

THE SERIOUS TRAVELER™

TOUR LISTING FROM TRAVEL CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL, INC. • FALL 2009

Dear Travel Friends,

It has been a very long year since we published our last newsletter. Thanks to our many friends who have written and called wondering, "Where is it?" During the recession we struggled ahead and have depended on our website and phone.

This edition is dedicated to my dear mother who passed away January 20th. I would not have a business without her. She was my inspiration for the appeal of international destinations as well as my appreciation for the beauty and diversity of our own wonderful country. I grew up reading *National Geographic*, *Natural History*, *Smithsonian* and *Archaeology* magazines and have only begun to pore through the many photographs she had in her home of India, China and Indonesia. When she completed 40 years of nursing, Home Hospital, which was her employer, presented her with a trip around the world knowing how much seeing the world meant to her. Even now as I am surrounded with treasures she collected as memories, I am inspired to continue offering trips which we know mean so much in the lives of many. My hope is the tradition you establish—sharing stories and pictures of your travels with your children, and a better understanding of



Pauline A. Schiavone 1920-2009

current world events with your friends and family, just as my mother did. I know she would relish reading about what we are offering and I hope you will too. She taught me to look up and think about our vast world, creating a desire to see for myself.


SERIOUS TRAVELER....

Gwen -Gwen Erwood

"The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page," Saint Augustine (354-430 AD)

Don't be a one-page person! See www.SeriousTraveler.com for information on exciting cultural experiences that embrace the world.

ASIA

Silk Road Journeys

Much more than a route for exchange of treasured goods, this course is a conduit of culture. The trade routes of old beckon us still. Travel the Great China Silk Road from Chang'an (Xi'an) to Kashgar. Continue through central Asia to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Did you know Iran was also a stop on the Silk Road? The dazzling Arab Emirates continues the tradition today.

Splendors of Myanmar

Classic Myanmar (Burma) tour featuring bustling Yangon, the magnificent UNESCO site of Bagan, a private boat cruise up the fascinating Irrawaddy river from Mandalay, the thousands of Buddhas in the Pindaya Caves and a lake front view chalet in Inle Lake. Features include a candlelight dinner at an ancient pagoda, classical dance and marionette shows, and horse-cart visits to local villages.

JANUARY 5 - 15 • \$2990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

(Asia continued on page 2)

EUROPE

A Balkan Odyssey

Mysterious, intriguing and beautiful, our series of tours begins with a wonderfully low-priced tour of Albania on the Adriatic. Make a short "bridge" trip through Macedonia. Experience the best of Bulgaria with deluxe features you'll savor and finally explore the legends and traditions of Romania. Also, see our New Adventures in the Balkans scheduled for the fall.

Sacred Sites of Ireland

Join Jo Coffey and Martin Byrne for a journey to the oldest and best-preserved megalithic monuments of western Europe. In Sligo and Navan, we'll explore the crown jewel of megalithic monuments in Ireland. Experience Newgrange, Knowth, Carrowkeel, Carrowmore and the scenic Lough Arrow area. Expect mild weather and emerald green countryside.

FEBRUARY 13 - 21 • \$2440 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

(Europe continued on page 3)

AFRICA

Diverse Africa

We're going back to Libya just as soon as visas are issued at reasonable rates. Ethiopia is a favorite destination for serious travelers. Des will introduce you to Ethiopia for the Timkat Festival. We'll visit the tribal people of Omo Valley. Stay tuned for other African destinations: Morocco, Egypt and Kenya.

Ethiopia's Timkat Festival

Make a unique journey of a lifetime! Let us take you to a colorful place of legendary rulers, fabulous kingdoms and ancient mysteries. Ethiopia is one of the oldest extant civilizations on the continent. Travel to the source of the Blue Nile, and be seven years younger!

JANUARY 15 - 25 • \$5730 FROM WASHINGTON, DC VIA ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

Omo Valley Extension

Visit the Hammer, Konso & Mursi tribes.

JANUARY 25 - FEBRUARY 3 • \$3690

(Africa continued on page 3)

ASIA 2010

(Asia continued from page 1)

Vietnam's Culinary Delights

Visit the home of musicians for dinner and a performance, take a cooking class in Hue at the home of a well-known historian, dine in a restored royal house, have tea with Buddhist monks, take part in a cooking class at the Saigon Culinary Arts Center, cruise the Mekong River and Halong Bay, partake of a candle-light dinner at the Ambassador's Residence. Nothing is spared on this trip of a lifetime.

