



**HONDURAS | CENTRAL AMERICA**



# **Beaks and Peaks**

**BIRDING & ADVENTURE TOURS  
HONDURAS**

**People, parks, and cultures of Honduras  
with a bonus of good birds  
(extended Guanaja version)**





# People, parks, and cultures of Honduras with a bonus of good birds (extended Guanaja version)



## Overview

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# Introduction

Honduras is the heart of Central America. The country is sandwiched between Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. It has a long coastline in the north, on the Caribbean Sea, and a small piece on the Pacific coast in the south, the Gulf of Fonseca. The capital is Tegucigalpa, often abbreviated to Tegu. San Pedro Sula is the second largest city in the country and the economic center. Other towns of any size are La Ceiba on the north coast and the twin cities La Esperanza and Intibucá in the central highlands.

Honduras is a mountainous country (the highest point being Cerro de las Minas in Celaque NP, towering 2849m above sea level), with a whole range of vegetation and habitat types: rainforest, deciduous forest, pine forest, mangrove, sandy beaches (pearly white on the north coast, volcanic black in the south), cloud forests, and so on. That diversity in ecosystems also explains the huge variety of birds (776 species to date, and more are being discovered regularly), insects, plants, mammals...

Since Honduras has not yet been discovered by the big crowds of tourists, there are still many unspoilt natural places. Here you can still spend hours or days wandering the mountains and forests without ever encountering even one other person. Honduras is therefore a paradise for any nature lover.

This trip to western Honduras combines fabulous birding, coffee culture, spectacular landscapes, and Maya, Lenca and Spanish colonial history. You will be talking to local





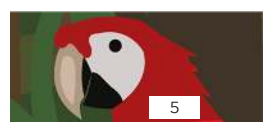


Freshly picked coffee

people about their traditions, their beliefs, and their day-to-day life. You will have the chance to experience firsthand how coffee—one of Honduras' most important crops and number one export product—is produced, and taste some of the best varieties. You will enjoy the stunning landscapes of Honduras' most impressive mountain ranges—Celaque, Santa Bárbara and Cerro Azul Meámbar—and breathtaking Lake Yojoa. You will learn about conservation and the challenges facing protection of parks and wildlife in this country. And if you want, you will see plenty of colorful birds such as Keel-billed Motmot, Prevost's Ground-Sparrow, Resplendent Quetzal, Blue-crowned Motmot, Masked Tityra, Crimson-collared Tanager, Bushy-crested Jay, Honduran Emerald, and many more.



Scarlet Macaw





# Day-by-day itinerary

## Day 1 Arrival in San Pedro Sula and transfer to Copán

After we pick you up from the airport in San Pedro Sula, we drive straight to the charming town of Copán Ruínas in West Honduras. After settling into our gorgeous hotel Casa de Café on the edge of Copán's historical center, we may have time in the evening to explore the lively town square, visit to many arts and crafts shops, and enjoy the cobblestone streets. Over dinner in one of the many excellent restaurants, we will become acquainted with each other and the tour leaders.

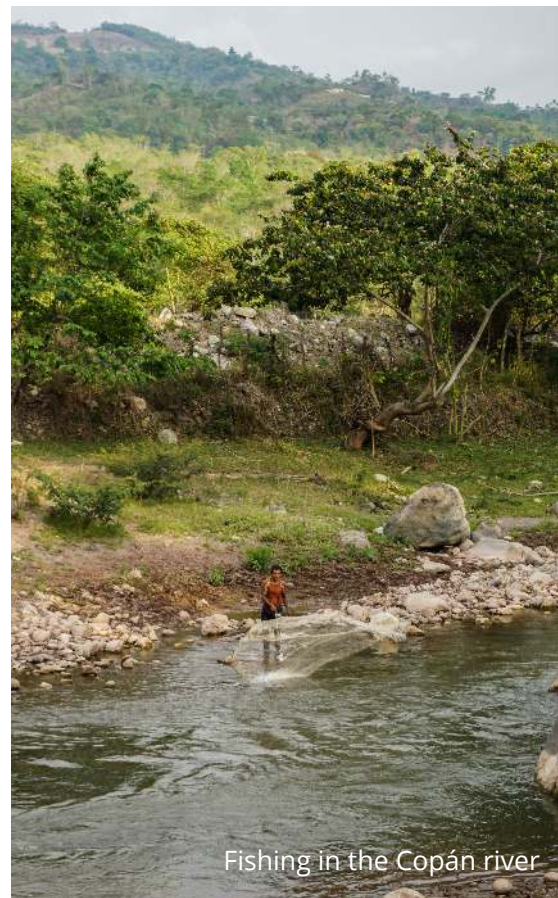
## Day 2 Exploring the Mayan city of Copán Ruínas

