



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

FRANCE: BRITTANY IN FALL

OCTOBER 4–12, 2025

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Pontusval Light, Brignonan-Plages. Photo Wikimedia Commons

They call it Finistère, the ends of the earth, and this westernmost jurisdiction in France preserves some of the wildest and most breathtakingly beautiful landscapes in all of Europe. Rocky headlands, deep ocean bays, and vast sandy beaches are the backdrop to scattered villages where the Breton language and ancient Celtic folkways survive, while scrubby forests, dunelands, and heath are home to breeding birds now rare elsewhere in Europe. Nature and culture come together most delightfully in October, when the year's cider is pressed and migrant birds pour in from all directions: over the years, more than 330 species have been recorded here this month, including hordes of Arctic shorebirds and waterfowl,

finches and pipits from Scandinavia and Russia, and hawks and owls and warblers from continental Europe.



Common Firecrest. Photo Rick Wright

Seabirds, too, can occur at this season in incredible numbers, and we will watch from coastal vantage points for Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, Great Skuas, Razorbills and Common Murres, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars, and Manx Shearwaters. Much of our time, though, will be spent birding terrestrial migrant traps and breeding hotspots in search of everything from Crested Tits and Zitting Cisticolas to Firecrests and Fieldfares. October is prime time, too, for a wide range of scarcer migrants, among them the enchanting little Red-breasted

Flycatcher, the bizarre Rosy Starling, and the irresistible Pallas's Leaf Warbler. Even if a given day passes without our discovering a real rarity, we can count on enjoyable days in the field with large numbers of birds, a chance to truly get to know species seen elsewhere in scattered ones and twos.



Black-tailed Godwit. Photo Rick Wright

After assembling at the airport in Brest, we will be based for our entire tour in a single elegant seaside hotel 40 minutes north on the Iroise Sea, with its own fine restaurant and spa. Recently remodeled to the strictest environmental specifications, our hotel is just minutes away from the finest birding spots in northern Brittany, and on many days, the lawns and gardens surrounding the facility offer excellent opportunities to watch migrant and resident birds without leaving the grounds.

October 4, Day 1: Departure from home. Most flights from the United States bound for Europe depart in the afternoon or evening and arrive the following day. Participants concerned about the travel time to Brest are encouraged to arrive a day or two early, or to plan an overnight layover in Paris, in order to rest and be better able to enjoy our subsequent activities. On request, the VENT office will be happy to help early arrivals with their hotel and airport transfer arrangements.

NIGHT: Aboard flight in transit to Brest

October 5, Day 2: Arrival in Brest and transfer to hotel. Participants should arrange to arrive at Brest Bretagne Airport (airport code BES) today, then ride the shuttle to our nearby hotel. We will meet at 7:00 pm for a first dinner together, a chance to get to know one another and to discuss our plans for the days ahead.

NIGHT: Airport hotel, Brest



The Hotel de la mer, our base for this tour. Photo Hotel de la mer.

October 6, Day 3: To the Bay of Goulven. After breakfast, we will set out for the 40-minute drive north to our home base for the remainder of the tour, Brignonan Plages. Along the way, we will stop at Coat-Mez or Landerneau or Lann Gazel to bird one of Finistère's few genuine forests, where we will keep our eyes and ears open for such local specialties as the Black Woodpecker, Short-toed Treecreeper, and Crested Tit. We plan to have lunch at La Fabrik Lesneven in the charming and historic town of Le Folgoët, halfway between Brest and Brignonan.

Not even the most single-minded of birders can visit Brittany without succumbing to the allure of one of Europe's richest cultural and historical landscapes. Mysterious and imposing stone monuments bring vivid life to the dim Neolithic past, and houses and churches – built of the same rugged granit – recall the splendor of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Le Folgoët, an important cultural and commercial crossroads dating to at least the first century AD, is the site of the Basilica of Notre Dame, a splendid medieval church housing one of the masterpieces of the “golden age” of Breton sculpture, a Flamboyant Gothic choir screen of kersantite.



The remarkable tower of Notre Dame in Le Folgoët. Photo Wikimedia Commons

After our stroll through Le Folgoët, it is another twenty minutes' drive to our hotel on the rocky shore of the Iroise Sea. After checking in, we should have a short time to wander the grounds and get our bearings in this sublime landscape. Dinner this evening will be in our hotel's excellent restaurant, a convenience we will take repeated advantage of during our time in Brignonan.

NIGHT: Hotel de la mer, Brignonan Plages

October 7 to October 11, Days 4-8: Northern Finistère. With sunrise coming after 8:00 am, we can take our time over breakfast, then strike out for a different combination of nearby birding sites. The precise itinerary each day will depend on winds, tides, and local advice, but our general plan is to spend the morning in search of migrant landbirds, then visit coastal localities for shorebirds and seabirds.