JANUARY 4 - 16 • \$4860 FROM LOS ANGELES
VIA CATHAY PACIFIC

Cambodia and Laos

Continue the theme and enjoy Luang Prabang and the exquisite Angkor Wat.

JANUARY 16 - 22 • \$2550 AS EXTENSION

Treasures of Iran

Amazing intricate workmanship is the hallmark of the artists you'll meet. Be inspired by the mosaics, architecture and gardens of Persia. See the fabulous crown jewels. Search for the fabled Peacock Throne. See the Sassanian Palace at Kerman (224-637 A.D.) a city known for its Persian carpets. Marvel at the architectural wonder of Darius the Great's Persepolis. Explore Shiraz, a city of roses, nightingales and poetry. Continue to the second oldest city in the world—Yazd. Stay in a delightful caravanserai in everyone's favorite, Isfahan, where you'll soak up the beauty that has enthralled visitors for centuries.

FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 7 • \$5960 FROM JFK
VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

Arabian Emirates Interlude

Visit six of the seven Emirates including: Dubai, Sharjah, Um Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, Al Ain and Abu Dhabi. In dazzling Dubai, stay at the Atlantis The Palm, have tea at the Emirates Palace, dine as you watch thoroughbred racing. Visit an Arabian fortress, a desert oasis and bound across the dunes on a desert safari.

MARCH 26 - APRIL 1 • \$3990 AIRFARE
ADDITIONAL

Grand Tour of Jordan

Indiana Jones brought the Nabataean city Petra to the world's attention. It's now one of the *new 7 wonders*TM of the world. Explore amazing Jerash, visit the Bani Hamida Weaving Project and Madaba - the City of Mosaics. Like Lawrence of Arabia we'll venture from Wadi Rum to Aqaba.

APRIL 1 - 11 • \$4780 FROM JFK VIA ROYAL
JORDANIAN

Iran - Passage Through Persian History & Culture

Ah, all the wonderful sights and sounds! Don't let the naysayers diminish your enthusiasm. Experience Persian hospitality for yourself. The treasures held in Tehran's museums are outstanding. Persepolis, a short drive from Shiraz, is one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world. Isfahan is a unique city with exquisite mosaic-clad domes, bridges and Persian gardens. Iran as a whole is nothing short of breathtaking! Travel in security with our experienced Iranian tour manager. Our perfect introductory tour also includes Kerman, the citadel of Rayen, Shiraz—the city of "Roses and Nightingales"; Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great, ancient Yazd and Kashan.

APRIL 2 - 17 • \$5560 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH
AIRLINES • CASPIAN EXT APRIL 17 - 21 • \$1740

China Silk Road Expedition

The inimitable and beloved Sam Su is back to take you through western China all the way to Kashgar for the Sunday market. Visit the Uygur people in Xinjiang Province. See the Mummies of Ürümqi, exquisite Buddhist grotto art of the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang, and the western most gate of the Great Wall. The Tibetan Labrang Monastery is again open for visitors. This has been one of our favorite tours for almost a decade, but we continue to add fascinating features, like a sky burial and a magnificent view of the first bend of the Yellow River. With train rides and camel rides (short ones), this is truly a great soft adventure. See Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai too.

APRIL 20 - MAY 11 • \$5880 FROM SFO VIA AIR
CHINA
SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 19 • \$5880 FROM
SFO VIA AIR CHINA

Soft Journey to Tibet

Let's go hug Mt. Everest. With Sam Su and Mr. Lhakpa Dorjee guiding, you will have an incredible journey to the *Rooftop of the World*. We'll reach the Base Camp of the world's most famous peak, and meet the Tibetan people in their homes, monasteries and cultural centers of Lhasa, Tsedang, Shigatse and Gyantse.

JUNE 24 - JULY 8 • \$4930 FROM SFO VIA AIR
CHINA

Mongolia with Naadam

Picture yourself in a comfortable ger (yurt) on the endless steppe under a brilliant starry sky...and exploring the Great Gobi Desert where wildlife abounds. Spin a prayer wheel inside a richly gilded Buddhist

temple where few foreigners venture. Built around the 3-day annual Naadam Festival, our comprehensive tour includes the pageantry of the opening ceremony and competition of horsemanship, archery and wrestling. We also travel north to Lake Hovsgol, west to Genghis Khan's Karakorum and south to Roy Chapman Andrews' Flaming Cliffs.