The UNESCO World Heritage site of Copán Ruínas offers a grand combination of Mayan history and a beautiful natural setting including easily viewed Scarlet Macaws. Although not the largest Mayan city, Copán was the principal Mayan cultural center during the 400 years when the city was at the peak of its development. It was far ahead of other larger Mayan cities in its development of sculpture, astronomy, and hieroglyphic writing. We will have a guided tour through the ruins by a knowledgeable local specialist.

The Mayan city of Copán as it exists today is composed of a main complex of ruins with several secondary complexes encircling it. The main complex consists of the Acropolis and five important plazas. From what is known today, the sculpture of Copán appears to have attained a high degree of perfection. The Acropolis, a



Stela in Copán



Fishing in the Copán river





Red-throated Parakeets

magnificent architectural complex, appears today as a large mass of rubble which came about through successive additions of pyramids, terraces and temples. The world's largest archaeological cut runs through the Acropolis. In the walls of the cut, it is possible to distinguish floor levels of previous plazas and covered water outlets. The construction of the Great Plaza and the Acropolis reflects a prodigious amount of effort because of the size of its levelled and originally paved expanse of three hectares and the latter because of the enormous volume of its elevated mass, which rises some 30 meters from the ground (<http://whc.unesco.org/>).

Copán lies in a fertile valley traversed by the Copán river, boarded by hills covered in dry pine and mixed forests. We drive up into those hills

for a delicious lunch in Hacienda San Lucas, and an afternoon nature walk after that. We may see White-fronted Parrots, Green Kingfishers, Rufous-naped Wrens, and the lovely White-throated Magpie-Jays.

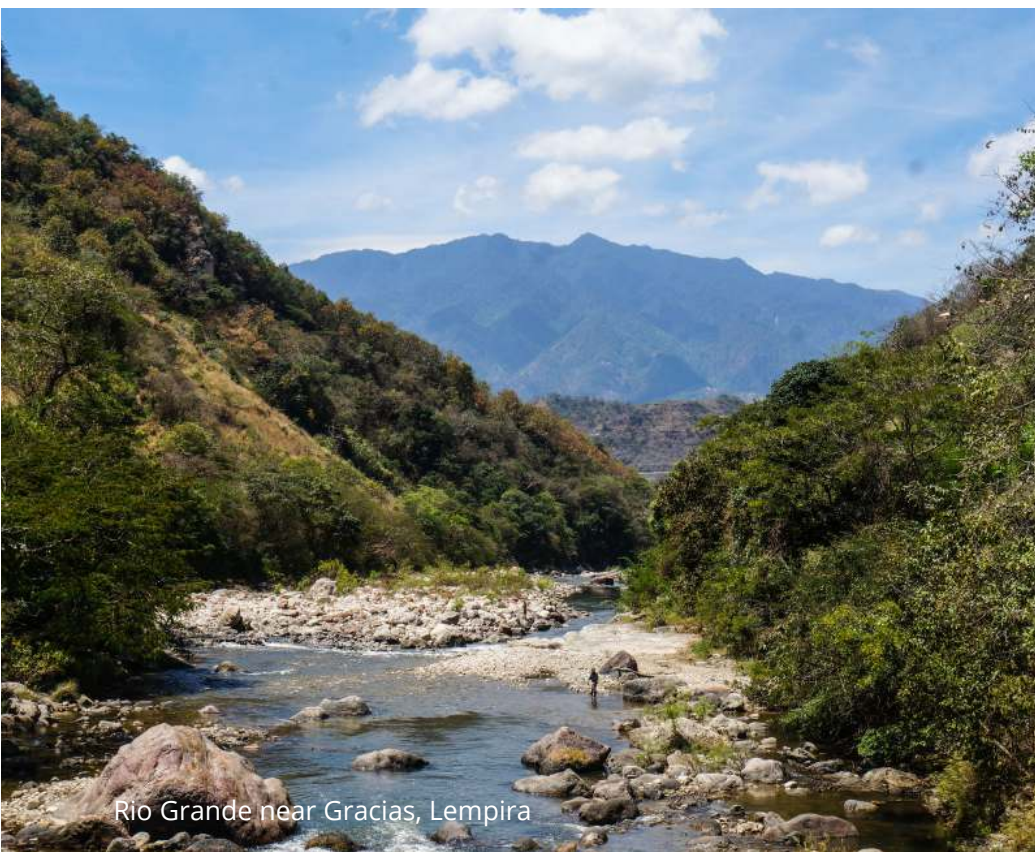
After a full day of archaeology and nature, we will enjoy excellent Honduran cuisine in one of Copán's many cozy restaurants!

