, by following these procedures.

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 for the time being 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 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.
- **On the trail:** Guides will not encourage the use of masks when walking. Chance of virus transmission is nominal 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.

- **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.

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.
- Mental and spiritual well-being have been given more attention in recent months. 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

- Effective for all tours in the USA released after December 1, 2021, WAI requires a negative antigen test result to be emailed to us within 3 days of the departure date of the tour. We are working with a company that provides "proctored" testing (using an app on your smart phone or computer).
- The company we are negotiating with is the first to be approved by CDC to be used for travel. We chose this company and the concept of having the test proctored because we understand it reduces the likelihood of taking the test incorrectly and ending up with a false positive result.
- The cost of the test is included in the tour price. A test kit will be mailed to your home in the weeks before the tour begins.
- Results are available within 15 minutes of taking the test and produce a report that can then be emailed to WAI.
- At present, WAI does not require covid testing for international tours because of overlapping requirements imposed by host countries.

Vaccines

- Covid-19 vaccines are a subject of controversy and can be a force for division amongst us. WAI's position is that receiving inoculations into one's body constitutes a personal health decision and is therefore 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 travel to the destination does 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 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.

Our understanding is that authorities suggest maintaining mitigation procedures whether vaccinated or not, and, for now, that will be our position.

WAI is obviously not a medical authority, and it is possible, even likely, that the above statements are in some way flawed. 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!