JUNE 30 - JULY 16 • \$5990 FROM LOS ANGELES
VIA AIR CHINA

Bali and Beyond

Have an intriguing look at three of Indonesia's distinct cultures. Java, South Sulawesi and the mystical Bali give you vibrant culture, unique art and mystical ceremonies! Start in Borobudur for sunrise then continue to Toraja Land to see the unique boat shaped houses. Come to the Island of the Gods—Bali—to experience art-filled Ubud, the Sea Temple of Tanah Lot, and beaches of Sanur.

JULY 24 - AUGUST 7 • \$4990 FROM LOS
ANGELES VIA SINGAPORE AIRLINES

Jewels of the Silk Road Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

From Tashkent, fly to Khiva, where the entire city is a UNESCO reserve. We'll explore Bukhara and Samarkand, the Eden of the Orient, cities that rivaled each other in richness, beauty and architectural magnificence. Your hotel in Bukhara opens on to its covered bazaar. An extension to mountainous Kyrgyzstan and the Ferghana Valley features scenic beauty.

OCTOBER 7 - 18 • \$4940 FROM NEW YORK VIA
TURKISH AIRLINES • KYRGYZSTAN EXT OCT 18
- 22 • \$1990

Crafts of Turkey

Join Lloyd Herman and other crafts enthusiasts for a specialized trip including Istanbul, one of the Cultural Capitals of Europe for 2010. Meet glass and other artisans at their workshops in Bursa, Cappadocia and the art enclave of Bodrum. Return to Chicago in time to attend SOFA.

OCTOBER 20 - NOVEMBER 3 • FROM CHICAGO
VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

Persia Revisited

This exciting itinerary takes us west to Hamadan to see the tomb of Esther and the monument to Avicenna, Persian Father of Modern Medicine. Continue to Kermanshah and Ahwaz to visit the site of Susa and the Chogha-Zanbil ziggurat. We won't miss, Shiraz, Persepolis, Pasargad, Yazd and everyone's favorite, Isfahan. An extension to the Caspian and Tabriz is an option.

NOV 5 - 20 • \$5580 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH
AIRLINES • CASPIAN EXT NOV 20 - 24 • \$1740

How do I get more information? www.SeriousTraveler.com • 1-800-762-4216

We update our website almost every day! Get the latest information online. See the itineraries, look at photos, read comments from past travelers and get the latest news. When you're ready, we have a wonderful brochure for you. It will answer your questions about flights, meals, and much more. The reservation form is part of the brochure. We can "pencil you in" to hold space with just a phone call. Would you like a brochure right now? We can send it as a PDF the minute we hear from you. Our brochures are not posted on our website, as we like to talk with you directly. We'd like to get acquainted and know how we may be of help to you. Send us an email, order from the website, call or cut out and mail this form to us. Your address should be on the reverse side. Please check and make any necessary corrections. If there are other destinations you'd like to see, let us know.

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EUROPE 2010

(Europe continued from page 1)

Iceland - Return to Diplomacy

Fridrik Brekkan guides us through the Golden Circle to see waterfalls, geysers and hot springs and introduces us to Saga History. Have an insider's look back to the American-Soviet negotiations which led to the successful resolution of the Cold War. Enjoy meetings with U.S. and Russian Embassy officials.

APRIL 25 - MAY 1 • \$2280 FROM BOSTON OR SEATTLE VIA ICELANDAIR

World Heritage Sites of Albania

Have the treat of traveling with Mr. Auron Tare on this introductory tour. Ari, a prominent historian, journalist and undersea explorer, will meet you in Tirana and introduce you to Kruga, Durres, Apollonia, Saranda, Gjirokastra, Permet, Korça, and Lake Ohrid. The highlight is the UNESCO site of Butrint, where Auron was one of the founding directors.

MAY 30 - JUNE 9 • \$2990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

Macedonia Bridge

Continue from Lake Ohrid to Sofia.

JUNE 9 - 13

Seven Wonders of Bulgaria

Treat yourself. Too many delightful features to mention here. From Sofia to the Black Sea with Kazanluk, Arbanassi, Varna, Plovdiv and Rila Monastery. Learn about the Thracians, Byzantines and medieval Bulgarian cultures from Bulgaria's top guide.