### **Day 3** Transfer to Gracias and nature walk along Río Grande

Gracias was once the first capital of Honduras — for a brief time in the 16th century it even was the capital of all Spanish-conquered Central America — and is still a very pleasant town. Gracias lies in the shadow of Honduras' highest peak: Cerro de las Minas in Celaque National Park. The area combines







Río Grande near Gracias, Lempira

Doña Desideria in her traditional pottery workshop

virgin cloud forest, dry pine/oak and broadleaf woodland, with a surrounding mosaic of farmland, coffee plantations and patches of woodland, making this region a nature paradise that is also rich in culture.

After settling in our hotel Casa Celaque and yet another succulent lunch, you have the option of going to Río Grande, a beautiful river just outside of town and a favorite local swimming hole. Here we may see the only bird that occurs in no other country in the world, a hummingbird called the Honduran Emerald. A small population of this gorgeous hummer was discovered here in April 2013. Before, it was only known from hard-to-access Olancho! The region is also home to many other drier-country birds, amongst others the Elegant Trogon, Striped Cuckoo, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Bushy-crested Jay and many more. Along the Río Grande, we will also see some water birds such as Green Herons, Black Phoebe, different kingfisher species etc. After that, we enjoy a short city stroll before we enjoy another succulent dinner in the historical center of Gracias.

Or if you would rather hang out and enjoy the peace and quiet of the hotel's natural surroundings, or relax in Gracias' local hot springs, that is an option too!

#### Day 4 Lenca culture in La Campa

Just twenty kilometers south of Gracias in the department of Lempira, lies one of the most beautiful and ancient cities of Honduras – La Campa. To see this small







workshop



Honduran Emerald

town with its charming and extraordinarily well preserved colonial buildings amidst canyons and pine forests is near magical.

Most of the inhabitants of La Campa are Lenca descendants, and despite the era of Spanish colonial rule, many still preserve their traditional way of life and their cultural identity. La Campa is well known for its distinctive Lenca pottery. Much of the ceramic production comes from the surrounding mountain villages, where people are experts in the manufacture of pottery in the traditional Lenca style.

We visit the simple but beautiful church of La Campa – one of the oldest in the area – and the museum. Afterwards, we go to the workshop of Doña Desideria, a true Lenca woman and a master in the art of traditional pottery! She will give us a brief demonstration of her skills, and you will have the opportunity to purchase some of the finest Lenca pottery, straight from her hands.

When we return from La Campa, there will still be time to explore the lower elevation trails of Celaque National Park. We will be keeping our eyes open for the Mesoamerican endemic Bushy-Crested Jay, Turquoise-browed Motmot, some resident warblers such as the Rufous-capped Warbler, and other birds like the Altamira Oriole, Black-headed Saltator, Mountain Trogon, Flame-colored Tanager and so on. There may also be a chance to exchange with the park management and/or local guides about the importance, and the challenges and opportunities of the park.





