

Walking Adventures International

Our Approach to Fun but Prudent Travel

2021 Tours

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

Our goal is to present reasonable expectations for prudent and sensible travel behavior. Another goal is to assure travelers 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 one another while we travel. Not all of us, for example, are convinced of the efficacy of wearing face coverings. For now, however, until we receive authoritative direction to the contrary, we will follow conventional thinking that face coverings, while on the vehicle, are in the best interest of the group at large. If you would not otherwise choose to adopt these policies and procedures for your own benefit, we ask you to join us in doing so for the benefit and unity of the group.

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 12 to 18, we use motorcoaches with a seating capacity of 40+ seats. For groups of 7 to 12, we use one or two 15 pax vans, seating no more than 7 travelers in each 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. No traveler is required to sit next to another.
- 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. Supplies will be available or the traveler can bring their own from home.

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:** In general, guides will not encourage the use of masks when walking and suggest instead to keep reasonable spacing between walkers. Chance of 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:** Please respect others by wearing your mask when in the proximity of others and keeping a cushion of space whenever possible.

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.

- 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. 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 the 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 to ensure your needs are met.

Covid-19 testing and vaccines

- Covid-19 tests are not currently required for participation due to 1) lack of uniform access to timely tests and 2) concerns about the degree of false positives returned by tests. As we learn about timely, reliable tests that are widely available, we will reconsider this as a possible way to increase everyone's comfort level.
- Covid-19 vaccines are also not required at this time for three reasons:
 - 1) different views are held on the safety and efficacy of vaccines and credible arguments are made on both sides,
 - 2) receiving immunizations and vaccines into one's body are a personal choice, and we do not feel we have a legal or ethical authority to make them a condition of participation, and
 - 3) those vaccinated should be immune and hopefully secure in their protection while those not vaccinated understand that they participate at their own risk.

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!