

Georgia

THE EDGE OF EUROPE

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS | TOUR INFO PACK



Handsome male Güldenstädt's Redstarts can be found in hedgerows in the Caucasus Mountains © Giorgi Rajebashvili

2018 **Saturday 28th April – Sunday 6th May (9 days)** **Small group tour with Brian Small and local guides**

Among European birds there are a special few that attain near-mythical status, for they occur only at the outermost extremes of the Western Palearctic region. Caucasian Snowcock, Caucasian Grouse, Güldenstädt's Redstart and Great Rosefinch are all names to conjure with... and far-flung Georgia, now opening up to tourism, is home to all four! This superb tour is timed to give the best chance to see them - plus there is of course so much more to enjoy along the way. Join us as we return to the spectacularly scenic mountains of the High Caucasus and the dry rolling hills of the Iori Uplands on a wonderful 9-day trip to this fascinating country at 'the edge of Europe'.

- Birding the eastern extreme of Europe for sought-after specialities
- Caucasian Snowcock and Caucasian Grouse in the spectacular High Caucasus
- Güldenstädt's Redstarts and Great Rosefinches on the edge of town
- Bearded Vultures and Wallcreepers in the mountains
- Caucasian Chiffchaff, Ménétries's and Barred Warblers, Green Warbler
- Raptors include Black Vulture, Eastern Imperial Eagle and Long-legged Buzzard
- Rollers, Bee-eaters, Calandra Larks and Black-headed Buntings on the steppe
- Expertly led by Limosa's Brian Small and an English-speaking Georgian bird guide

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- English-speaking Georgian bird tour guide
- Flights - from London Heathrow to Tbilisi with Lufthansa Airlines
- 7 nights in accommodation in Georgia
- All main meals included - with drinking water provided during the day
- All local travel, entry fees, tour-based tips and taxes

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Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** Fly London overnight to Tbilisi
- Day 2:** Arriving Tbilisi early on day 2, we transfer north to the Caucasus Mountains seeking our first raptors, *Güldenstädt's Redstart* and *Great Rosefinch*. *Stepantsminda* (3 nts)
- Days 3-4:** We focus on more upland specialities of the High Caucasus
- Day 5:** After another morning in the mountains we leave *Stepantsminda* and return to the Georgian capital. Night Tbilisi
- Days 6-7:** We head east to the rolling plains of the *Iori Uplands* in search of *Ménétries's Warbler* and a host of eastern Mediterranean species. *Dedoplistskaro* (2 nts)
- Day 8:** Birding en route to Tbilisi. Night Tbilisi
- Day 9:** Fly Tbilisi-London Heathrow

Tour Overview

Following the outstanding success of our 2017 tour, we are thrilled to be travelling to Georgia again in April 2018. It is an exciting destination to travel to, with largely unspoilt landscapes and amazing bird life.

North of Tbilisi, at the end of the old Russian highway, lie the High Caucasus mountains that straddle the border between Europe and Asia. Set amidst some of the highest peaks on the continent – five of which rise above 5000m - lies the town of *Stepantsminda*, scenically situated below the glacier-clad *Mount Kazbeg*. This developing town is an excellent base from which to explore the region and to search for four near-mythical birds that occur here at the eastern edge of the continent. Mere mention of their names is enough to get the birding juices flowing: *Caucasian Snowcock*, *Caucasian Grouse*, *Great Rosefinch* and *Güldenstädt's Redstart*. Georgia, now opening up to tourism, gives the best chance to see all four and this exciting early spring tour amidst the rich montane landscapes of the High Caucasus range is timed to catch them before they follow the retreating snow line

higher and deeper into the inaccessible mountains.

From our conveniently located hotel, the hills are but a stone's throw away and we start early for two of the key targets - for it is at this time that jumping *Caucasian Grouse* perform their lek on grassy slopes, while *Caucasian Snowcocks* give their presence away by their haunting, diver-like calls high above. Patches of buckthorn are places to search for crimson male *Great Rosefinches* and handsome white-capped *Güldenstädt's Redstarts*. With three days to explore this fascinating mountain region, we have a great opportunity to see all four of these local specialities against the fantastic backdrop of *Mount Kazbek*.