Fuente de Vida local guides

## Day 5 Transfer to Finca Santa Elena for the perfect combination of coffee culture and nature

Hidden in the beautiful pine forests of southern Lempira near the village of San Juan Intibucá lies Finca Santa Elena – a modern coffee plantation that is environmentally and bird friendly.

Finca Santa Elena produces high quality coffee using innovative and sustainable methods. It is the only coffee finca (a small ranch of plantation) to grow coffee under pine trees, and one of the first in Honduras that uses drip irrigation. The finca produces several different varieties of coffee – some of which you will get a chance to taste and compare later! Part of the property has also been ‘left to nature’ and has become a haven for wildlife. And if you are here in October or early November, it is also a great location for hawk watching during migration!



Hiking in the cloud forest

Employees of the finca will introduce us to the entire coffee production process — from tree to cup. We finish the tour with a tasting of espressos and cappuccinos based on the different varieties of coffee grown in the finca, along with a slice of homemade bread. Which coffee will be your favorite? You can even pick and roast your very own coffee, which will then be packed for you to take home. Or get one—or more—bags of their finest house brand, all ready to go.

## Day 6 Transfer to Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park (PANACAM)

We leave early for the Lake Yojoa area, making a short stop near la Esperanza to visit private reserve and hummingbird garden El Consejero, a small ecotourism project that we support to give this warm local family some extra income and encourage them to



Delicious coffee, grown under pinet







Granular Glass Frog

keep protecting their amazing property. The feeders and flowers of the garden attract many highland hummingbirds. An amazing sight to enjoy while having a cup of coffee prepared by the owners' daughter Arcadia.

We then continue our way to the lake area, which is home to the biggest variety of bird species in Honduras. We have lunch at a restaurant on the lake which offers a splendid view over the lake and the surrounding wetlands and marshes. And the food will be fresh and delicious. Over here we have the opportunity to spot some additional new birds and to see local people using the lake.

After lunch we drive up to our hotel PANACAM Lodge withing this mountainous national park. Once we are settled, you will have the option of enjoying your comfortable lodging and

the well-tended grounds and trails, or looking for some of this park's birds with your guides. We might see toucans, motmots, and several hummingbirds. If you are not too tired, we can also do a nightwalk and look for owls, frogs, snakes, and other creatures of the dark.

### **Day 7** Visit to La Fuente de Vida eco-tourism project in the Santa Bárbara Mountains

On first appearances this seems like an idyllic landscape but unfortunately, as is the case throughout much of the world, there is pressure to clear more forest to make way for agriculture in order to support a growing population. What is different about this region however is that three communities have come together to form a project we named "Montaña de Santa Bárbara - La Fuente de Vida". Thousands of people depend on Montaña de Santa Bárbara for food,





Guanaja



Rufous-necked Woodrail

water and shelter and income. It is truly the source of life—la fuente de vida—for all of these people. Because of its incredible biological diversity it is also the source of life for the innumerable plants and animals that call the mountain home. The three communities are working together to develop new sources of income based on ethical and sustainable tourism in the hope that these additional resources will enable them to improve our livelihood while protecting this critical environment and maintaining their cultural values.

By visiting this program you will be part of an inspiring conservation effort in a spectacular landscape, and to learn about the friendly people of the local villages, and to gain a better appreciation of why this is an important area to protect.

Breakfast and lunch will be prepared by a local family, and local guides will show us around some of the trails the communities have built to show visitors the natural wonders of their home. You can also talk with the local people, experience what life is like up here in the mountains, see how they produce honey and grow vegetables, learn about the place coffee growing takes in their lives, hear about the Fuente de Vida project, or learn how to prepare some of the local meals!

We plan to arrive back at our hotel before dark and in time for our farewell dinner.

