

USA | New Mexico

BOSQUE DEL APACHE & MORE!

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS | TOUR INFO PACK



Up to 20,000 Snow Geese (above) and 8,000 Sandhill Cranes winter at the Bosque del Apache reserve © davidtipling.com

2019 **Saturday 9th - Monday 18th March (10 days)**
2020 **Saturday 7th - Monday 16th March (10 days)**
Small group tour with Brian Small

NEW! *Our late-winter birding tour to New Mexico takes in one of the greatest spectacles of the avian world. If you want wonderful winter birding, with thousands of wildfowl and cranes - plus lots of raptors too - this is the trip for you! Up to 20,000 Snow Geese and 8,000 Sandhill Cranes over-winter at the Bosque del Apache and Rio Grande Valley refuges near Albuquerque. Join us in March for the chance to experience them - plus a host of localised specialities, including Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Chestnut-collared Longspur and up to 3 species of handsome rosy finch: Grey-crowned, Brown-capped and Black.*

- Shake off those winter blues on this spectacular birding tour!
- The world famous spectacle of wintering Snow Geese & Sandhill Cranes at Bosque del Apache
- Bald Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk among numerous birds of prey
- Countless other highlights: Ross's Goose, Cinnamon Teal, Ladder-backed Woodpecker ...
- Superb array of sought-after passerines, including up to three species of rosy finch
- Plus everything from Cactus Wren and Juniper Titmouse to Pyrrhuloxia and Phainopepla
- Wonderfully scenic: from desert flats to upland pinewoods and snowy peaks
- Small group tour - maximum 7 participants
- Expertly led by Limosa guide Brian Small

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Return flights - London Heathrow to Albuquerque (New Mexico)
- 8 nights accommodation at comfortable hotels of good North American standard
- All main meals - with drinking water provided during the day
- Minibus transport
- All excursions, entry fees, tour based tips and taxes

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Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** We fly London Heathrow-Albuquerque (change of planes in Texas). Short transfer to our first hotel. Albuquerque (2 nts)
- Day 2:** Birding at Sandia Crest (3280m) and Rio Grande Nature Centre
- Days 3-5:** An easy drive carries us south to Truth or Consequences, birding Elephant Butte reservoir, Percha Dam and Caballo. Truth or Consequences (3 nts)
- Days 6-8:** A one-hour drive north returns us to Socorro where we explore Bosque del Apache, Water Canyon & the scenic Magdalena Mountains. Socorro (3 nts)
- Day 9:** Back to Albuquerque, birding as we go. Fly Albuquerque to Dallas with onward overnight connection to London
- Day 10:** Late morning arrival Heathrow

Tour Overview

As the Rio Grande Valley snakes its way southwards through New Mexico, it provides one of the greatest spectacles in the avian world. If you want sensational winter birding - with easy distances, a diverse range of wonderfully scenic habitats and wildfowl, raptors and cranes galore - this March tour is the one for you!

Spend a day at the wildlife reserve at Bosque del Apache, just south of the town of Socorro along the Rio Grande Valley, and the superlatives soon run out... Picture the sun rising over distant hills; rays of light cut through the clear desert sky and the noise of thousands of birds fills the air as flocks rise up from their roosting sites and head out to feed in the surrounding agricultural land.

Up to 20,000 Snow Geese and 8,000 Sandhill Cranes spend the winter at Bosque del Apache. As the sun continues to climb, the clamorous throngs settle to feed - sometimes at incredibly close quarters. Occasionally, they are spooked by one of the numerous Bald Eagles that also overwinter here, lifting up as one to circle the

pans before settling nervously again – necessity overcoming fear.

Yet this is but a small part of the wealth of birdlife on offer. As many as 25 species of wildfowl use the wide ‘pans’ as their winter home, among them Cackling and Ross’s Geese, Redheads and Canvasbacks, Cinnamon Teal and Ring-necked Duck, while Northern Harriers float across the fields, eyeing their prey.

In New Mexico, between Albuquerque and El Paso just 240 miles to the south, the Rio Grande heads south before swinging west along the border between Texas and Mexico on its long journey to the Gulf of Mexico. As well as being supremely scenic - with grasslands merging into arid creosote flats, high mountains swathed in conifers, riparian forests, and dry canyons filled with exquisitely shaped boulders - this region of New Mexico is truly extraordinary for birds in winter. And while the Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese take centre stage, there are many other specialities to watch for here in March, including numerous raptors, Scaled and Gambel’s Quails, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Say’s Phoebe and White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows.