Keremma. Photo Wikimedia Commons

Among the well-known sites we expect to bird is Keremma, where a railroad line has been transformed into a path leading across dunes, salt marsh, and overgrown fields; we will be looking here for wheatears, pipits, Common Shelducks, and skylarks, among many other resident and transient species. Several vantage points along the western shores of the Bay of Goulven are favored by shorebirds, which gather here at high tide to loaf; such widespread birds as Ruddy Turnstones and Red Knots roost shoulder to shoulder with Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, European Golden

Plover, Curlew and Green Sandpipers, and Spotted and Common Redshanks. Trégueller is famous for its (irregularly occurring) Eurasian Spoonbills, which at times crowd into the shallows at high tide with a wide variety of herons, shorebirds, and waterfowl.



A migrant Whinchat takes an unusual perch. Photo Rick Wright

Farther inland, Tremaouezan is a peat bog with breeding Hen Harriers, Whinchats, and Cetti's Warblers. The ponds at Le Curnic are good for Little Grebes and for freshwater ducks including Common Pochard, while Cetti's Warblers and Zitting Cisticolas haunt the reeds.

We may well devote an entire day to birding what is often described as the most scenic drive in France, running forty miles between Goulven and Le Conquet, the westernmost municipality in metropolitan France. Endless small harbors and inlets along the route can produce an exciting array of waterfowl, shearwaters, and gulls, and the rugged landscapes and seascapes are outstandingly photogenic even by the exalted standards the rest of the region.



The mysterious dolmen of Tréguelc'hier. Photo Wikimedia Commons

All of these natural wonders provide a dramatic backdrop to an equally impressive human landscape. Dozens of imposing Stone Age relics still stand in the Finistère countryside: The world-famous menhir of Men Marz is a ten-minute walk from our hotel, and the equally well-known dolmen of Tréguelc'hier is an easy fifteen minutes by car. The sixteenth-century church of Saint Goulven, equally nearby, has a fantastic Renaissance tower, while the altar and organ loft are among the rare surviving examples of Breton wood sculpture from the period. In combination with our birding and natural history activities, our visits to these and other historical sites make this a tour appealing to both the hard-core and the less intensely passionate birder and traveler.

NIGHTS: Hotel de la mer, Brignonan Plages

October 12, Day 9: Departures. After a final breakfast in our hotel, we will return to Brest, where you can schedule your departing flight for any time after 11:00 am.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 12 participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADER(S): Rick Wright and second leader Marco Valtriani



Rick Wright is a widely published author and sought-after lecturer and field trip leader. A native of southeast Nebraska, Rick studied French, German, Philosophy, and Life Sciences at the University of Nebraska before making a detour to Harvard Law School. He took the Ph.D. in German Languages and Literatures at Princeton University in 1990, then spent a dozen years as an academic, holding successive appointments as Assistant Professor of German at the University of Illinois, Reader in Art and Archaeology at Princeton University, and Associate Professor of Medieval Studies at Fordham University. His numerous scholarly publications include two books on the Latin animal literature of the later Middle Ages. Among Rick's recent books are the *ABA Field Guide to Birds of New Jersey*, the *ABA Field Guide to Birds of Arizona*, and the *Peterson Reference Guide to American Sparrows*. He is also the co-author with Sanford Sorkin of *Watching Birds in Montclair* and *Watching Birds in the New Jersey Meadowlands*. Rick lives with his wife, Alison Beringer, and their jet-black lab, Quetzal, in northern New Jersey.



Marco Valtriani holds a degree in biology with an ornithology major from the University of Pisa; his thesis was on the ecology of the Dunlin in the Mediterranean basin. A passionate hiker, birder, and field researcher, Marco has spent years exploring wild areas around the world, from France to Nepal, Syria, and Venezuela. He is a licensed private guide and tour planner, creating and leading itineraries for international conservation organizations, schools, and private travelers. Marco specializes in the natural and cultural history of the Mediterranean, above all his native Italy. He is the author of numerous scientific papers and popular articles on the birds and natural landscapes of central Italy, and has co-authored

guides to Tuscany's natural habitats, trails, and wildlife. Marco lives with his family in Arezzo, where he devotes his free time to exploring new natural sites and discovering new aspects of familiar localities.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$6,085** per person in double occupancy from Brest. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 9, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Brest and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,314**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. We accept MasterCard and Visa. If you choose not to register online, you may pay your deposit by credit card, check, money order, or bank transfer. If not paying online, or by card, your tour space will be held for 10 days pending receipt of your deposit.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (May 7, 2025) prior to the tour departure date.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant's refund will be:</u>
180 days or more before departure date	Participant's deposit minus \$500*
179 to 151 days before departure date	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded
150 days or less before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends Medjet and its MedjetAssist® plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Ripcord

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness**

to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

About MedjetAssist

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company’s primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: Medjet.com/VentBird or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE:

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) for the most updated information.