### **Day 8** Transfer to Guanaja with lunch break in Tela

After an early breakfast we drive through the Sula valley on our way to the beautiful Island of Guanaja. But before that, we make a short stop at the beach of Tela. The town is located halfway between the cities of San Pedro Sula and







Lovely Cotinga

La Ceiba. Originally the headquarters of the United Fruit Company in Honduras, Tela has the largest concentration of Garifuna (African slave descendants) villages in the world. We have a delicious lunch in Cesar Maricos Restaurant (try the super-fresh seafood!) before we continue our way to La Ceiba to get our flight to the island of Guanaja.

### **Day 9** Trip around the island, lunch and swimming at Grahams Place

Guanaja still is a completely undiscovered destination, where you will be one of the lucky few to visit an island that has almost magically escaped from the masses' attention. Guanaja's charm, nature and stunning landscape will make you wish you never had to leave. Our base, Roland's Garden Guesthouse, boasts lush gardens with Yellow-napped Parrots, Green-breasted Mangos, Yucatan Vireos and many more. After Roland and Julia's delicious breakfast, we take a boat trip around the island to see the stunning landscape, turquoise water, and sandy beaches, and meet some lovely people on our various stops along the way. Make sure to bring both your binoculars and swimsuit, because we will have a tasty lunch at beautiful Graham's place, which offers great opportunities for swimming and snorkeling.

### **Day 10** Birding around Rolands place, afternoon transfer to Pico Bonito Lodge

After breakfast, we watch birds at Roland's Garden and the surrounding area, looking for species such as the rare Rufous-necked Woodrail, Yucatan Woodpecker, hummingbirds at the feeders, many migrants, iguanas, lizards, and beautiful flora too. After a goodbye lunch, we fly back to La Ceiba and head for





the pristine rainforest at Pico Bonito Lodge. Enjoy the afternoon resting or strolling around the gardens, before we meet at the Lodge's restaurant for a top dinner.

### **Day 11** Birding and herping around the Lodge and visit to young local artists

The Lodge & Spa at Pico Bonito's 400 acres property together with Pico Bonito National Park encompass several distinct ecosystems, each with their own resident and migrant avian species, which can be viewed from the various trails and three multi-story canopy observation towers. Today, we bird the Lodge's grounds in the morning, looking for manakins, tinamous, grosbeaks and many more. In the afternoon, we visit the local village of El Pino, where we will visit an art-workshop that keeps kids off the streets by offering them opportunities to create nature-related art or even train to become naturalist guides. To top off this well-filled day, we have the pleasure to meet Josué, an excellent local herpetologist who will show us some of the rainforest's reptiles and amphibians. After that, it is time for our final goodbye dinner.

### **Day 12** Transfer to San Pedro Sula

We drive you to the international airport of San Pedro Sula in time for your flight.



Herping at the Lodge





## Price

**2,899.00 USD pp\*\***

## INCLUDED

- 11 hotel nights (double occupancy\*\*);
- 3 meals per day, starting with dinner on day 1 and ending with breakfast on day 12;
- non-alcoholic beverages;
- all in-country transportation (private van/bus, return flight La Ceiba-Guanaja);
- all entrance fees to the parks and reserves mentioned above;
- activities as described above;
- guiding fees;- 15% VAT and 4% tourist tax.

*\*The trip will run with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 participants. If 60 days before the starting date the minimum number of participants is not reached, Beaks and Peaks has the right to cancel the trip — in which case your deposit will be fully returned — or reevaluate the price for a smaller number of participants.*

*\*\*Price per person in double occupancy. If you prefer a single room, a 600USD supplement will be applied.*

## NOT INCLUDED

- airfare to/from Honduras;
- tips;
- voluntary contribution to visited projects;
- exit/departure tax at airport on leaving Honduras (currently \$37 USD or equivalent in Lempira);
- alcoholic beverages;
- additional snacks, souvenirs.



# Practical information

## Weather

Honduras is tropical and so usually hot and humid. The driest months are January to May, the hottest ones April to September. Expect clear and dry mornings and moderate to heavy rains in the afternoon in the rainy season (usually the rains start after 3pm and only last a few hours).

## Language

The official language of Honduras is Spanish. On the mainland, few master other languages, although occasionally there are some younger people who speak some English.

