

Naturalist Journeys

Small Group Tours and Independent Travel



Dear Traveler,

We understand your concern about upcoming tours due to the lingering uncertainty of the current pandemic. This is particularly tough for those of you now facing a possible further delay of your travel plans when you already faced that last year. I don't think any of us thought we'd be at this crossroads once again. We all clearly want to get through this and move on but the path ahead is not yet clear. Some travelers are more comfortable making plans at this time than others, and we want the timing of your travel to be your decision. We are as disappointed as you are that you may have to delay a tour once again. The circumstances are global, and not in our control. We continue to work hard to negotiate with our providers for a fair resolution where we can do so. Wherever possible, for most tours, we can offer the same set of options that we did last year.

Please keep in mind that we still carry non-recoverable costs paid out in full for your tour last year, so there is no "full refund" option. The three options we set up last year, and honor this year, now have extended time frames for more flexibility in rebooking. They are outlined below.

Those affected the most were tours mid-March to mid-June where your full payment was made, and where the full push of the tour logistical work on our end was completed. Indeed, if your tour was within 60 days of March 15, 2020 we had completed, delivered and provided a good portion of your tour services. These are non-recoverable; payments were made to staff and service providers.

What are your options? We want to be fair and flexible, and we will continue to offer you the choice of the same three options we provided last year. These three options were set to reflect the non-recoverable costs associated with the services completed, delivered and provided for you by time that conditions of the COVID pandemic forced us to reschedule all future tours. A few international tours in that March to June period do not have all three choices because tour payments had been made and were not returned by the vendors in accordance with their policies.

If your tour cannot run in 2021, or if you feel that you are not comfortable waiting for a decision on whether it looks possible to run, here are the three options available to you.

- **\$\$ Full Tour Value** – Retain your full tour value by rebooking the same tour at a later time – some can be booked on another departure later in 2021, or in the years beyond. We will continue to make your tour available to you for rebooking as needed. We have

extended the rebooking window to July of 2023 so you have ample time to reschedule – if you need more time contact us on an individual basis. Please note that as a company we will still have considerable administrative and operations loss, but we have pledged to honor that for those that rebook their tours.

- **\$\$ 75% Flex Travel Coupon** – Bank your tour funds (adjusted 25% to cover non-recoverable administrative and operating expenses specific to the original tour) and choose any tour that you wish (as available) through July of 2023.
- **\$\$ 60% Cash refund** – This refund is based on the double occupancy tour cost, and will be made by the end of the month you were to travel in. Any single supplement will be returned in full unless we have penalty from hotels booked at the time. Penalties on this cash refund cover non-recoverable administrative and operating expenses associated with your registration, payment processing and logistical services completed for your tour.

What is the timing for your decision? For most tours, if you still want to go, we can wait and see up until about 60 days out for International tours, and 30-60 depending on our lodge requirements for tours in the USA. We will honor your decision on whether you want to travel this year and you have until that 60-day deadline to make a decision. We would still have to keep at least a small group together to operate a potential tour so that is a factor as well. Thus, if you know you are NOT going to travel, it would be helpful for us to know that. This will help us plan ahead and possibly use that space for another traveler who is ready to go. March tours are nearing decision dates now, particularly for International travel – some of our providers for March and April tours will let us have a few more weeks and we'll be in touch on that.

We are currently lining up 2022 tours in addition to 2021's expanded summer and fall offerings so that if you must reschedule again, you have options. We understand that travel still feels uncertain, but also know that many travelers want a PLAN, something to look forward to.

Again, we know this situation is not easy on anyone. We hope that you can hang in there and look forward to travel again in the future. If not, you will have some loss to bear, this pandemic was incredibly tough at many levels.

Our client's health and safety are our main concern, and that of our colleagues that provide us services. Our office staff members are all working from home, so email is the best way to reach us. We do monitor phones and will get back to you. If you have not subscribed to our weekly free eNews, that is a great way to keep informed about future travel and various options.

Sincerely,

Peg

Peg Abbott
Owner, guide

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