

TAC Tour Policies

Who We Are and Why We Offer Tours

Archaeological Legacy Institute (ALI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation founded in 1999, registered in Oregon and headquartered in Eugene. The focal point of our public mission is to tell the human story in an authentic, reliable and responsible way. Most of our activities involve telling that story through media, beginning with our flagship website, The Archaeology Channel (archaeologychannel.org; TAC). However, in 2017, when opportunity came knocking, we expanded our mission scope to include in-person tours to real places. We called our tour program “TAC Tours” to reflect our identity and our continuing emphasis on storytelling. Every one of our tours is a multi-episode storytelling experience.

Our Tour Goals

A central goal for us is to ensure that all our tour participants come home feeling that they have had a unique, worthwhile and fulfilling life experience that includes a significant gain in knowledge and understanding. We encourage every tour participant to help us accomplish this goal by taking full advantage of what we offer. ALI will make every effort to provide a safe, accident-free, enjoyable experience for all participants in this program.

Guides

In keeping with our intent to be authentic, reliable and responsible, we always arrange for expert guides to lead our tours. We select guides on the basis of true expertise. Not every guide has an advanced degree relating to the subjects of the tour, because expertise can develop from intense interest combined with experience. We do NOT select guides who deliver scripted narratives, but instead those who intimately know the subject matter with a measure of authority, whatever their title might be.

How We Organize Tours

Each of our tours is unique and deliberately designed. In our planning process, we take advantage of opportunities presented to us that mesh with our principles and goals. Wherever possible, we work with organizations in the tour country to arrange key elements such as accommodations and transportation. Sometimes that includes a guide as well. In other instances, we ourselves book accommodations and transportation and hire the guide. In all cases, however, ALI selects the destinations in order to match the storytelling requirements of the tour and the opportunities presented in the tour locale. We do not simply select a tour designed by others. Thus, every one of our tours is unique to ALI and not offered by others. Also, we are always considering tour concepts that we have not implemented yet. We are open to suggestions about that.

What Our Tours Cover

It is our intent to cover all tour-related expenses with the fees we ask from our participants. Exceptions can and do occur, but normally those fees cover all lodging and meals, private ground transportation, all entry fees, and an expert tour guide. And normally they do NOT include air fare to the tour location, gratuities for service providers (guides, waiters, drivers, maids, etc.) and alcoholic beverages. Depending on the circumstances, the tour might or might not cover transportation from and back to the local airport, evening lectures by our expert guide, and internal flights or other modes of public transportation within the subject country as part of the itinerary.

Lodging and Restaurant Selections

The quality of accommodations and meals is very important for the tour experience. At the same time, tour costs must be kept under control. We work to find the right balance between these two factors. Given that we must choose from what is available on the tour itinerary, we cannot guarantee that every hotel room and every meal will be ideal, even though that is our goal, but we try to ensure that they will be at least satisfactory. We do lots of advance research, and rely on our prior experience as well as that of others we trust, in order to make good choices.

Level of Difficulty on Tours

We deliberately design tours that are physically manageable by the average adult person. While some other tour operators classify their tours by level of difficulty, we do not do so because all our tours would fall into the “easy” or “moderate” category. We typically select itinerary sites that are directly accessible by bus or van and do not require long or difficult walks. However, exceptions do occur. We inform prospective tourgoers in our tour literature about sites that demand long or difficult walks, for one main reason: they need to know, before registering for a tour, what sites will require significant physical effort to access. It's not unusual for a tour to be easy for the most part while including a site that stands out as more difficult. In such cases, an individual can choose to remain at the hotel for a day or to stay on the bus while others move ahead. One thing is for sure: we will take steps to ensure that those who are not physically able to keep up with the group do not adversely affect the experience of other tourgoers.

At the same time, we do not want to discriminate against handicapped people. We will endeavor to provide access to our itinerary sites for those with physical challenges. We will require those with physical challenges to inform us about those issues prior to the tour, so that we can explore practical options, such as a wheelchair and volunteers to help push it. In those rare occasions when practical options cannot be found to ensure a good experience for the handicapped person and other tourgoers as well, we will regrettably exclude from the tour a person who cannot keep up.

Communicable Disease

If communicable disease arises in our tour group, ALI will take appropriate and practical action in order to prevent the spread of germs among the tour participants, possibly including the removal of infected people from the tour. We encourage all our participants to bring masks and to be prepared to use them when advisable. ALI recommends that all participants consult with their physicians with regard to vaccinations and other precautions that the physicians may recommend prior to participating in the program.

Payments, Deadlines and Refund Policy

The proceeds from this tour are an important source of funding for ALI and its programs. The registration portion of the tour cost is designated as a tax-deductible charitable contribution to a nonprofit. Upon request, ALI will provide participants with receipts and proper documentation regarding ALI's 501(c)(3) non-profit status for their records.

ALI sets up tour-related deadlines to provide enough time to put plans in place for a successful tour. Advance time is needed to ensure, for example, that lodging and transportation are firmly arranged. Typically, our tour registration deadline is 90 days ahead of the tour start date.

Payments to ALI for a tour normally follow two steps. First, a deposit for the tour, which can be characterized for tax purposes as a charitable contribution, is due upon registration. Deposits are an important source of ALI funding to cover our costs for the complex and time-consuming process of planning and organizing a tour. This is also the normal time to pay for travel insurance ordered through ALI, although travel insurance is not a requirement. Most commonly, deposits received can be 50% refunded upon written notice of withdrawal from the tour until 60 days before the date of the trip's first day of travel. Beginning at that time, no refunds of deposits will be granted. Insurance premiums can be returned at any time prior to the tour.

Second, the balance payment (total tour price less deposit) is normally due 45 days before the tour begins. These payments generally go toward paying vendors (such as hotels and bus companies) whom we book to conduct the tour. For most tours, balance payments are 80% refundable until one month before the date of the trip's first day of travel. After one month before the trip, no refunds on balance payments will be granted.

We supply the specifics about payments, deadlines and refunds in documents connected with each of our tours, such as our tour-specific "Cost and Refund" document.

The registration form disclaimer section states that the price of the tour is subject to change. While this is strictly true, we have never changed the price of a tour. We would do this only in circumstances outside our control and only after clear notification to registered participants.

Tour Cancellation

We do everything possible to avoid canceling a tour and would do so only in circumstances outside our control. Some potential reasons for canceling a tour include an insufficient number of registrants to make the tour financially viable, strife within the tour country that constitutes a danger to our tour participants, and the sudden withdrawal of our tour guide. Before canceling a tour, we would first consider postponement to a later date, but in such a case we would allow participants to opt out.

If we cancel a tour, we would reimburse completely those who have submitted payment. We would also reimburse completely those who choose not to remain with the tour after it has been postponed. This is different from participant withdrawal from a non-postponed tour, which activates our refund policy described above.