On the north coast, and especially on the islands, people often speak both English and Spanish fluently. Your bilingual tour leader / guide can translate if needed.

## Money

The local currency is the Honduran Lempira (Lempira referring to national hero Cacique Lempira). The exchange rate varies, but is currently around 23 HNL for 1 USD or 25 HNL for 1 EUR. You can exchange dollars upon arrival at the airport. Most ATMs work with Visa, some also with Mastercard. Be careful with money and other valuables. Honduras is poor, and although most people are very honest, temptation can get the better of some. Try not to display your money, jewelry and other valuables more than necessary.

## Health

Consult your doctor timely about vaccinations and medication. Inform us of any health issues or dietary requirements, so we can take the best possible care of you.

## Recommended bird guide

Peterson Field Guide to the Birds of Northern Central America by J. Fagan & O. Komar  
Guide to the Birds of Honduras by R. Gallardo

## What to bring (in addition to your usual packing list)

- Light shirts with long sleeves;
- Light long trousers;
- Raincoat;
- Sun hat or cap;
- Footwear with good grip;
- Repellent;
- Sunscreen;
- Personal medicine and products for personal hygiene);
- Camera;
- Binoculars.





# Our Team



William Orellana - General Manager and Tour Leader

William started birding at an early age in his hometown, Gracias Lempira, Honduras. William's first career was with the government, where he eventually became a math professor and later worked for a NGO helping communities to develop. He wisely decided on a complete change of career and started birding in 2005, rapidly becoming a key member of the Honduran Ornithology Association of Honduras (ASHO). William is also one of the best bird photographers throughout the country of Honduras. William has travelled extensively in search of birds, visiting over 15 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and Central America. He has spent considerable time in the field. He also created the first youth birdwatching club in Honduras named Tanunas. William has a long experience and skills to show you the best of Honduras.



Katinka Domen - Operations Manager and Tour Leader

Katinka was born and raised in Belgium, but fell head over heels in love with Honduras while traveling here. It didn't take her long to wave goodbye to her old life and cross the Atlantic to settle in her new home. Not one for sitting still, Katinka has been building up a portfolio of adventure tours including hiking, rafting, kayaking, etc, and rapidly became one of Honduras' top birders and guides. She puts a lot of importance in conservation and sustainable development. Katinka is fluent in many languages, and will be able to guide you in English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish. Katinka likes nothing better than introducing this magnificent country she now calls home to other visitors. Her enthusiasm and sense of adventure will no doubt kindle a passion for Honduras with anyone who visits.



# Terms & Conditions

## 1. Payment & reservation

*As we prefer personal communication, and we try to customize our tours as much as we can to your personal needs and wishes, we have decided against a single "book this tour" button on our website. Instead we prefer you to write us to let us know what you are interested in and how we can create the best possible experience for you. An overview of our reservation process here:*

*1.1. Contact us by e-mail at [info@beaksandpeaks.com](mailto:info@beaksandpeaks.com) and tell us which tour you are interested in (for pre-arranged tour packages) or what places, activities, birds... you would like us to include in your trip (in case of a tailor-made package);*

*1.2. We will confirm availability and (in case of a tailor-made tour) set out an itinerary for you. We will also send you the price for the tour you requested;*

*1.3. If you agree with the tour we suggest for you, we will send you a reservation form which we kindly ask you to fill out and send back to us by e-mail;*

*1.4. The form also contains a section to make your 50% deposit through our secure payments page. Attention: In the form, we will mention the price for your tour both in US dollars and Honduran Lempiras. Since local currency in Honduras is the Lempira, and our bank account and payment system use local currency, all online payments have to be made in Lempiras.*

*1.5. As soon as your deposit has arrived in our bank account, we send you a confirmation e-mail;*

*1.6. A month before the start of your tour, we will send you a reminder with another payment link so that you can pay the outstanding 50%. The full tour price must be paid at the latest 1 week before the start of your tour.*

## 2. Refunds

*2.1. Prior to departure: Please refer to the cancellation fees (section 3) listed below.*