The timing of our visit in spring gives us the chance to see the grouse and snowcock before they return to higher elevations for the summer. In catching the snowmelt just right, other high-altitude species come down from the mountains. On rockier pastures from which they pick on seed heads, *Red-fronted Serins* hop about the boulders, whilst *Caucasian Chiffchaffs* sing in budding trees with bright *Green Warblers*. On cliff-faces, *Wallcreepers* flutter like outsize butterflies, flashing crimson, black and white wings, while *Bearded Vultures* soar high above accompanied by passing raptors. *White-winged Ring Ouzels* of the distinctive form *amicorum* and *Common Redstarts* of the *samamiscus* race are both smart and well worth catching up with. The mountain cols act as pathways for migrants heading through the Caucasus into Russia, as passerines such as flycatchers - including *Red-breasted* and *Semi-collared* - warblers, *Yellow Wagtails* and *Red-throated Pipits* track north.

Dragging ourselves away, we return south to Tbilisi and enter a very different environment. In contrast to the high, snow-capped mountains, the warm rolling steppes and hills east of the capital attract a very different range of species. Here we can find *rainbow Bee-eaters* and *Rollers* flashing ultramarine blue in display, while scratchy *Ménétries's* and melodious *Barred Warblers* sing from bushes. Perched atop mounds, *Black Francolin* utter their grating calls and a wealth of wheatears feed on beetles, with closely related and smartly dressed *Pied* and *Black-eared* (as

well as numerous hybrids between the two), Isabelline (already with well-grown young) and the elusive Finsch's to look for.

Amid a landscape inhabited by Golden Jackals and Wolf, where prominent trees act as perches for vultures, the grassland rings to the sounds of spring lark song and the simple phrase of black, rufous and yellow Black-headed Buntings. We will keep an eye open for passing harriers - Montagu's are common as they float across the flowering grasslands, and Eastern Imperial Eagles will be nesting. Exploring lines of trees and verdant streambeds we will hope to come across a surprise migrant or two...

There are many special things to enjoy on this superb tour to Georgia, with its unspoilt and charismatic landscapes and fine scenery - plus some truly wonderful and special birds. Why not join us for the adventure?

Daily Itinerary

Days 1-2

FLY LONDON-TBILISI & TRANSFER TO THE CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS

Our spring birdwatching tour to Georgia starts with a Lufthansa flight from London to Tbilisi (via Munich). Early morning arrival in Tbilisi on Day 2, where we will be met by our local guide - and our adventure begins!

Heading north towards the magnificent mountains of the Greater Caucasus that loom ever larger in our view as we drive, we will stop along the way to enjoy anything of interest. As we begin to climb higher, we'll pause at Ananuri, where migrant birds rest in the foothills cloaked in oak and beech forest. In spring weather, vocal Green Warblers and perhaps singing Red-breasted or Semi-collared Flycatchers will be present. Around the monastery, flocks of Ortolan Buntings or Whinchats may gather. Our destination today is the town of Stepantsminda, nestled in the Terji Valley and dominated by the snow-capped peaks of the High Caucasus - notably that of Mount Kazbeg, which at just over 5000m (16,400ft) is one of the highest in Europe.

Following lunch, we arrive at and settle into our new and comfortable hotel, then have our first chance for a stroll and to explore this interesting town. A wealth of birds await and we will set out for a local patch of budding buckthorn, hoping to pick out our first superb *Güldenstädt's* Redstart and Great Rosefinch! High above, we may well see our first spiralling birds of prey above the mountains. However, it will have been a long day and we will settle to bed early ready for the exciting days ahead. *Night Stepantsminda*

Days 3-4

STEPANTSMINDA & THE CAUCASUS

Rising early we have our first chance before breakfast of two of the 'star' birds of the tour: Caucasian Grouse and Caucasian Snowcock. It is important to get out close to dawn as these shy grouse are most active during the first hours of daylight and can soon disappear as the sun rises. The snowcock sit high above the grassy slopes and we should hear their eerie, diver-like calls echoing about the valley. Caucasian Grouse, a lyre-tailed and all-black relative of the Black Grouse, strut about on lower slopes and are generally easier to see. If we didn't manage to spot one yesterday, we further opportunities to look for Great Rosefinch - the gorgeous males' deep alizarin crimson bodies flecked with white. Hopefully we will return for breakfast well and truly 'full' of birds!

