

**ALVARO'S ADVENTURES**  
birding & nature tours



# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## April 2026

*April 5 – 14, 2026*  
**Guided by Arturo Kirkconnell  
and second guide if needed.**



Hispaniolan Lizard-cuckoo (©Héctor Andújar)



## Dominican Republic,

Well known for its cigars, rum and baseball players, the Dominican Republic forms one half of the island of Hispaniola, the second largest of the Antilles. Santo Domingo is one of the oldest colonial cities in the New World, and the capital city of the Dominican Republic. Our visit to the Dominican Republic will be enriched by the hospitality of its people and their wonderful Caribbean-style cuisine.



**Black-crowned Palm-tanager (©Doug Wechsler/VIREO)**

The island's scenery is some of the most dramatic in the region. Situated at the center of the West Indies, Hispaniola has the highest avian endemism, with 32 species and three unique endemic families. This is due in part to its size, very ancient geological history, great diversity of habitats, from wetlands to cloud forests and the

presence of the highest mountains in the region (highest elevation: Pico Duarte with 3098 m). A total of 306 bird species are recorded from Dominican Republic.

This is an exciting and brand-new tour for us. After many years, decades of organizing and leading tours as well as working on the birds of Cuba Arturo Kirkconnell has organized a wonderful new tour to the neighboring island of Hispaniola. Of the Greater Antilles, Hispaniola has the unique history of being divided into two countries, French Speaking Haiti in the West and Spanish speaking Dominican Republic in the East. Suffice to say that Haiti being one of the poorest nations in the America's has some environmental as well as social issues that are much less extreme in neighboring Dominican Republic. A massive amount of nice habitat remains in the Dominican Republic, and it is there where we will be birding and enjoying our time.

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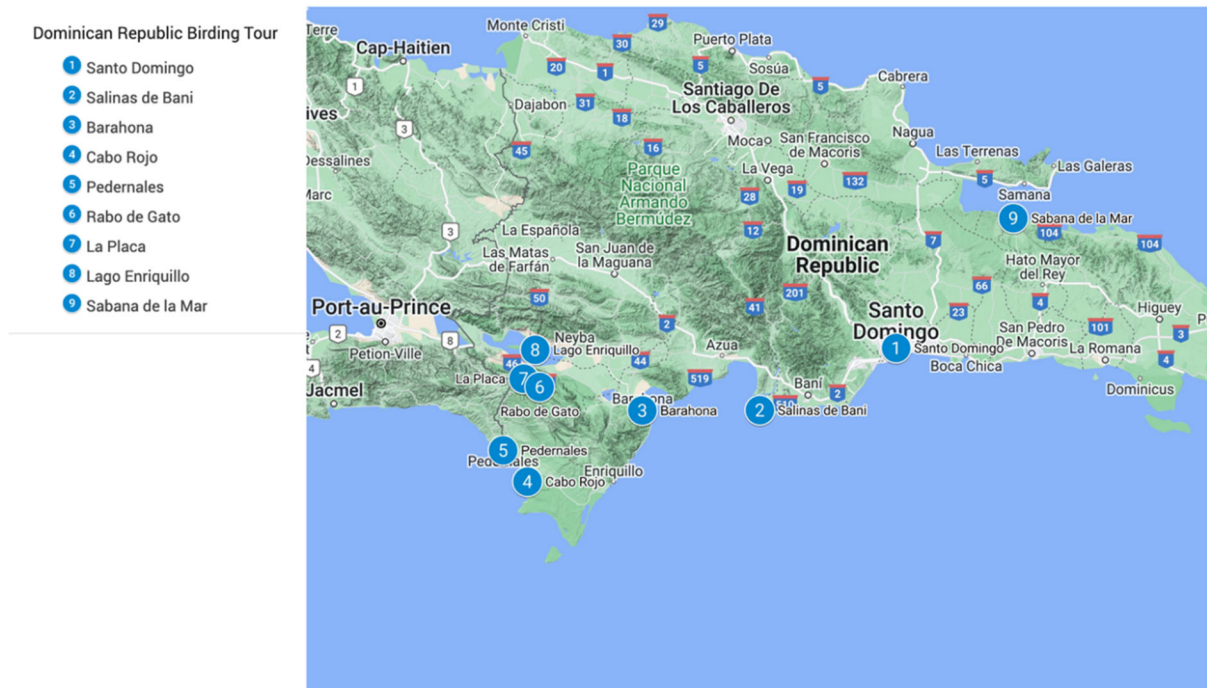
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All of the Greater Antilles are rich in endemic birds, as is typical of islands. The most endemic rich islands in the Caribbean are Cuba, Hispaniola and Jamaica. Nearly all of Hispaniola's endemics can be seen in the Dominican Republic. Our search for the endemics and regional specialties will take us to the cloud forest, pine forest and thorn scrub of the Sierra de Bahoruco where most of the birds could be found. A side trip to the very different north shore of the island will allow us to look for the extremely rare Ridgway's Hawk in the limestone karst forest.