CLIMATE: October is a fine time to travel in Brittany. It is usually pleasantly cool, with highs reaching into the low 60s F and lows in the low 50s. It can be noticeably cooler right on the coast, where early mornings can feel chilly. Rain is possible at any time, but our schedule is relaxed and flexible enough to let us adjust our plans on short notice to accommodate rain or fog, and Finistère offers a wide range of alternative cultural and gastronomic activities should we not be able to take to the field.

CONDITIONS: Our days will be full, but our pace will always be easy and relaxed as we combine excellent birding with visits to historical and artistic monuments. Just as historical sites are often good birding, our field excursions sometimes lead us to unexpected cultural highlights.

Except on the days when we are traveling between Brest and Brignogan, it is always an option to simply take time off to enjoy the landscape on your own.

The physical demands of this tour are light to moderate. We will bird from the vehicles, from blinds, or on paths and roadsides, and are unlikely to walk more than a mile at a time. All of our walking will be at a slow pace. Remember that towns and villages often have uneven pavement, high curbs, and stairs. No one will be subjected to physical demands that exceed her or his capabilities.

CLOTHING

- **Pants:** Two or three pairs of pants are essential. French birders wear the same clothing as American birders in the field. At this season, mid-weight pants of cotton or some other material may be best; denim, though less comfortable, is certainly acceptable in the field. You will be most comfortable in neat, but still informal, attire in restaurants.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores carry field clothing made of lightweight but durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams that many birders find appealing.
- **Shirts:** Long-sleeved shirts in any comfortable style and suitable for cool weather.
- **Hat:** A hat for protection from the sun is essential.
- **Sweaters and Coats:** A sturdy sweater and light coat or jacket will be welcome on cool mornings. Rain is always possible, making a rain jacket essential; that jacket can be “layered” over a sweater in the field. Light gloves may also keep you comfortable.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service may be available at an extra charge in our hotel, but it is always best to bring enough clothes to get you through the entire tour.

FOOTWEAR: Water-resistant hiking shoes or boots are best for our birding expeditions; in the evenings, lighter-weight walking shoes may be more comfortable.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy in Brittany:

- **Small backpack** for extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment.
- **Notebooks and pencils**
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Chargers for laptops, camera batteries, etc.**
- **Chargers for cameras, laptops, phones, etc.**
- **Collapsible walking stick**— highly recommended for those who have trouble walking
- **Tissue packs**

BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES

Binoculars: We strongly recommend good binoculars of 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. Do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. They are small and lightweight, but have an extremely small field of view and very poor light-gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting scopes: Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so; a scope will increase your enjoyment not just in watching seabirds and waterfowl, but in observing the subtle patterns of many passerines at close range.

EXTRA TIME IN FRANCE: Brest offers excellent connections to the rest of France and to other countries in Europe. Participants with an interest in enjoying other activities beyond the stated program should plan to arrive early or to stay after the tour ends; the VENT office will be happy to help you with your arrangements.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from France is required. Visas are not required for entry by United States citizens. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: Your trip fee includes most necessary expenses. You will need cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as alcoholic beverages, taxis or shuttles, gifts, laundry, gratuities, snacks and meals on your own, and other personal items. It is best to carry small denominations, as some places we visit may be unable to provide change for larger bills.

The official currency of France is the euro; US dollars are not accepted anywhere in the country. You can order euros through your bank before leaving home, or withdraw them from ATM's at the airport or in Brest and a few of the smaller towns. Please ask your bank or credit card issuer for information about using your ATM and credit cards abroad.

ELECTRICITY: The electrical current in France is 220-240V (110-120V in the US). All outlets are ungrounded with openings for two round prongs. You will need a two-prong Type C or Type E adapter to plug in your appliances; if your appliances do not run on higher voltage, you will also need an all-purpose transformer in addition to the plug adapter.

LANGUAGE: French is spoken throughout the area, with Breton (the Celtic language of Brittany, related to Cornish) spoken by a growing minority of the population. Younger people and people in Brest also often speak good English. Most of our hotel staff is fluent in English.

TIME: France observes Central European Summer Time in early October, 6 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight and 9 hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Time.

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers

against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers’ Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Birds

Mullarney, K., L. Svensson, and D. Zetterstrom. 2023. *Birds of Europe*. 3rd ed. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ. This is the indispensable guide to the birds of Brittany.

Mammals:

MacDonald, D., and P. Barrett. 1993. *Mammals of Europe*. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on May 1 2025, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical

needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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4/29/2024 – RW
11/6/24 – CD/SB
05/1/25- CD/DE