

MONGOLIA

Birds, Wildlife, and Culture

47.60° N

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

MONGOLIA

Birds, Wildlife, and Culture

Greetings, Fellow Explorer!

Mongolia: the name stirs the imagination. This vast, windswept land at the heart of Asia was once the seat of the world's greatest land empire, led by the legendary **Genghis Khan**. Today, Mongolia remains one of the planet's most sparsely populated countries—said to be the “**Last Wilderness Nation**.” A place where wild horses still roam the steppe, nomadic herders live much as they have for centuries, and the silence of open space is broken only by birdsong and the wind.

On this two-week summer journey through Central Mongolia, we invite you to discover a country where the modern world feels far away—where you'll see a diverse array of Asian birds and mammals. Each day brings new habitats: steppe lakes, tranquil river valleys, boreal forests, and the picturesque, boulder-strewn hills of the Mongolian interior.

Beginning in the capital, **Ulaanbaatar**, we'll explore nearby riverine woodlands for striking bird species like **Azure Tit** and **Long-tailed Rosefinch**. Then we'll visit the grasslands of **Hustai National Park** to search for **Przewalski's Wild Horses**. Scanning the sky, we might see raptors like **Bearded Vulture**, **Amur Falcon**, and **Golden Eagle**.

Traveling further west, we'll watch **White-winged Terns** and **Mongolian Gulls** glide over the waters of **Ugii Lake**, and perhaps find **Demoiselle** or **White-naped Cranes** stepping through the reeds. In the **ancient capital of Karakorum**, we'll walk the ruins of the Mongol Empire, and look for songbirds around the grounds of Mongolia's oldest Buddhist monastery. Next, we spend two days exploring the sand dunes, steppe, and rocky hills of **Khogno Khan National Park**.

Returning east, we'll walk the slopes of **Bogd Khan Mountain**. In the boreal forests of **Gorkhi-Terelj National Park**, we'll search for birds like **Siberian Rubythroat** and **Taiga Flycatcher** among wildflowers and conifers. And finally, we'll take in the views and go birding at **Ayaga Lake** and the **Herlen River**, where cranes call across the valley and **Argali sheep** tread the high ridges.

Our days will be filled with rich birdlife, cultural wonders, and the kind of stillness that only a truly wild place can offer. If you're drawn to the romance of the unknown, to rare species and timeless landscapes, this Mongolian adventure is calling.

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: June 23, 2026

Duration: 15 days

Number of participants: Max of 10

Fee: \$7,295 per person

Deposit: \$3,600

Single Supplement: \$1,295

Trip Leaders: Ivan Phillipson & Steve Backus

Activity Level: Moderate

Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground transportation
- All meals, from dinner Jun 23 to Breakfast Jul 7
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

Not Included:

- Flights
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipson
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes

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MONGOLIA

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PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS



Walking and Physical Activity

Easy to moderate walking for the most part. There will be a few harder walks in the mountains (uneven, steep terrain), but these will be *optional*.



Accommodation

The hotel in Ulaanbaatar is simple but clean and comfortable with private bathrooms. Outside the city (most of the tour), we'll stay in permanent tourist ger camps. These have gers (i.e. yurts) for accommodation, and separate blocks of European style toilets and shower rooms, as well as a restaurant. Each ger is a large, circular room with several Mongolian-style, attractively painted beds (although we'll have just one or two persons per ger). Each ger has a wood-fired heating stove.



Transportation

We'll travel in a 15-passenger bus. Most of our travel will be on paved roads, with occasional side trips on dirt roads. On a couple days of the tour, we'll travel longer distances, up to 4 hours. We'll make short stops to break up these journeys.



Meals

Breakfasts will be simple: bread, toast, cheese, butter, jam, eggs, sausage, and cereal. Coffee is commonly provided. Depending on the day's activities, we may have picnic lunches from the restaurants. Sometimes we'll have lunch in local restaurants. Evening meals will be well-prepared Mongolian and European-style dishes served in the hotel restaurants and at the camps. Food is generally good. However, it may lack variety given the remoteness of where we're traveling.