Strung out like pearls along the Rio Grande are several productive State Parks - from the small and beautiful Percha Dam, south of the town of Truth or Consequences, to the vast Caballo Reservoir, where Cactus and Rock Wrens, Crissal, Sage and Curve-billed Trashers, both Phainopepla and Pyrrhuloxia (as hard to spell as they are to say), pink-sided Dark-eyed Juncos and Black Phoebe can all be found. At Elephant Butte Lake we have the chance to enjoy one of the largest concentrations of Clark’s and Western Grebes to be found in North America, while at its northern end we should encounter Horned Larks and exquisite Chestnut-collared Longspurs – in March, the males already richly coloured before they fly north to breed.

Rising up to either side of the valley we will explore the lovely landscape of Water Canyon, set amidst the juniper and pine forests of the Magdalena Mountains - an excellent area for Juniper Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker and the recently ‘split’ Woodhouse’s Scrub Jay, plus Pinyon Jay and the striking Bridled Titmouse.

Topping it all off, we'll drive high up to Sandia Crest at 3280m (10,760ft) in our quest for the handsome Grey-crowned, Brown-capped and Black Rosy Finches!

And though it is the spectacle of the Bosque del Apache Refuge that most will come here for, it won't take long to discover that this easy-paced tour offers a fabulous journey through a special landscape laden with exciting winter birds!

Daily Itinerary

Day 1

FLY ALBUQUERQUE

Our winter birdwatching tour to New Mexico begins with a morning flight from London Heathrow to Dallas Fort Worth (Texas), and onward connection to Albuquerque, New Mexico. We make the short transfer to our nearby hotel, which will be our base for the first two nights of the tour. *Night Albuquerque*

Day 2

SANDIA CREST & ALBUQUERQUE

Making an early start from our hotel we head just to the northeast of the city, where the ski road rises up to Sandia Crest, 3280m (10,760ft). Here we can drive right up to Crest House, well known amongst birders as a site to see all three species of North American rosy finches: Brown-capped, Grey-crowned and Black! This is a rare opportunity to look for them and to learn how to separate these alluring but rather similar-looking species. Numbers do vary from year to year, but often by early March, Grey-crowns are the most common, then Black, while Brown-capped have usually reduced in number. Amongst the handsome, rich-brown Grey-crowned birds we could also spot one or two of the 'Hepburn's' race, with its greyer face than the interior form.

Ploughed and salted, the road that winds up to the Crest affords good birding and, if possible, we'll pause along the way to search for species such as Steller's Jay, Red-breasted and White-headed Nuthatches and perhaps American Three-toed Woodpecker and Red Crossbill. The forest here is also home to Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Red-naped Sapsucker, Pine Siskin, the attractive 'Grey-hooded' form of

Dark-eyed Junco and Brown Creeper. Other possible highlights might include wintering Hermit Thrush and Cassin's Finch, and chances of Mountain and Western Bluebirds, Clark's Nutcracker and - if we are lucky - Townsend's Solitaire.

Fed and refreshed, we drop back down to head round the northern fringe of the city, to the Rio Grande Nature Centre. A refuge from the city life of Albuquerque, amidst the 270 acres of woods, meadows and farmland flourishing with native grasses, wildflowers, willows and cottonwoods, many species spend the winter. Wildfowl include Ring-necked and Wood Ducks, Greater Scaup and possibly Canvasback, with the likes of Greater Roadrunner, Eastern Bluebird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Spotted Towhee and House Finch attending the Centre's busy feeders. In sedges and reeds we may spot an elusive Marsh Wren. Bewick's Wrens are also present in March, and Myrtle Warblers overwinter as do Bushtits plus Mountain and Black-capped Chickadees.

On our return to our hotel, maybe we will pass along a section of the famous 'Route 66' - though we should already have got our kicks! *Night Albuquerque*

Days 3 - 5

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Leaving Albuquerque this morning, we travel a couple of hours south to the wonderfully named Truth or Consequences. We'll pause now and then to stretch our legs - and also at a layby where various sparrows, including Brewer's, may be feeding in the grasses or where a Northern Harrier might swing by. Scaled Quail frequent the roadside scrub and numerous Red-tailed Hawks adorn the poles and fences as we pass. We'll be keeping a keen eye open for the scarce Ferruginous Hawk, too.