## The Birding Sites We Visit

### Dominican Republic - Birding Tour



**Sierra de Bahoruco** This is the mountain range in the southwest of the Dominican Republic. Here one can sample various different elevations, although for birding the higher elevations are some of the best areas to visit. We do need to begin early on these days as the mountain roads are not good and the distances in time are long. In the lower areas one finds deciduous forest, as one ascends the montane forest becomes more humid

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and finally at the top (the mountains reach to nearly 7000 feet), one will find pine forests. Each elevational change in habitat as a corresponding change in birds, some of them



Bay-breasted Cuckoo (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

highly sought after specialties. Most of the Hispaniolan endemics are found here, so we will concentrate a good part of the tour in this area. Here we could find Hispaniolan Parrot, Narrow-billed Todies, La Selle Thrush and Western Chat-Tanager. One of the difficult ones which we can find here is the Bay-breasted Cuckoo it is a skulker and not common. More specialties include Flat-billed Vireo, White-winged Warbler, Hispaniolan Emerald and Antillean Siskins among others. The Sierra crosses the border into Haiti, although the habitat is mostly gone from the Haiti side. On the other hand, in the Dominican side the habitat is largely undisturbed. We'll divide our time between two productive areas: broadleaf forest and the primarily pine woodlands. We will be looking for Plain Pigeon, Key West Quail-Dove, Hispaniolan Parakeet, Hispaniolan Trogon, Antillean Piculet, Greater Antillean

Elaenia, Hispaniolan Pewee, Golden Swallow, Hispaniolan Palm Crow, Antillean Siskin, Hispaniolan Spindalis, and the endemic Hispaniolan Crossbill.

**Los Haitises National Park** The specialty here is the endemic Ridgway's Hawk a rare relative of the Broad-winged Hawk. We may find other species such as Hispaniolan Parrot, Antillean Palm-Swift, and Hispaniolan Woodpecker, and more common species and migrants.

## About the Physical Requirements & Pace

In general roads and transportation are good in Dominican Republic, but we will not be visiting "average" parts of the country. We will be deep in the mountains, in areas well away from the built up areas of the country. In these mountain areas in particular, the roads are not good, and driving necessitates travel in 4x4 vehicles, and even so it is a

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bumpy ride. These roads also add a lot of time to get to the highland habitats we need to visit, and it requires that in some days we get going extremely early, as early as 4:30 am. It is the only way we can be at the birding sites in the morning hours when bird activity is highest. Suffice to say, that a bit of an adventurous spirit is required to visit the Dominican Republic. But, also suffice to say that it is absolutely wonderful. The vistas, the birds, the people, it is a gorgeous and remarkable natural area that remains in the Caribbean.