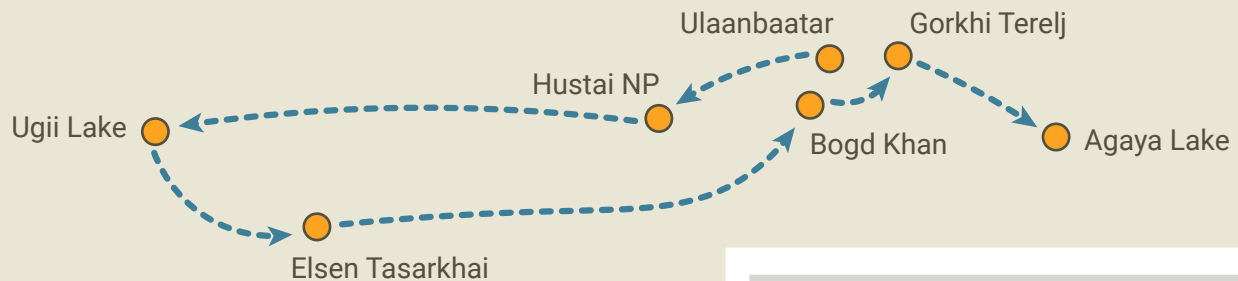


Climate

Central Mongolia's high elevation (3,000 - 5,000 ft) and continental climate mean warm summer days, cool nights, and little humidity. Days are typically sunny and dry, with temperatures in the range of 60 - 85°F. We may experience some overcast days and rain (or snow, on rare occasions). It's often windy.

MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026



ITINERARY

Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.

Day 1 - Jun 23 - Arrival in Ulaanbaatar, the Capital of Mongolia

Welcome to Mongolia! Your Wild Latitudes guides, Ivan Phillipsen and Steve Backus, will greet you upon arrival at Chinggis Khaan International Airport in **Ulaanbaatar**. We'll cross the city to our hotel and get everyone checked in.

After brief introductions, we'll head to one of Ulaanbaatar's most iconic restaurants to enjoy a welcome dinner, then return to the hotel for a restful night.

Lodging: Khuvsgul Lake Hotel, Ulaanbaatar

Day 2 - Jun 24 - Local Birding around Ulaanbaatar

Today offers a relaxed yet exciting introduction to Mongolia's birdlife. After breakfast, we'll gather for a brief orientation at the hotel.

Ulaanbaatar lies along the sacred **Tuul River**, whose riparian forests of poplars and

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Azure Tit



willows support a vibrant bird community. Our main outing today takes us to this river and a nearby gravel pond for our first glimpse of Central Asian species. Possibilities include **Azure Tit**, **Azure-winged Magpie**, **Long-tailed Rosefinch**, and **White-crowned Penduline Tit**. Waterfowl may include **Mandarin Duck** and **Ruddy Shelduck**.

In the evening, we'll relax at the hotel with drinks and our first round of going through our bird and wildlife checklists, followed by dinner in the city.

Lodging: [Khuvsgul Lake Hotel, Ulaanbaatar](#)

Day 3 - Jun 25 - Hustai National Park

After breakfast, we leave the city behind and head west into Mongolia's vast open landscapes. Our destination is **Hustai National Park**, a renowned **Important Bird Area** with over 200 recorded species. Steppe grassland dominates the landscape here, and raptors are especially well-represented. We may encounter **Saker Falcon**, **Amur Falcon**, **Eurasian Hobby**, **Golden Eagle**, **Booted Eagle**, **Cinereous Vulture**, and **Himalayan Vulture**.

Hustai NP is also home to a wide variety of mammals, including **Altai Elk**, **Mongolian Gazelle**, **Roe Deer**, **Wild Boar**, **Ibex**, **Daurian Hedgehog**, and **Mongolian Marmot**. With luck, we might glimpse elusive predators like **Grey Wolf**, **Eurasian Lynx**, or the iconic **Pallas's Cat**.

But the park's most celebrated resident is **Przewalski's Wild Horse** (known as *Takhi* by the locals). Once extinct in the wild, this species was reintroduced in the 1990s. Smaller and stockier than domestic horses, these rare animals offer a thrilling glimpse into Mongolia's natural heritage.