South of Socorro, we'll divert a short distance to visit Monticello Point, at the northern end of Elephant Butte reservoir. The flat grassland here offers a good chance to find the superb Chestnut-collared Longspur, before it heads north to breed in the northern prairies. By March they should have acquired their lovely colours and the numbers here are often good. Alongside

them, pink-shawled and mustard-faced Horned Larks scuttle, whilst American Robins and beautiful Mountain Bluebirds perch about the fences. Out on the lake itself, a mixed gathering of Clark's and Western Grebes can often be seen, along with Hooded Merganser.

'T or C' is an excellent centre from which to explore key birding areas in the Rio Grande Valley, including Percha Dam State Park and Caballo Reservoir to the south of town. These two sites are not only beautiful state parks but two of the best places for landbirds in New Mexico and we will spend time over the next two days gently walking through them searching for feeding parties.

Percha Dam is small but perfectly formed, its mix of riparian woodland and contrasting desert scrub attracting a wide variety of birds.

Extensive stands of cottonwood trees attract large numbers of wintering birds and we'll hope to see species such as Gambel's Quail, White-winged Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Black Phoebe, Chihuahuan and Common Ravens, the plush-capped Verdin and the king-sized Cactus Wren, all the while hoping that we're not the one to spot and have to call out *Pyrrhuloxia* or *Phainopepla*! Often something unexpected turns up, and birding here is always exciting.

In comparison, Caballo reservoir is large, encompassing 11,000 acres. In winter, it's a great place to look for wildfowl and gulls, including the dapper little Bufflehead amongst the diving ducks. Around the shores, we may find the desert-dwelling Ladder-backed Woodpecker, the exquisitely patterned Red-naped Sapsucker and the slender, more subtly marked Say's Phoebe, while keeping our eyes open for both Bald and Golden Eagles that sometimes grace the skies. Below the dam itself, at Riverside Recreation park, we have a chance to see Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Verdin, Rock Wren, Western Bluebird and American Pipit. *Three nights Truth or Consequences*

Days 6 - 8

SOCORRO: BOSQUE DEL APACHE & THE MAGDALENA MOUNTAINS

We bid farewell to Truth or Consequences this morning and take an easy drive back north

(about an hour) to Socorro. A three-night stay here will enable us to devote plenty of time to the wonders of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, its 57,000 acres playing host to numerous birds in winter.

Mornings at Bosque del Apache consist of early starts to witness the spectacular dawn flights of cranes and geese. With our fingers crossed for fine weather (March here averages only two days with rain), as the desert sun lifts above the distant eastern mountains and the first hint of daybreak tints the sky, the initial bugles and honks of one or two cranes and geese soon rise to a crescendo. As thousands of Sandhill Cranes and geese - mostly Snow Geese - lift into the air and leave their night-time roost, we'll watch the clamouring hordes flying out across the surrounding countryside to feed, soaking up the atmosphere before we ourselves head back for breakfast.

We will spend much of the next two days exploring the loop roads of the reserve, enjoying the spectacle of waterfowl and other species, including rails, American Bitterns and crowds of Red-winged Blackbirds. Birds of prey are numerous: majestic Bald Eagles survey the scene from prominent dead branches, as marauding Peregrines and Cooper's Hawks create panic amongst the flocks of feeding waterfowl. Up to 25 species of wildfowl use the wide 'pans' as their winter home, including Canada and Ross's Geese, Canvasbacks and Redheads, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Ring-necked Duck and Lesser Scaup. Waders feed along the water's edge or crouch in the grass, with Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Long-billed Dowitcher and Greater Yellowlegs all regular here in early March.

Around the information centre, Gambel's Quail and various sparrows feed - notably Spotted Towhee, White-crowned and White-throated. Woodpeckers can include Ladder-backed as well as Northern Flicker and Red-naped Sapsucker, while American Barn Owl can be picked out at times and we have a good chance of seeing the impressive Great Horned Owl. The abundance of easy prey attracts scavenging Coyotes, too. Both Black and Say's Phoebes overwinter in the area and we even have a chance of Vermilion

Flycatcher: all can be seen from and around viewing platforms as we drive about the 'loops'. Hirundines begin to appear in March and we have chance of Northern Rough-winged, Tree and Violet-green Swallows.

On one afternoon we will head up into Water Canyon in the lovely Magdalena Mountains, rising up through the grasslands and on into forest and montane scrub. Along the way we will look out for Prairie Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike and Horned Lark, but soon the grasslands give way to pinyon-juniper woodland at the entrance to Water Canyon. This habitat is one of the more extensive vegetation types found in the southwestern US and here occurs as nearly pure stands of pine, juniper or a mix of the two.