## Itinerary for Dominican Republic April 2026

**April 5, 26. Day 1 – ARRIVAL IN SANTO DOMINGO.** Arrival day in Santo Domingo with participants flying in from different destinations. You will be picked up by Arturo and Chapa (driver's nickname, also a good local birder). The tour officially starts with a welcome dinner at a fine restaurant in the old town, where we will chat about the plans for the next day and review the target species we will expect to see. Our hotel will be situated close to the center of colonial Santo Domingo, and those who arrive early may wish to explore the nearby historical old section of the city. Please do not forget to carry your binoculars because you could see some of the emblematic birds of the Hispaniolan avifauna such as Hispaniolan Parakeet, Hispaniolan Woodpecker and Palmchat. Night in Santo Domingo at Gran Hotel Europa



Hispaniolan Woodpecker (©Doug Wechsler/VIREO)

**April 6, 26. Day 2 – TRAVEL TO SIERRA DE BAHORUCO. AFTERNOON VISIT TO LAGO ENRIQUILLO, RABO DE GATO TRAIL AND PUERTO ESCONDIDO.**

**AM** Breakfast at 7:00 am and departing 7:45 am to Duverge, Sierra de Bahoruco.  
**PM** Visit to Lago Enriquillo. The lake is a short distance from where we have lunch, and is a lake that is 120 feet below sea level. This is the largest lake in the Caribbean region. This saline lake has an area of over 40,000 hectares; it is the remnant of a channel that once

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divided Hispaniola into two islands, apart from being a National Park it is a Ramsar site. Among the important birds we could watch are: Hispaniolan Palm Crow, and Plain Pigeon. Also, we could see the local Burrowing Owl. Lunch and dinner at a local restaurant (Ramada). Continuing we will visit Rabo de Gato riparian forest where target species are: Antillean Siskin, Hispaniolan Euphonia, Key West Quail-Dove, Broad-billed Tody, Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo, Least Pauraque and Northern Potoo. In Puerto Escondido we also could find the Hispaniolan Parakeet, White-necked Crow and Palmchat. At night we have an optional search for nocturnal birds where we may find Least Pauraque, Hispaniolan Nightjar, Northern Potoo and Ashy-faced Owl. Night in the Aparta Hotel Ramada.



**Broad-billed Tody** (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

## **April 7, 26. Day 3 – BIRDING ZAPOTÉN. AFTERNOON IN PUERTO ESCONDIDO.**

AM: Departing at 3:30 am (packed breakfast) with three 4x4. We will be birding before sunrise looking for nocturnal birds. Also be ready for a cold morning session (please do not forget your coat). Target species: Hispaniolan Trogon, Narrow-billed Tody, Broad-billed Tody, La Selle Trush, Western Chat Tanager, Hispaniolan Crossbill, Ashy-faced Owl. This locality is excellent for species such as: White-fronted Quail-Dove, Hispaniolan Nightjar, Hispaniolan Emerald, Antillean Piculet, Rufous-throated Solitaire, Greater Antillean Elaenia, Green-tailed Warbler, White-winged Warbler, Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, Hispaniolan Spindalis, Hispaniolan Euphonia, and Antillean Siskin. Lunch and dinner at Ramada restaurant, Duverge. PM We will be birding in Puerto Escondido (Rabo de Gato

trail): Looking for endemic birds. Night in the Aparta Hotel Ramada.

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**April 8, 26. Day 4 – BIRDING LA PLACA AND PUERTO ESCONDIDO.** Early departure at 5:30 am (packed breakfast). Departure to the field to visit La Placa. The target species will be Bay-breasted Cuckoo. Here we will be looking for any missing endemics.



Hispaniolan Parakeet (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

This area is very important for the Antillean Piculet, and Flat-billed Vireo. Other species we may find include Olive-throated Parakeet, among others we may have missed on previous days. Lunch and dinner at Ramada restaurant, Duverge. Night at Ramada lodge. In the afternoon we will look for any species we have missed so far, or to obtain better views of local specialties.