*2.2. After departure: No refunds are available once a tour has started, nor in respect of any package, accommodation, meals or any other services utilized.*

*3. Cancellation by the client: Canceling a booking with Beaks and Peaks may result in cancellation fees being applied. Beaks and Peaks will charge cancellation fees as stated below (sections 3.1 to 3.4). In case of a cancellation, you will be notified via e-mail of the total cancellation fees.*

*3.1. If the client cancels more than 30 days before departure: 20% of the total package price.*

*3.2. If the client cancels within 29 to 14 days before departure: 30% of the total package price.*

*3.3. If the client cancels within 13 to 8 days before departure: 50% of the total package price.*

*3.4. If the client cancels within 7 to 0 days before departure: 100% of the total package price.*

*4. If Beaks and Peaks is forced to cancel a trip for any reason, the participants will be completely refunded without any possibility of further indemnity.*

*5. Passports/Visas: It is the responsibility of all passengers, regardless of the passport they hold, to check with the appropriate consulates to determine if any visas are required. As visa and health requirements are subject to change without notice, it is recommended that verification prior to travel be made of existing foreign visa and health requirements.*

*6. Prices: Price quotations are subject to change without notice until a booking has been confirmed. Prices in USD are merely informative, it is the price in HNL which prevails and which has to be paid according to §1 of our Terms & Conditions.*

*7. Taxes and charges: There are no hidden fees, or charges payable upon arrival at your destination. Certain tour products include optional itinerary components that may be charged separately should you elect to take them; these are clearly noted on the product page.*

*8. Not included: Any applicable foreign departure, charges, immigration, passenger facility charges, and international transportation taxes; international transportation; passports; visa; baggage and personal insurance; beverages and food not listed under inclusions in the travel product; and all other items of a personal nature.*



*9. Travel insurance: We strongly recommend that, at the time of the booking, a comprehensive travel insurance policy be purchased.*

*10. Health and equipment: Our expeditions are accessible for all person in good health, they do not require an exceptional physical condition or any technical or special knowledge (unless indicated so) but the travelers must be ready to (and willing to) provide a reasonable physical effort in relation with the tour chosen. Travelers are responsible for informing Beaks and Peaks or its tour leader of any known illness, disabilities, allergies or medical condition prior the travel. Travelers being under medical prescription must have at all time during the tour their medication in their immediate possession and should inform the guide of their condition. If the health or conduct of a client appears to endanger the safe and sound progress of a tour he/she may be excluded from the tour. Furthermore, it is recommended that all clients have adequate health and/or hospitalization insurance in their respective home countries.*

*11. Risks: Our tours may by their very nature involve an element of risk for the traveler not normally associated to holiday packages. The client must accept these attendant risks and also be aware that safety standards of providers (hotels, tours, transports) are not of the same standard as in his/her home country. Due to political and cultural differences as well as generally tougher physical conditions, travel to many destinations we offer involve risks others than those we take in our daily lives. The client must be aware of this fact and should make his travel decisions accordingly.*

*12. Booking arrangements: In all booking arrangements, the person making the booking all is deemed to have accepted the booking conditions on behalf of the persons named in the booking. The contract will be governed by and subject to the Terms & Conditions. No variation to these Terms & Conditions shall be of any effect unless made in writing by and with the authority of Beaks and Peaks.*

*13. Our responsibility: Tour members acknowledge by their acceptance that Beaks and Peaks, its agents and suppliers, in making arrangements for hotels, tours, transportation or any service in connection with the itineraries of individual tour members shall not be liable for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity, liability or expense to person or property due to act of default by any hotel, carrier or other company or person providing services included in the tours. Further, Beaks and Peaks, its agents and suppliers accept no responsibility for any sickness, pilferage, labor disputes, machinery breakdown, government restrains, acts of war and terrorism, weather conditions, defect in any vehicle of transportation or for any misadventure or casualty or any other causes beyond their control.*

*14. Beaks and Peaks reserves the right to cancel, change or substitute any service and to decline to accept or retain any tour members at any time for any reason.*





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