Three juniper species are found in the canyon: One-seed, Rocky Mountain and Alligator. The sociable Acorn Woodpecker occurs and we should also find the attractive (and recently 'split') Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, the nomadic Pinyon Jay, and the striking Bridled Titmouse and Mountain Chickadee - not to mention the unfortunate Juniper Titmouse and Bushtit, two species unceremoniously dismissed in the *Sibley Field Guide* as 'drab grey birds of the arid Southwest'. *Three nights Socorro*

Day 9

RETURN TO ALBUQUERQUE, FLY LONDON

It's only a one-hour drive today from Socorro to Albuquerque so we'll have time to enjoy some final birdwatching this morning as we head back north.

Late afternoon departure from Albuquerque to Dallas Fort Worth, where we connect with our onward overnight flight back to London.

Day 10

ARRIVE LONDON

Early afternoon arrival at London Heathrow, where our tour concludes.

Trip Information

Group Size Max 7 participants and 1 leader

What To Expect A 10-day winter birding tour to New Mexico, including the magnificent spectacle of Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes at famous Bosque del Apache and birding along the bird-rich and scenic Rio Grande Valley.

Birds 130-160 species

Accommodation 8 nights accommodation in New Mexico, in comfortable US-style hotels of good North American standard. All rooms en suite.

Meals All main meals are *included* in the tour price, commencing with dinner on arrival in Albuquerque on Day 1 and concluding with lunch prior to departure from New Mexico on Day 9. Food is good, varied and plentiful. Breakfasts are usually buffet-style at the hotels. Lunches will usually be picnics though we sometimes visit a local restaurant or diner. In the American fashion, evening meals will usually be taken at a local restaurant since many North American hotels lack in-house restaurant facilities. [Our tour price includes the expected 15-20% gratuity for all meals in North America.]

Walking Walks are short and mostly easy; moderate at times in the mountains. Walks at Water Canyon and Caballo Reservoir involve a bit of walking (some uphill), but will be taken at a gentle pace. At Bosque del Apache, we drive the loops, getting out of the bus to view from the bunds or viewing areas.

Upland roads are ploughed and salted to give access to the mountain ski resorts during wintry conditions. The road to Sandia Crest reaches a maximum elevation of 3280m (10,678ft), where we spend a couple of hours looking for the rosy finches.

Trails are generally good, though may be rocky and uneven in places, and some vegetation can be spiny. Wear comfy waterproof walking shoes with stout corrugated soles for grip.

Weather March is a great time to visit New Mexico, with very little chance of rain and mostly sunny days with little cloud. With cold air coming down the Rio Grande Valley from the north, winter temperatures at Albuquerque are rather low - in March, typically between 1-16C (34-61F). As the air is dry however, usually it doesn't feel too cold. Nonetheless you should come prepared with warm winter clothing, and the possibility of some snow at altitude above Albuquerque. As we travel south towards Socorro and Truth or Consequences, on some days the weather can feel rather warmer with highs on some afternoons in March up to 15-21C (59-69F).

Maximum elevation this tour: We reach a height of ca. 3280m (10,760ft) at Sandia Crest, in the Sandia Mountains above Albuquerque.

Flights Return flights from London Heathrow to Albuquerque. Please note there are no direct flights from the UK to New Mexico, so a change of planes is necessary in the US. Currently, the best schedules are offered by British Airways / American Airlines, nonstop from London Heathrow to Dallas Fort Worth (Texas), with an onward flight to Albuquerque (New Mexico).

Ground Transport By air-conditioned minibus or people carrier.

Insects Should not be a problem on this trip!

Photos Good to excellent photographic opportunities on this trip, especially at Bosque del Apache – mainly birds, but other wildlife possible. Some great scenery, too.

Tour Cost ^{*1}

2019 (10 days): £2995 (inc. flts from London)
Land only cost: £2245
Deposit: £400
Single Supp: £490

Cost includes

- Services of Limosa guide
- Return flights London Heathrow-Albuquerque
- 9 nights accommodation in New Mexico
- All main meals (with drinking water provided)
- Minibus transport
- All excursions, entry fees, tour based tips (inc. gratuities for meals) and taxes
- Map and checklist of birds for the tour.

Cost excludes

Insurance, ESTA (US \$14; see page 8 below), drinks, airport meals/snacks & other items of a personal nature.