We'll settle in for the evening at our ger (i.e. yurt) camp, our typical accommodation for much of the trip. These traditional felt tents offer cozy beds, wood stoves, modern shared facilities, and a warm welcome. We'll wrap up with bird and wildlife list reviews.

Lodging: [Hustai Ger Camp](#)

MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Day 4 - Jun 26 - Birding Hustai National Park

We have a full day to explore the steppe and hills of Hustai. Some target birds include **Bearded Vulture**, **Steppe Eagle**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Daurian Jackdaw**, **Black Stork**, **Isabelline Shrike**, **Mongolian Lark**, and **Meadow Bunting**.

After a morning of birding, we'll visit a spring where **wild horses** gather. In the evening, we'll review our lists and enjoy dinner at the park's restaurant.

Lodging: Hustai Ger Camp



Przewalski's Wild Horses

Day 5 - Jun 27 - Ugii Lake

Early risers may opt for a pre-breakfast bird walk around our camp. After breakfast, we drive west across the steppe (about four hours) to **Ugii Lake**, also known as **Ögii Lake**. This is a **Ramsar Site of International Importance** and an **Important Bird Area**, serving as a crucial stopover for migrating waterfowl.

In the afternoon, we'll search for a variety of waterbirds and shorebirds. Highlights may include **Bar-headed Goose**, **Swan Goose**, **Demoiselle Crane**, **White-naped Crane**, **Asian Dowitcher**, **Pied Avocet**, **White-winged Tern**, **Pallas's Reed Bunting**, and **Citrine Wagtail**.

MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Our ger camp on the lakeshore offers serene views, a comfortable stay, and time to review our bird sightings before dinner.

Lodging: [Ugii Lake Camp](#)

Day 6 - Jun 28 - Exploring Ugii Lake

We'll spend the morning along the lake's shore and the river delta on its western side, where we may see thousands of **Swan Geese** and species like **Stejneger's Scoter**, **Mongolian Gull**, **Little Ringed Plover**, **Pallas's Fish-Eagle**, **Red-crested Pochard**, and **Common Pochard**.

Around our camp, we might find **Rock Sparrow**, **Pere David's Snowfinch**, and **Upland Buzzard**. We'll enjoy another peaceful night beside the lake.

Lodging: [Ugii Lake Camp](#)



Demoiselle Cranes



Mongolian Ger (traditional dwelling)

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026



Erdene Zuu Monastery

Day 7 - Jun 29 - Kharkhorin, Ancient Capital of the Mongol Empire

Today focuses on culture and history. After breakfast, we'll drive south to the town of **Kharkhorin**, located in the **Orkhon Valley**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** rich in historical significance.

We'll explore the ruins of **Karakorum**, the Mongol Empire's capital from 1235–1260, and visit the **Erdene Zuu Monastery**, the oldest surviving Buddhist monastery in Mongolia. Its vivid architecture and deep spiritual history are unforgettable.

Birding opportunities continue, with possibilities like **Blyth's Pipit** nesting near the monastery. We'll return to our ger camp for dinner and checklist review.

Lodging: Ugii Lake Camp

Day 8 - Jun 30 - Elsen Tasarkhai Dunes

After checking out, we drive 1.5 hours east into a semi-desert zone. The **Elsen-Tasarkhai Dunes**, with their mix of sand and wetlands, support a diverse avifauna. Today's targets include **Arctic Loon**, **Eurasian Spoonbill**, **Tufted Duck**, **Falcated Duck**, **Eastern Marsh Harrier**, **Oriental Reed Warbler**, and **Eastern Spot-billed Duck**.



Mongolian Lark

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

With luck, we may also spot **Asian Dowitcher**, **Spotted Redshank**, or **Isabelline Wheatear**. Lunch at the ger camp is followed by more birding in the afternoon.

Lodging: Tasarkhai Camp

Day 9 - Jul 1 - Khogno Khan National Park

Today we explore **Khogno Khan National Park**, just north of the dunes. The scenic landscape features rugged mountains, rock outcrops, and centuries-old temples—some still active, others in ruins.