After breakfast, a stroll around town may reward us with more good species - perhaps a variety of migrants or 'seconds' of Great Rosefinch and the white-capped *Güldenstädt's* Redstart. This region is the only location within the Western Palearctic that offers the chance of seeing these birds, so we will spend some time checking.

With Stepantsminda as our base for three nights, we can explore the spectacular and winding roads that lead to the higher passes. South at the Truso Valley we will encounter a number of mountain birds, with tame flocks of Twite (of the race *brevirostris*), Shore Lark (of the race *penicillata*) and White-winged Snowfinches feeding alongside the road and often giving excellent photographic opportunities. As we scan the slopes, we will start to see our first raptors, as Griffon Vulture, Golden Eagle and Bearded Vulture appear above a hill top.

Small flocks of the stunning black and 'red-pollled' Red-fronted Serin can be found amongst the boulders and crimson-winged Wallcreepers flutter about the sheer rock faces, while Red-billed and Alpine Choughs wheel above. White-winged Ring Ouzels of the *amicorum* race are stunning here and other 'montane specials' include Alpine Accentor plus abundant Water Pipit, Black Redstart and Northern Wheatear.

If the wind is in the right direction, this region is a flyway for raptors heading into the vastness of Russia to the north. Northern Goshawk and Steppe Buzzard, plus Steppe Eagle, Montagu's and Pallid Harriers, and the season's first Red-footed Falcons could well be passing through the valleys at this time. Ortolan Buntings, Willow Warblers, Bluethroats and Barred Warblers may also be passing through, while Yellow Wagtails of various races and Arctic-bound Red-throated Pipits can be feeding in grassy fields. Caucasian Chiffchaff is common here and often calls from the birches about the hotel! Taking our time exploring the small copses we will hope to see a fine Semi-collared or Red-breasted Flycatcher.

There are a number of interesting mammals in the region, such as East Caucasian Taur and Chamois. If we are incredibly lucky, Eurasian Wolf or Brown Bear are sometimes seen, too.
Two further nights Stepantsminda

Day 5 STEPANTSMINDA TO TBILISI

This morning we will make the most of our time in the mountains and get out early for one final chance to enjoy the snowcock or grouse. After breakfast, we may check once more for migrants or try for Alpine Accentor or Snowfinches (here of the paler race *alpicola*) as we head over Jvari Pass or stop at the peace monument at Gudauri.

We'll stop for lunch near Ananuri, where the fortress and surrounding trees often hold stunning white-winged *samamisticus* Common Redstarts – often known as 'Ehrenburg's Redstart'. Red-backed Shrikes and smart Semi-collared Flycatchers, Barred Warblers or Ortolan Buntings are among other highlights to be found here in spring.

As we approach Tbilisi, we will make another roadside stop to check the hillside woodland that might produce Green Warbler, passing raptors or Black or Syrian Woodpeckers. *Night Tbilisi*

Days 6-7

DEDOPLISTSKARO & IORI UPLANDS

So as to make full use of our day in the field, we will depart Tbilisi promptly after breakfast to head east towards our next base, Dedoplistskaro, where we stay two nights. The landscape here is very different to the mountains, being dry and Mediterranean or savanna-like steppe country - and this brings a range of very different species. Stopping at various sites as we drive, we should find open fields full of birds: numerous Montagu's Harriers skydance in display; Corn Buntings jangle their keys from almost every perch; Nightingales, Red-backed Shrikes and Black-headed Buntings sing and flowering hedges harbour singing Common Whitethroats and Barred Warbler.

The Iori Uplands are a line of hills set amidst rolling plains and incised with several gorges. On the edge of the steppe lies the town of Dedoplistskaro, our home for two nights, where the variety of birds is amazing and certainly not to be missed! Over the next couple of days, we will visit the local lake, checking for raptors such as Lesser Spotted Eagle and Black Vulture; perhaps the edge of the water will be adorned by Black-winged Stilts or Ruddy Shelducks, whilst Bee-eaters pass by and Rollers perch on isolated trees. Yet more Corn Buntings chase about and Quails call (invariably unseen!) from the fields.

