

THE SERIOUS TRAVELER™

TOUR LISTING FROM TRAVEL CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL, INC. • SPRING 2012

Dear Travel Friends, **Are you still there?**

Although you have not heard from us for over a year, we are still here for you! It is time for us to do some long overdue spring house cleaning. We have now been in business 27 years and our mailing list is really huge. With the loss of my beloved mother three years ago, I know how mail keeps coming after times and situations change.

We have spent the last two years trying to convert our postal mailings to environmentally friendly email, but we haven't heard from you for ages!

We are providing one last *Serious Traveler* newsletter in a familiar format.

Do you want us to keep in touch with you? If yes, simply send an email, call us on the 800 line, or complete the form on page 3 and mail it to us. If you have email, we will happily enroll you in our Constant Contact Updates. For those who are not connected through the internet, an abbreviated update will be sent by post from time to time.

We are very much looking forward to hearing from you as we have many exciting tours in the works where our small groups will be honored guests.

-Gwen Erwood *Amen*
President, Travel Concepts International



ASIA

We're returning to the Emirates for an Architectural tour: Attention Silk Road enthusiast! Feast your eyes on the treasures of the Silk Road. A longer tour goes to Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Iran as an option. A shorter 11-day trip highlights Uzbekistan. Have you been to Sri Lanka yet, the Pearl of the Indian Ocean? We offer two trips, July and January. We're so impressed with India, we're including North, South and Ladakh. Yes, Americans are still traveling to Iran. Lastly, there's time to join our Mongolia trip this year. Read on.

Mongolia with Naadam

Our Steppes to the Gobi Mongolia tour is built around the 3-day annual Naadam Festival. This 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.

\$5280 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL (WE'LL HELP!)

JULY 5 - 20, 2012 • ALSO 2013

(Asia continued on page 2)

EUROPE

You'll recognize some favorites such as Romania, Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia as well as our Puglia tours exploring the "heel" of the boot. Our New Adventures in the Balkans is an odyssey through Bulgaria, Northern Greece, Albania and Macedonia. Explore Russia's Moscow and St. Petersburg connecting by Sapsan fast train during the Spring Festival - Maslenitsa (Butter Festival). We're excited about our new Imperial Capitals and Retreats of Austria, the Czech Republic and East Germany.

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.

\$2990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

JUNE 13 - 24, 2012

JUNE 12 - 23, 2013

(Europe continued on page 3)

THE AMERICAS

Our January and March 2012 tours were full and overflowing. Join us as we return.

Cuba - People to People

The tours, in cooperation with a fully licensed provider, will take our group of no more than twenty to Havana and Viñales Valley.

\$3810 FROM MIAMI VIA CHARTER FLIGHT

NOVEMBER 10 - 17, 2012

JANUARY 19 - 26, 2013

MARCH 2 - 9, 2013

AFRICA

Ethiopia's Historic Route

Experience the unusual Christian Meskel Festival at Lalibela in September that celebrates the Finding of the True Cross. Add ancient history, age-old culture, breathtaking highland scenery, waterfalls, castles, and rock churches.

\$4990 FROM WASH, DC VIA ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

SEPTEMBER 19 - 30, 2012 • ALSO 2013

Omo Valley African Safari

Here is a fascination exploration of the colorful tribal culture of the Hammer, Konso and Mursi. Game animals and boat cruises on Lake Chamo and Omo River will give you another perspective.

\$3670 AS AN EXTENSION

SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 10, 2012

Freedom Tour of Egypt

How things have changed in just one short year. During the demonstrations in Tahrir Square, we were in contact with our Egyptologist and close friend, Hossam. Together we have worked out a very special tour that links you to the changes under way and to upper Egypt, the Pyramids and Alexandria. A two-day extension to the Sinai includes flights to Sharm el Sheikh. See St. Catherine's Monastery and trek if you wish to Mt. Sinai.

\$3780 FROM JFK VIA EGYPT AIR • SINAI EXT

NOV 23 - DEC 3, 2012 • EXT DEC 3 - 5, 2012

Call or write to receive the link to pictures of our March Egypt and many other tours. We have some wonderful photographers who travel with us.

ASIA 2012

(Asia continued from page 1)

Sri Lanka's Art & Culture

Visit six of Sri Lanka's World Sites – Anuradhapura, Dambulla, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Kandy, Galle, Ruhunu National Park in Yala plus the enchanting Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage. Dine elegantly and overnight at a Planters' Club in Nuwara Eliya, and stay in a historic beach resort in Bentota designed by iconic Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa.