White-winged Warbler (©Doug Wechsler/VIREO)

**April 9, 26. Day 5 – TRAVEL TO EL QUEMAITO WITH STOP AT LAGUNA CABRALES.** We will be looking for any missing endemic birds this morning. Assuming we leave early after seeing all we are looking for, we could then stop at Laguna Cabrales, a location where several aquatic birds could be observed: Ducks, Egrets, and Rails. Lunch will be en route. Dinner at El Quemaito. Night in El Quemaito Hotel

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## April 10, 26. Day 6 – BIRDING CACHOTE AND ACEITILLAR AS WELL AS PEDERNALES.

AM: Early departure at 5:00 am (packed breakfast on the way). This morning, we will use vans 4X4 due to poor road conditions. It will be a cold birding morning at moist broadleaf forest. This high elevation cloud forest contains the unique Eastern Chat-Tanager, it will be our main target species. Also, other endemics can be watched, Golden Swallow, La Selle Thrush, White-fronted-Quail Dove, Hispaniolan Emerald, Rufous-throated Solitaire, Antillean Siskin, Hispaniolan Spindalis, and Narrow-billed Tody. Also, Hispaniolan Euphonia, and a resident subspecies of Sharp-shinned Hawk. Lunch at El Quemaito Hotel (watch for Hispaniolan Oriole and Village Weaver). PM After we return to our hotel, we will put our luggage in the van and we will head to Alcoa and Aceitillar, which are located on the southern slope of Sierra de Bahoruco. This excellent road will allow us to easily reach the top of the mountain. The transition of the vegetation (fifteen natural vegetation zones exist in Bahoruco National Park) during our drive will be quite noticeable, beginning with thorn-scrub habitat, then deciduous woodland, humid montane broadleaf forest, and ending with a cover of pine forest at the top. These changes in habitats obviously give us an opportunity to observe changes in the bird species occupying their respective habitats. The target bird will be Hispaniolan Crossbill and Golden Swallow. Also, we will be looking for a number of species this afternoon, including Hispaniolan Emerald, Broad-billed Tody, Narrow-billed Tody, Olive-throated Parakeet, Hispaniolan Parrot, Plain Pigeon, Hispaniolan Pewee, Hispaniolan Palm Crow, Rufous-throated Solitaire, and Pine Warbler (endemic *chrysoleuca* subspecies).



Rufous throated Solitaire (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

**April 11, 26. Day 7 – CABO ROJO AND TRAVEL TO SANTO DOMINGO.** We will begin with breakfast at 7:00 am at the lodge. The Cabo Rojo wetlands are a locality near the southern slope of Sierra de Bahoruco. Here we might encounter White-cheeked Pintail, White Ibis, Hispaniolan Mango, Vervain Hummingbird, Stolid Flycatcher, Village Weaver, wintering ducks and shorebirds. Here we also hope to find Mangrove Cuckoo and Mangrove (“Golden”) Warbler. The bluffs around the cape provide nesting habitat for White-tailed Tropicbird, Cave Swallow and Caribbean Martin, and Brown Booby offshore. Near Pedernales some landbirds can be watched: Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, Hispaniolan Woodpecker, and Greater Antillean Bullfinch. Near Pedernales some landbirds might also be seen: Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, Antillean Piculet, Hispaniolan

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Woodpecker, and Greater Antillean Bullfinch. Lunch at El Quemaito Hotel. Night at Gran Hotel Europa.

**Day 8 (April 12); PARAISO CAÑO HONDO AND SABANA DE LA MAR.** Early breakfast (depart at 6:00 am with luggage). Consisting of about 995 square miles, the unique landscape of Los Haitises National Park is a real natural jewel which we will visit today. Here we plan to search for the critically endangered Ridgway's Hawk, a very rare



**Broad-billed Tody** (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

raptor with a restricted distribution, usually found on a small part of northern parts of the island. In the flowering trees, we should also see Hispaniolan Oriole, Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, White-necked Crow, Broad-billed Tody, Palmchat, Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Tanager, and Ruddy Quail-Dove can be found on this forest. Among the birds also found in the area are: Antillean Piculet, Hispaniolan Woodpecker, Plain Pigeon, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Hispaniolan Mango, Hispaniolan Parrot, White-necked Crow, Ashy-faced Owl and Mangrove Cuckoo. We will conduct some nocturnal birding in the area. Lunch and dinner at lodge. Night in Paraiso Caño Hondo.