Birds we may find include **Eurasian Crag-Martin**, **Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush**, **Red-billed Chough**, and the elusive **Wallcreeper**. Mammals may include **Corsac Fox**, **Siberian Ibex**, **Mongolian Gazelle**, and **Daurian Pika**.

We return to our camp at Elsen-Tasarkhai for our final night there, enjoying drinks, dinner, and our checklist ritual.

Lodging: Tasarkhai Camp

Our Commitment to Conservation

On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.

Mongolian Nomads



Domesticated Bactrian Camel



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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Day 10 - Jul 2 - Travel to Bogd Khan Mountain

After morning birding, we'll drive four hours east to **Bogd Khan Mountain**, just south of Ulaanbaatar. Arriving in the late afternoon, we'll settle into another ger camp.

Protected since the 12th century, Bogd Khan is among the oldest nature reserves in the world. We'll explore its boreal forests, dominated by **Asian Black Birch**, **Siberian Spruce**, **Siberian Larch**, and **European Aspen**.

Time permitting, we'll do some birding before dinner and have a peaceful night in camp.

Lodging: Munkhtenger Camp

Day 11 - Jul 3 - Bogd Khan to Gorkhi Terelj National Park

This morning we search the forests and meadows of Bogd Khan for birds like **Thick-billed Warbler**, **Dusky Warbler**, **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Blyth's Pipit**, **Common Rosefinch**, and the striking **Siberian Rubythroat**.

After lunch, we head northeast to **Gorkhi Terelj National Park**, a stunning landscape of forested slopes and braided river channels. The boreal ("taiga") forest and steppe habitats here are home to birds like **Common** and **Oriental Cuckoos**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, **Great Spotted Woodpecker**, **Gray-headed Woodpecker**, **Black Woodpecker**, **Eurasian**



Gorkhi Terelj National Park

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Wryneck, Great Tit, Willow Tit, Pine Bunting, Red-throated Thrush, White-cheeked Starling, Dusky Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, Pallas's Leaf Warbler, Red-flanked Bluetail, and Hawfinch.

We begin exploring this rich habitat before settling into our ger camp for the night.

Lodging: [Tsevegmaa Tourist Camp](#)



The Tuul River in Gorkhi Terelj National Park

Day 12 - Jul 4 - Gorkhi Terelj National Park

We'll spend the full day in this beautiful park, searching for taiga forest specialties, including two highly sought-after species: **Chinese Bush Warbler** and the magnificent **Black-billed Capercaillie**. The latter bird is a massive, charismatic grouse.

We'll also visit productive riparian areas to look for birds like **Eurasian Three-toed Woodpecker, Olive-backed Pipit, Common Rosefinch**, and **Long-tailed Rosefinch**. Along the way, we'll see iconic geological formations like **Turtle Rock** (*Melkhii Khad*).

After a rewarding day, we'll gather for dinner and to review our lists.

Lodging: [Tsevegmaa Tourist Camp](#)

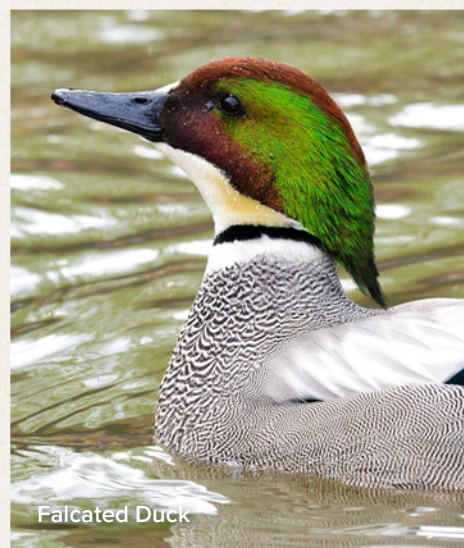
MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Steppe Eagle