JUNE 13 - 23 • \$4490 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

Page 3

Traditions and Legends of Romania

This out of the ordinary tour visits South-East Saxon Transylvania, the peaceful rural communities of Maramures and the stunning "Painted Monasteries" of Bucovina. Get a taste of real Romania and its people.

JUNE 23 - JULY 4 • \$3440 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

Baltic Capitals

Visit the revitalized capitals of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Start in Tallinn, a perfect medieval city. As we journey southward, we'll make stops in Pärnu, Cesis - a Hanseatic League city, and Sigulda. The Baltic spa town of Jurmala is an excursion from Riga, and from Vilnius we won't miss Trakai.

SEPTEMBER 3 - 13 • \$3880 FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR

New Adventures in the Balkans

For the experienced traveler (and we think you are), we'll make an odyssey from Istanbul north to Chanakkale, Kavala, Filippi and Thessaloniki, Greece. Turn northward into Bulgaria to see Melnik and Plovdiv and return to Istanbul via Edirne. Learn about the Romans, Goths, Huns and Avars, Byzantines, Turks, Slavs and Tatars who all left their marks.

OCTOBER 19 - NOVEMBER 5

South Italy and Sicily

We're developing a trip that winds from Puglia (Apulia), though Basilicata and Calabria (heel, instep and toe of Italy) to the island of Sicily. Let us know if you are interested so we can keep you updated.

FALL 2010

Russia for Thanksgiving

This is a favorite tour of ours. Spend Thanksgiving in a Winter Wonderland, when the theatre comes alive and the onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral sparkle against the snow. Our short one-week vacation will seem so much longer as we show you the best of St. Petersburg and travel by overnight train to Moscow. Take a few more days and travel to the Golden Ring.

NOVEMBER 22 - 29 • FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR •
MEDIÉVAL RUSSIA PRE-TRIP EXT NOV 19-22

AFRICA 2010

(Africa Continued from page 1)

Grand Tour of Libya

We've offered Libya in the past and we hope to return when the visa issue is resolved. See Sabratha, Cyrene, Apollonia, Ptolemais and Leptis Magna. Venture into the Libyan Desert and learn about the Berbers. Overnight in a deluxe Magic camp on the Great Sand Sea (Erg Ubari) and visit the Ghadames oasis, an ancient caravan center.

MARCH 11 - 22 • \$3490 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

OCTOBER 14 - 25 • \$3490 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL



ALL DATES AND RATES ARE AS OF OCTOBER 2009 AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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TRAVEL CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL

24th Year

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2010 TOURS SAVE FOR REFERENCE!

Why Travel With TCI?

We are not your typical tour company. We are different in the places we visit, the way in which we travel, and the people who join us! And we're proud of our differences!

Expert Guides

Our tours are led by hand-picked, local guides who are fun, friendly and knowledgeable. They meet you upon arrival and stay with you throughout. Our guides are also our close friends. As friends do, they share perspective from their part of the world.

Life Experiences

Get ready for some great fun. We're always observant, flexible and watchful for serendipitous opportunities that touch and change our lives (and the lives of those we meet) in a positive way. You'll never be the same. Who would have expected travelers to have been a part of the reunion of adopted Romanian children and their birth mother? It happened!

Detailed Brochures

The descriptions are here to entice you to call us. If the dates and destinations meet your needs, learn more. Rather than produce huge catalogues, we provide a detailed brochure for each specific tour. These are available by PDF or post. Just call or email to order. As a preview, look for the itinerary on our website. If you need help in navigation, please call.

Personalized Attention

You are unique and not just a number to us. We are available to assist—before, during and after your tour. The greatest compliment we receive is that so many travel with us again and again. We happily provide references.

We Go All Over

Yes, we go to Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. We also go to those much less visited places like Uzbekistan, Jordan, Libya (when we can get visas), and Iran.

Cultural Visits

We include musical programs, cultural exchanges, performances, counterpart meetings, embassy visits, home visits, trips to schools and crafts centers, and private lectures by local experts.

Choose Your Air Arrangements

What's best for you is best for us. Use your mileage, secure your own tickets or let us help you find good discounted rates.

Small Groups

Most of our groups are 10 to 15 citizen diplomats, both men and women, singles and couples of all ages. We offer room shares for single travelers. Our travelers are simply the best. You'll fit right in!

Pre-trip Study Material

Since we believe that enjoyment of the journey begins long before departure when you begin learning about your destination, we prepare you with informative pre-trip study material.

Cultural Tours to Better Understand the World and its People
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