## **April 13, 26. Day 9 – PARAISO CAÑO HONDO TO SANTO DOMINGO.**

Morning birding in Caño Hondo, and after we will drive to Santo Domingo. According to the arrival time to Santo Domingo we could visit the Botanical Garden. This Garden is centered on a densely forested canyon. Several bird species could be seen including Hispaniola Woodpecker, Vervain Hummingbird (the second smallest bird in the world). Other species: West-Indian Whistling Duck, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Antillean Mango, Hispaniolan Parakeet, Hispaniolan Parrot, Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo, Mangrove Cuckoo, Broad-billed Tody, Palmchat, Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, Least Grebe, Antillean Palm-Swift, Red-legged Thrush, among others. Lunch stop on route. Night in Gran Hotel Europa

**April 14, 26. Day 10 – RETURN HOME.** Transfer to the airport.

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## Your Guides



Arturo Kirkconnell, the world's authority on Cuban birds with Alvaro Jaramillo

**Arturo Kirkconnell** is the undisputed world's expert on Dominican Republic birds, co-author with Orlando Garrido of the Birds of Dominican Republic, and a lifelong birder and ornithologist. No one knows Dominican Republic birds like Arturo. Arturo has been guiding tours in Dominican Republic since 1988, and it is safe to say he has mentored or taught essentially all of the other guides in the country, how to identify and find birds in Dominican Republic. Certainly, Arturo was Alvaro's teacher during his early trips in the late 90s. Arturo is the bird curator at the National Museum of Natural History of Dominican Republic and the author of several definitive papers on Dominican Republic birds, he is currently writing the British Ornithologists Union checklist to the Birds of Dominican Republic. His most recent book is a photographic field guide to the birds of Dominican Republic, published by Cornell University Press.

If the tour fills – a second guide will be added.

## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$4500 Starting and ending in Santo Domingo.

**DEPOSIT:** \$500 per person, to secure spot

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** 2/7/26

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$525.

**LIMIT:** 8.



## Additional Information



Ridgway's Hawk (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey, Dominican Republic generally asks for two pages for entry and exit stamp.

**DOCUMENTS:** For entry to Dominican Republic a current passport valid for six months after your arrival date is necessary for US and Canadian citizens to enter. No visa is required for visits of less than 30 days.

If you are not a US or Canadian citizen, please check with the Dominican Republic consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or phone or e-mail Alvaro's Adventures and we can look this up. Passports

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Please plan to arrive in Santo Domingo on April 5, 2026 or earlier. If you arrive a day or two before the tour, we can help with hotel arrangements. Plan on returning from Santo Domingo on April 14, 2026, at any time.

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**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The tour fee is \$4500 for one person in double occupancy starting in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 11, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 10, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leaders. Alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature are not included. The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Dominican Republic, airport taxes, visa fees, travel insurance, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.



Hispaniolan Pewee (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

The single supplement for the tour is \$525. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the enclosed Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a deposit of \$500 per person. If registering by phone, a deposit and the Release and Indemnity form must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. Full payment of the tour fee is due 60 days prior to departure, or by Feb 7, 2026. We will bill you for the

final payment at either 60 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later. Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**SMOKING:** This is a non-smoking tour.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Alvaro's Adventures for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change or are sometimes

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totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

## **TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:**

We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.



Hispaniolan Parrot (© Arturo Kirkconnell)

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When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Alvaro's Adventures, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the



Narrow-billed Tody (©Doug Wechsler/VIREO)

registration form. Alvaro's Adventures acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Alvaro's Adventures accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike,

war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, and other pertinent matter provided by Alvaro's

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Adventures. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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