Just north of the town is the Eagles Gorge, where Egyptian Vulture and Black Stork may be breeding. A late afternoon walk here should produce Booted and yet more Lesser Spotted Eagles, or maybe even an Eastern Imperial. The limestone crags can be zapped by Alpine Swifts, but also harbour some superb wildflowers and a few early butterflies. Scops Owls call from the pines around the hotel and we will have a look for them on at least one occasion.

We have one long but outstanding day to drive from Dedoplistskaro to the Chachuna Managed Reserve. The open steppe along the way can produce many great birds and often starts with a

variety of larks including Calandra, Greater Short-toed and Lesser Short-toed. Rock Sparrows call wheezily and Little Owls should be looked for on small stones. Hoopoes and elegant Demoiselle Cranes may be found amidst poppy studded hillsides, where Eastern Imperial Eagles breed. As the habitat becomes drier, Isabelline Wheatears and Woodchat Shrikes become very common, with the former already feeding well-grown young.

At the Dali Reservoir, specialities such as Black Francolin, Chukar, Ménétries's Warbler and both Eastern Olivaceous and Eastern Orphean Warblers could well be found in the scrub below the dam. Amongst the reeds, Penduline Tits call and pools can hold Kingfisher, while the trees may reveal an incongruous Green Woodpecker. A small colony of Lesser Kestrels wheels about an old dam building.

There is a slim chance of finding Finsch's Wheatear on rocky outcrops, though Black-eared or hybrid Pied x Black-eared Wheatears are rather more common. All the while, Black, Egyptian and Griffon Vultures loaf about and noisy flocks of numerous Rosy Starlings are a joy to watch as they chase about after grasshoppers or sing from bushes. If we are lucky, we may find a Golden Jackal – and if we are extremely lucky a Wolf might also put in an appearance as we explore this fascinating region.

Two nights Dedoplistskaro

Day 8

DEDOPLISTSKARO & RETURN TBILISI

With the whole day to travel back west to Tbilisi, we will take our time today, perhaps visiting a breeding spot for Semi-collared Flycatchers or diverting south to the monastery at David Gareji – another superb open steppe region and hillside close to the Azerbaijan border. More raptors drift above the open landscape and perhaps a Saker Falcon or Pallid Harrier will sail by. This will also be our final chance to see a party of migrating Demoiselle Cranes resting on their long journey north before they attempt to pass over the high mountains.

The rocky and scrubby slopes by the monastery could well provide us with our best chance of Pied Wheatear amongst the hybrids and Black-

eareds, while Ortolan Buntings sing from the bushes. Blue Rock Thrush can be found here too, and migrants such as Eastern Orphean Warbler, Woodchat Shrike and Bee-eater pass over the fascinating rock formations. Armenian Stonechat – a form of Siberian Stonechat – can sometimes be seen on the rocky fields.

As we arrive back in the capital for our final night, we'll take our evening meal at a typical Georgian restaurant, where we can sample some of the local foods and also sip a glass of one (or more!) of the fine wines of which the country is rightly proud. Retiring early will give a chance for some sleep prior to our early morning transfer to Tbilisi Airport and our flight home.

Day 9

FLY TBILISI-LONDON

We check in early this morning for our Lufthansa flight back to London (via Munich), where our superb spring birdwatching tour to Georgia concludes.

Trip Information

Group Size 10 participants & 2 leaders

What to Expect Our tour to the Caucasus is timed to run in late April and early May, when there is still the chance of snow lying - which keeps the high mountain specialities at lower elevations for us to find them! In the steppe around Dedoplistskaro, it will be warm-hot. Birding in the mountains will require some physical effort so a reasonable degree of fitness is required for this tour. We shall naturally want to make the most of our days at the peak of early morning bird activity, so on this tour please note we will be starting early each day (around 06.00am) with optional early birding, returning later for a sit-down breakfast (around 08.00am).

This tour involves four longish drives (each of around 3 hours travelling time) - from Tbilisi north to Stepantsminda and back a few days later, and from Tbilisi east to Dedoplistskaro and again back a few days later - though on each we shall stop along the way for birding and for lunch.