***1 2019 tour costs shown. Please note costs for our 2020 tour TBA (available summer 2019)**

About Your Guide

Brian Small Brian was a teacher for 12 years and lives in Suffolk with his wife and their teenage son. In 2013, he switched to full time employment with Limosa, guiding tours and working as Operations and Media Manager in the Limosa office. Brian has travelled around the globe and is the inspiration behind a growing number of *Limosa* tours, including those to Malaysia, Argentina, Brazil, Switzerland, Italy, Georgia - and New Mexico. He regularly leads our guided *BirdWalks* in Norfolk and Suffolk, too. Well known as a bird artist his current projects include work on a major new guide to birds in southern Brazil. In his spare time at home, he concentrates on working his local patch on the Suffolk coast, searching especially for migrants and gulls. Brimming with infectious enthusiasm, Brian has been guiding tours for Limosa since 2002 and has excellent experience of tour leading across Europe, Asia, Africa and North and South America. He has travelled extensively throughout the southern US states, including Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

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 ATOL 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}

^{*1} **Conditions:** *This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extra costs such as additional flights or accommodation, private extensions and cancellations. • Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements. • Please note discount must be requested at time of booking!*

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.

Please be sure to read our Booking Conditions and General Information prior to booking. These can be found in full in the footer on every page on our website (or available from our office on request); also in an abridged form at the back of our brochure.

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.

All 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

Deposit: The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **electronic bank transfer** (please ask for our bank details), **UK debit card** and **cheque** (made payable to *Limosa Holidays* and drawn on a UK bank in GBPounds Sterling).

We also accept Visa and MasterCard credit cards for payment of Booking Deposits only.

Balance: Full payment of the **tour 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 balance payments and any additional payments (e.g. interim flight deposits, flight upgrades, extra hotels etc) by **electronic bank transfer (BACS), UK debit card or cheque.**

Payment by overseas customers

These must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by electronic transfer direct to our bank (*please ask for our bank details*).

We do **not** accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

Credit cards - please note:

(i) *We do NOT accept credit cards or overseas debit cards for balance payments (including any additional or interim payments) from customers living within the UK or European Economic Area (the EEA is the EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).*

(ii) *For customers living in North America, Australia and all other areas outside of the UK and the European Economic Area we are able to accept payment by Visa and MasterCard credit cards or overseas debit card but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges.*

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, your passport must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay.

While no additional period of validity beyond this is required, **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.

***** IMPORTANT!** The US authorities require all those booking flights to provide the airline

concerned with **Secure Flight Data (advance passenger information)** for all passengers.

Please be sure to supply our office with your FULL PASSPORT details at time of booking or as soon as possible afterwards, including your full names exactly as they appear in your passport, nationality, date of birth, place of birth, gender, passport number, place of issue, date of issue and date of expiry.

Please note that without this information our office will be unable to ticket your flights so be sure to provide us with it in good time.

• **VISA NOT REQUIRED by UK passport holders eligible under the current US Visa Waiver Programme (VWP)**, which allows most British Citizen passport holders to visit the US for up to 90 days.

All others should contact the nearest US embassy or consulate to check whether or not they require a visa/s. If a visa/s 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.

***** ESTA:** The US requires all those travelling under the Visa Waiver Programme to provide details online at least 72 hours prior to travel. This is known as an **Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA)**, and is mandatory.

The latest information about entry requirements including ESTA can be found on the **UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office website at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice** - follow the link to find the US page. For more information, and to apply online, please visit the official ESTA website at esta.cbp.dhs.gov.

Getting an ESTA is a separate process to providing your airline with secure flight data / advance passenger information (details of your passport, country of residence, address of your first night's accommodation in the US etc).

New regulations require the ESTA applicant to include details of first accommodation and contact in the US. Our **Travel Information sheets** (sent to all participants) contain further details and our office will supply you with the hotel address and do its best to assist with your ESTA application if you have any questions.

Health & Vaccinations

Compulsory vaccinations: None.

Recommended vaccinations: For travel everywhere (even within the UK), we recommend you check you are up-to-date with protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A.

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)** www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx 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. You can search for individual country requirements, which are updated regularly.

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 recommended** 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. Be aware that some destinations may require you to produce proof of comprehensive travel insurance (*e.g.* valid insurance certificate) at immigration on arrival in the country, so you should carry your documentation with you.

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 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 email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24hrs) 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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