\$3950 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ JULY 7 - 19, 2012

Mountains of Ladakh, India

Join us in exploring the remote Buddhist area of India. We've selected the best time of year to visit the majestic Himalayas; we've scheduled the dates to coincide with an important event in the Buddhist calendar - the Phyang Tsechu. Explore the secret fertile Nubra Valley, see Leh Palace, described as a miniature of Lhasa's Potala Palace, view the treasures of monastery museums with their "Thangkas" and ascend to one of the world's highest elevated lakes, Pangong Lake.

\$3670 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL • SRINAGAR EXT

☐ JULY 13 - 26, 2012 • EXT JULY 26 - 29, 2012

Jewels of the Silk Road

Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran

Complete your Silk Road experience in a seldom-visited area. This tour connects Central Asia to the Near East. Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, Tashauz, Ashgabat, Merv (Mary). The Mashad and Tehran extension is optional.

\$5990 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

☐ OCTOBER 17 - 31, 2012

☐ MARCH 20 - APRIL 3, 2013

Combine Jewels of the Silk Road with Persia Revisited or Passage Through Persia.

Persia Revisited

See 7 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and all four Persian capitals: Ecbatana, Susa, Pasargadae, and Persepolis. 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, Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great, and everyone's favorite, Isfahan. We'll take in the desert city of Yazd to learn about ancient technological systems using *bafgirs* (windcatchers), *qanats* (water channels

from the mountains), and *yakhchals* (ice houses), making life in the desert along the Silk Road thrive. Optional extension to the Caspian and Tabriz.

\$5980 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES •

CASPIAN EXT (2 more UNESCO Sites) • \$2190

☐ NOV 2 - 17, 2012 • EXT NOV 17 - 21, 2012

Classical Jordan

Indiana Jones brought the Nabataean city of Petra to the world's attention. It's now one of the *new 7 wonders™* of the world. Explore amazing Jerash, then, like Moses, from above the Jordan River atop Mt. Nebo, gaze at Jerusalem and Jericho. Feel like Lawrence of Arabia as we venture to dine in a Bedouin's tent at Wadi Rum. We end our stay at a Dead Sea resort.

\$2890 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ NOVEMBER 17 - 24, 2012

Combine Classical Jordan with Egypt.

North India with Darjeeling

Once in your life you must see the Taj Mahal—and the sculpted temples of Khajuraho—and the pink city of Jaipur! But there's more! Kolkata and the majestic Himalayas.

\$5420* AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ DECEMBER 28, 2012 - JANUARY 9, 2013

Combine North India with South India.

ASIA 2013

Splendors of Burma

With the positive political changes we are delighted to secure much-desired space to allow you to capture the mystery and romance of Mandalay. Classic tour to the mystical lands of Burma featuring bustling Yangon, the magnificent UNESCO site of Bagan, a cruise up the fascinating Irrawaddy River. Restore yourself during a sojourn at Lake Inle. Combine this with North Thailand and Laos.

\$2990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ JANUARY 8 - 18, 2013

North Thailand's

Golden Triangle and Laos

Ayutthaya to Chiang Saen. Markets, golden temples, and hill-tribe villagers make this trip a delight for craft lovers. Cruise down the Mekong to Luang Prabang.

\$3260* FROM BANGKOK TO LUANG PRABANG

☐ JANUARY 18 - FEBRUARY 3, 2013

Experience South India

From Chennai to Kanchipuram, Pondicherry to Thanjavur. Celebrate the Pongal Festival in Madurai. Get in touch with nature at Periyar and Cochin. Hassan, Mysore and Bangalore make this program extraordinary.

May be combined with Sri Lanka.

\$3990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL • MUMBAI EXT

☐ JANUARY 9 - 22, 2013 • EXT JAN 22 - 24, 2013

Sri Lanka

Pearl of the Indian Ocean

Please see July description.

\$4470 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ JANUARY 24 - FEBRUARY 5, 2013

Treasures of Iran

Be inspired by the mosaics, architecture and gardens of Persia. See the fabulous crown jewels. Persepolis, Shiraz, and Yazd can't be missed. Stay in a delightful caravanserai in everyone's favorite, Isfahan, where you'll soak up the beauty that has enthralled visitors for centuries.

\$5980* FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

☐ FEBRUARY 15 - 28, 2013

Combine Treasures of Iran with Emirates.