The drive to the reservoir near Chachuna is over a 30km track - great for birding and we will stop regularly - but some going here will be rough and bumpy.

Birds 150-180 species

Mammals 5-10 species

Accommodation 7 nights accommodation in Georgia, where we stay in a modern hotel at Tbilisi (for one full night plus one part night on our last full day) and at Stepantsminda in the Caucasus Mountains (3 nights) and Dedoplistskaro in the southeast (2 nights) in simple yet comfortable hotels run by the Ilia State University Research. Rooms are warm, a little small at Stepantsminda, but the food served is home-cooked. All rooms have en suite facilities, but there are no kettles for making drinks in the rooms. **Wifi** is freely available in the rooms at all of the hotels.

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with breakfast on arrival in Georgia on the morning of Day 2 and concluding with dinner in Tbilisi on the evening of Day 8. Lunches will be a mix of picnics and sit-down meals according to weather and location.

Walking Easy to moderate, with some uphill walking inevitable in the mountains – though precisely what we do and where we go is dependent upon weather conditions at the time as well as the snowline. Wear sturdy waterproof walking shoes or boots with stout corrugated soles for good grip. We will be taking things slowly with plenty of time for breaks.

Altitude In the mountains, we will be spending most of our time at elevations of around 1900-2200m although we may reach 2500-3000m depending on snow conditions at the time of our visit.

Weather We will experience a difference in climate between the two different regions we visit. In the mountains, the weather in late April is cold-cool and changeable, with the winter snows beginning to melt. Daytime temperatures here typically vary from 5-15°C, but drop quickly at night. The southeastern steppes of

Dedoplistskaro in early May average rather warmer, with daytime temperatures in the range of 13-26°C and periods of sunny skies and more overcast or rainy conditions. It can feel cool here, especially at night. There is a high chance of some precipitation on this tour (most likely falling as rain but snow is still possible in the mountains).

Flights We fly with Lufthansa from London Heathrow-Tbilisi (change of planes in Munich). Based on current airline schedules, flights arrive and depart Tbilisi very early in the morning.

Ground Transport Minibus with local driver.

Tour Cost

2018 (9 days): £2195 *¹
(inc flights from London)
Land only cost: £1625 *¹
Deposit: £400
Single Supp: £160 *¹

Cost includes

Services of our expert guides; flights London Heathrow-Tbilisi; 7 nights accommodation in Georgia; all main meals (with water provided); all local transport, entry fees, tour-based tips and airport taxes; map and checklist of birds for tour.

Cost excludes

Insurance, drinks, airport meals/snacks and other items of a personal nature.

*¹ 2018 prices provisional, TBC summer 2017

About Your Guides

Brian Small A teacher for 11 years, Brian has worked full time in the Limosa office since 2013 - at least, when he's not away guiding our tours that is! He has travelled widely around the globe and is the inspiration behind a growing number of *Limosa* tours, including the Swiss Alps, Italy, Kuwait, India and Brazil. An accomplished bird artist, Brian's current artwork projects include illustrative work on major new guides to birds in Brazil, and various parts of Africa. He has lately

recovered from a previous 'affliction' that saw him sifting through gull flocks on the local pig fields (something of a solitary occupation we're told!) and now concentrates on birding his local patch at Southwold on the Suffolk coast, where he lives with his wife Janet and their teenage son Ben. He regularly leads our guided *BirdWalks* in Norfolk and Suffolk. Brimming with infectious enthusiasm, Brian has been guiding for Limosa since 2002 and has excellent experience of Western Palearctic species - including leading our inaugural Georgia tour in April 2017.

Our **local guide** will be **David Dekanoidze**, a very experienced, English-speaking Georgian bird tour guide. David has led many tours throughout the country - including our April 2017 tour to Georgia with Brian.

Financial Security

Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays' insolvency. Our licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as 'Land Only', all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For details please see our brochure or website: <http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection>

Limosa Loyalty Discount

We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying 'thank you', we offer a **Frequent Travel Discount**. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip^{*1}. Remember to request your discount at time of booking!

^{*1} **Please note:** This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-

based trips, extras such as additional flights, private extensions and cancellations. Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.