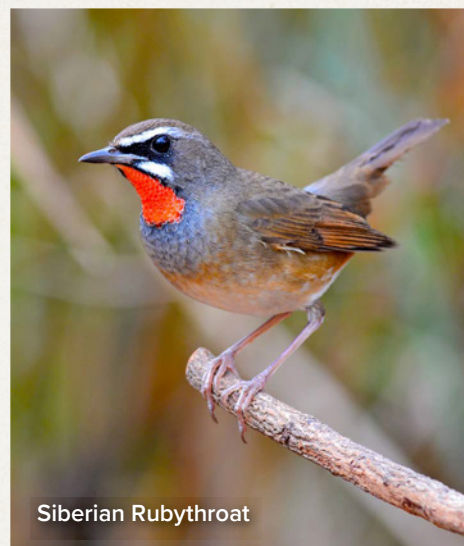
Amur Falcon



Falcated Duck



Northern Nutcracker



Siberian Rubythroat

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026



Long-tailed Rosefinch

Day 13 - Jul 5 - Ayaga Lake and Herlen River

We depart Gorkhi Terelj this morning and head to another mountainous region known for **Argali Wild Sheep** and **breeding cranes**. After a traditional lunch, we'll reach our final ger camp of the tour.

Birding around **Ayaga Lake** and the **Herlen River** may bring views of now familiar species and possibly some new ones: **Eurasian Wigeon, Garganey, Ferruginous Duck, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Crane, Kentish Plover,** and **Eurasian Curlew**. At the river, we may spot **Eurasian Magpie, Arctic Warbler, Pallas's Bunting,** and **Asian Short-toed Lark**.

As the sun sets on the steppe, we'll enjoy our final night in camp, going over our bird and wildlife lists.

Lodging: Steppe Nomads Camp



Demoiselle Cranes

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

Day 14 - Jul 6 - Genghis Khan Statue and Return to Ulaanbaatar

After breakfast, we begin our journey back to Ulaanbaatar. En route, we stop to visit the remarkable **Genghis Khan Statue Complex**. Standing 130 feet tall, this steel monument honors Mongolia's most legendary leader. We'll also explore the on-site museum to learn more about the Mongol Empire.

Back in Ulaanbaatar, we'll have lunch, a bit of sightseeing, and time for souvenir shopping before our joyous farewell dinner with the Mongolian crew.

Lodging: Khuvsgul Lake Hotel, Ulaanbaatar

Day 15 - Jul 7 - Departures

After breakfast at the hotel, we transfer to the airport for your flight home—or onward to new adventures.



Genghis Khan Statue



Red-flanked Bluetail



Pine Bunting

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MONGOLIA

Jun 23 - Jul 7, 2026

YOUR GUIDES

IVAN PHILLIPSEN

Ivan is a passionate naturalist with a background in scientific research. He holds a M.S. in biology from Cal State San Bernardino and a Ph.D. in zoology from Oregon State University.

He is the Co-owner of Wild Latitudes. Before starting this business, Ivan lead many domestic and international tours for the Audubon Society of Portland and still works for Lindblad Expeditions as a shipboard naturalist in Alaska and Baja California, Mexico. In recent years, Ivan has led birding tours to Patagonia, Ecuador, Mexico, Vietnam, Iceland, and Australia.

Natural history is Ivan's true passion and what he is most excited to share with tour participants. Although he is fascinated by just about every aspect of nature, Ivan is particularly fond of birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, plants, and geology. Everything is interconnected in nature and Ivan does his best to take a holistic approach when teaching about the natural world.



STEVE BACKUS

Steve is an avid birder and naturalist with a background in the maritime industry hailing from North Carolina. Through his work and personal travels he has gotten to see many beautiful corners of the world and loves to share what he has experienced.

An infinitely curious person by nature, Steve is drawn to explore the life around him and the environments they occupy. Though the particulars of the individual organisms are incredibly exciting, he feels particularly drawn to the stories told of the relationships in the world around us and how those came to be. The constant flux of the natural world is of endless interest to him, and sharing the things he has learned is a great passion of his. Learning how life interacts and connects is a true passion of Steve's.

As a mariner, waterbirds are of particular interest to Steve and his time as a ship's naturalist, a captain of wildlife cruises, a point counter at migration hot-spots, and many other employments and community science efforts has deepened his appreciation of them. Though our feathered friends are Steve's primary area of expertise, he can be found peeking under logs and listening by swamps at night for the creeping and crawling life found beneath us.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at info@wildlatitudes.com
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.