Emirates Architectural Tour

Stunning modern Dubai skyscrapers, the man-made Palm Island with its Atlantean adventure in The Lost Chambers, Mall of the Emirates, and Ski Dubai; a Desert Safari; Al Ain Palace Museum and Oasis; and finally Abu Dhabi, the Emirates Palace, Ferrari World & Saadiyat Island.

FROM JFK VIA ETIHAD OR EMIRATES

☐ MARCH 1 - 8, 2013

Iran - Passage Through

Persian History & Culture

Don't let the naysayers diminish your enthusiasm. Experience Persian hospitality for yourself. 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. 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 Zoroastrian Yazd.

\$6360* FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIR • CASPIAN EXT

☐ APRIL 5 - 20, 2013 • EXT APRIL 20 - 24, 2013

Uzbekistan

Our Jewels of the Silk Road transports you to Central Asia. Tashkent, Urgench, Khiva, Bukhara, Shakre Sabz and Samarkand are featured in this compact tour that will seem much longer than 11 days.

\$4990* FROM CHICAGO VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

☐ MAY 2 - 13, 2013

Georgia on My Mind

An in-depth tour with a taste of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

☐ SEPTEMBER 2013

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EUROPE 2012

(Europe continued from page 1)

Croatia & Slovenia Yachting the Adriatic

This lovely two-week trip includes a week aboard the sparkling new Aloha Princess (18 cabins). Our small group will ferry from Venice to Istria and explore Slovenia and Croatia before sailing to Hvar, Dubrovnik and Split.

\$3620 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 AUGUST 10 - 25, 2012

Precious Stones of Puglia

Still relatively undiscovered and free of crowds, the heel of Italy retains the cultural charm of the simple life combined with a rich historical heritage. See the Trulli of Alberobello, sojourn in Baroque Lecce, visit Castellano, Martina Franca, Cisternino, Taranto and Matera (Basilicata).

\$3640 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 5, 2012

Roseto Valfortore & Gargano

More of Puglia. From Bari, north to the village of Roseto Valfortore, then on to the Gargano Peninsula: Padre Pio's San Giovanni Rotondo; the Crusaders Monte Sant' Angelo; the picturesque rugged coast.

\$2950 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 OCTOBER 5 - 12, 2012

New Adventures in the Balkans

For the experienced traveler (and we think you are), we'll make an odyssey from Sofia and Melnik, Bulgaria south to Kavala, Philippi and Thessaloniki, Greece. Turn west into

Kalambaka and Ioannina and up through Butrint, Durres and Tirana, Albania and finally back east through Ohrid and Skopje, Macedonia ending in Sofia. Learn about the Romans, Goths, Huns and Avars, Byzantines, Turks, Slavs and Tatars who all left their marks. With our excellent guide, Lyuba.

\$6880 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 OCTOBER 5 - 30, 2012
 OCTOBER 4 - 29, 2013

EUROPE 2013

Best of Russia

Travel to this Winter Wonderland, when the theater comes alive and the onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral sparkle against the snow. In the Golden Ring we'll see Vladimir, Suzdal and Palekh. Delight in the Butter Festival - *Maslenitsa* - in Moscow and the magnificent museums of St. Petersburg including the Hermitage.

\$3780 FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR
 MARCH 9 - 21, 2013

Imperial Capitals & Retreats of Central Europe

Travel through Austria, the Czech Republic and East Germany. Spend three wonderful days in Vienna; stop in Cesky Krumlov enroute to Prague. Explore Kutna Hora and Karlovy Vary that are Czech treasures. On to Dresden, Berlin and Potsdam with its Sanssouci Palace.

AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 MAY 4 - 18, 2013



*ALL DATES AND RATES ARE AS OF APRIL 2012 AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

World Heritage Sites of Albania

Have the treat of traveling with Mr. Auron Tare, a prominent historian, journalist and undersea explorer. He and our archaeologist guide 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.

\$2490* AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 MAY 19 - 29, 2013

Macedonia Mosaic

Part of the former Yugoslavia with its scenic Lakes Ohrid and Debar. A delightful exploration includes remote Treskavets, Kalishta and St. John Bigorski Monasteries, of course Skopje, the capital, en route to Sofia, Bulgaria. A perfect extension to our Bulgaria tour below.

\$2590* AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 MAY 27 - JUNE 2, 2013

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.

\$3950* AIRFARE ADDITIONAL
 JUNE 2 - 12, 2013

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FINAL ISSUE



2012/2013 TOURS

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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 be 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 Burma, Cuba, Georgia and Iran - and when they open up again, Libya and Syria.

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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