How To Book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

Book Online, by Phone or by Post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely **Online** via our website, using the '**Book This Tour**' button on the relevant tour page or the **Booking** tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there's one tucked inside every brochure or as a PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Be sure to read our **Booking Conditions** and **General Information** (found at the back of our brochure, on our website or available from our office on request) prior to booking.

When to Book

Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an **Early Bird Discount** - see our current brochure or website for details.

Our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

Last-minute Bookings: We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season so it is always worth enquiring about vacancies on any tour - even for those departing in just a few weeks!

Payments

The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **debit card, cheque** (payable to Limosa Holidays and drawn on a UK bank in GB Pounds Sterling) and **BACS** (please ask for our bank details). We also accept Visa and MasterCard **credit cards**, with no transaction charge on payment of tour deposits.

Full payment of the **balance** is due not later than 12 weeks prior to departure (20 weeks in the case of certain tours such as cruises or those involving rail travel). We will send you an invoice before the balance is due.

We accept payment for balances (and interim payments) by **cheque, BACS or UK debit card**. We also accept balances (and interim payments) by **credit card or overseas debit card** but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges. [Note we do not retain your card details, which are destroyed once used. This means we may need to phone you again for details for subsequent payments.]

Payment by **overseas customers** must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by transfer to our bank (please ask for our bank details), or by overseas debit or credit card with a 2.5% transaction charge. Please note we do not accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

Late Booking Payments: In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at time of booking for all late bookings (*i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure*).

Other Things You Need To Know

Passports & Visas

For UK passport holders, for stays of up to one year in Georgia, your **passport** must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay.

No additional period of validity beyond this is required - however, when travelling anywhere

overseas we always recommend that your passport has a minimum of 6 months left to run after your intended date of return home in case of unforeseen delay.

• **VISA NOT REQUIRED** by British Citizens to enter Georgia. Georgian visa rules changed with effect from June 2015 and you can currently visit for up to a year, visa-free.

Holders of other types of British passports and non-UK passport holders should contact the nearest Embassy of Georgia or consulate to enquire whether or not they require a visa. If a visa is required, you will need to apply locally. If the embassy or consulate requires you to provide a letter confirming that you are booked on an all-inclusive tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to provide one.

Health & Vaccinations

Compulsory vaccinations: None.

Recommended vaccinations: tetanus, polio, diphtheria and hepatitis A. Check with your doctor for current advice regarding TB, typhoid and hepatitis B.

The above information, together with that contained within our Travel Information sheets (sent to everyone who books), outlines health requirements for this tour. **Please note that these details are given for guidance only - and are only for certain diseases - and you must consult your doctor in good time prior to travel as to what immunisations (if any) are needed for your chosen holiday.**

For full and up-to-date health information we urge everyone to consult The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk prior to booking any overseas holiday. NaTHNaC is funded by the UK Government's Health Protection Agency and provides health information for both health professionals and travellers, with information compiled by its own clinical and scientific team.

Your Safety & Travel Advice

An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad nowadays is the risk it may pose to your safety and security. The best advice on current risks is provided by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination we strongly recommend that you refer to the relevant FCO Travel Advice - both prior to booking and regularly before you travel. See www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

It is standard Limosa policy for our office to send a copy of the relevant FCO Travel Advice about the tour to all participants along with their Final Letter (ca. 2-3 weeks prior to the trip).

‘**Travel Aware**’ - staying safe and healthy abroad - is a travel safety campaign run by the FCO, and another useful resource. Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/travelaware>

Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is essential before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, it is a condition of booking that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling overseas with us.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses. Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary. Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire, particularly in Third World countries, may be inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or illness. You must

inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

Important Things to Note about Insurance

- Travel Insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.
- Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount, additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of additional premium. We recommend all travellers check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.

Arranging Your Insurance: due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

General Information

www.limosaholidays.co.uk

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

Special Diets & Other Requests

We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

Smoking

Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our **NO SMOKING** policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions at any time, you'll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way. Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by fax and email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24 hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

*Thank you for your interest in our tours.
We do hope that you will be able to join us
- and we look forward to hearing from you
again!*

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