

*Winter/Spring Dutch Treats and Andalusian Deals from
Untours ... see p. 20*

Travel Scoop

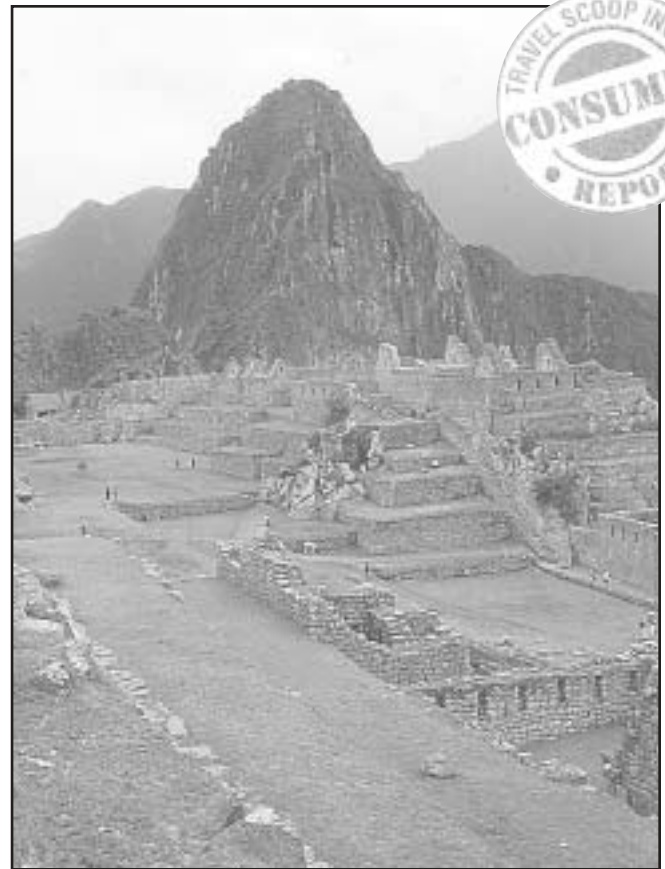
*The Newsmagazine
for Members of
The Travel Society*

Vol. 21, No. 1 January 2003

From Andes Mountains to Amazon Jungle

— by *Ted and Judy van der Veen*

The Inca Empire – its vastness, its power, its architecture! Ever since I first saw a photograph of Machu Picchu, I have dreamed of seeing it, and now, finally, I have. In November 2001 we took an 18-day trip encompassing the northern portion of Bolivia and much of Peru. We toured pre-Inca sites, visited Spanish cathedrals built on Inca ruins, rode across the high plain, admired snow-capped mountains in the distance, walked streets originally laid out in Inca times, roamed giant Inca temples, and, of course, wandered enthralled through Machu Picchu, the Lost City of the Incas. And almost as an afterthought, we experienced an island culture where time has stood still, spent three days at an Amazon Jungle Lodge, and then along the Pacific coast boated through the Ballestas Islands wildlife sanctuary and flew over the mysterious Nazca Lines.



Machu Picchu (van der Veen)

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TravelScoop

The Newsmagazine for Members of
The Travel Society

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January 2003

Vol. 21, No. 1

From your Editor's desk...



Time to wish you all a wonderful New Year and happy, healthy travels in 2003.

Speaking of health, I don't want to start the year off on a worrisome note, but on the other hand I'd rather you all be safe and healthy than sorry. So I will plough ahead.

TravelScoop subscriber Dean Feltham, who often sends us tips, alerted me to an article in *The Wall Street Journal* on 1 November 2002 entitled "How Safe is Airline Water? Bring Your Own Bottle" by Nancy Keates and Jane Costello.

The title really tells all, but I will elaborate a little. The investigative journalists collected tank water samples on 14 U.S. domestic and international flights and sent the samples to a recognized laboratory for testing. Apparently almost all the samples were contaminated at a level far above U.S. Government limits. Some contained E.coli and the germ that causes Legionnaire's disease. The authors approached the airlines for statements and received a variety of responses, from "serving tap water would violate company policy" to the acknowledgement that "tap water could get served". When some flight attendants were asked for their comments they confirmed that they serve tap water when water bottles run out, primarily on full flights. "It happens fairly frequently," one said.

I found it interesting that this U.S. article ended with the fact that, early last year, E. coli was found on the aircraft used by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien; apparently the Canadian Department of National Defense said that no one became sick.

Subscribers to *The Wall Street Journal* online (www.wsj.com) can access the full story for themselves. But its message is simple: take some back-up water of your own and make sure you drink only fluids that you know come from sealed containers. And don't forget to take a safe water supply with you when you go to that tiny space to clean your teeth.

Keep safe!

coming in *February*

- *Bulgaria*
- *Southern Colorado*
- *Lost Luggage?*

Update Items

TravelScoop reported on the great winter week-end getaways in Algonquin Park (3½ hours north of Toronto) offered by Voyageur Quest a few years ago. The park is a winter wonderland, and visitors to VQ's cabin can experience dogsledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and ice fishing. Many guests really are city slickers, signing up to experience these activities for the first time. And if you decide, at the time, that it really does look too frightening out there, you can just relax in the cozy cabin. Group size is limited to 12 guests and the cost of \$490 includes two nights' accommodation, all meals, guides and equipment. For details call 416 486 3605 or 1 800 794 9660 or visit www.voyageurquest.com

Business as well as tourism news from Hilton Hotels in that they are getting into the all-inclusive market with four Coral properties in the Dominican Republic. If you're interested your agent will have details.

Remember our story on Friuli, Italy, in the May 2002 edition? There's an exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto (14 December - 16 March) entitled *The New Mosaic: Selections from Friuli, Italy*.

Oops ... we lost a couple of lines in our last issue (in the green box on p. 11). See p. 19 in this issue for the trips for which single travellers are wanted.

This Month's Winning Scoop

Holy Week in Antigua

by Ron Waldie

One of the world's unique festivals takes place every year between Palm Sunday and Easter in Antigua, Guatemala. The city, the original capital of Central America, was founded in 1540, and almost abandoned in 1753 when the capital moved to Guatemala City. Antigua, or *the old one*, is a treasure trove of ruins and buildings dating from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. And just as the buildings of the city are a reminder of its rich past, so do the Holy Week processions remind us of the city's religious foundations.

The week begins with the Palm Sunday procession which leaves the cathedral church of La Merced and winds its way through the streets of the city for seven hours. Believe it or not, but this procession involves ten thousand people. Planned and run by organizations called *confradias*, processions of this scale require a miracle of organization. First in the processions come the Roman soldiers, all carefully costumed. Next comes a sculpture of Christ on his way to Calvary on a float weighing nine thousand pounds and carried by ninety men. Following Christ is Mary, who is carried by forty women on a float that weights over forty-five hundred pounds. These sculptures are very old and are highly treasured here. Both floats require teams of carriers who change every quarter of a mile, and both are shrouded in incense, tons of which are burned during the procession. Both floats have their own marching band which play sombre marches to accompany the bearers and set the tone for the onlookers.

It takes about 20 minutes for the processions to pass by any one spot and, when the figures are finally returned to La Merced six to

Members are Rewarded for Sharing!

TS rewards members for all submissions published.

The Winning Scoop receives a 1-year membership extension.

Your Scoops receive a 3-issue membership extension.

Favourite Places receive a 3-issue membership extension.

Reader Reports receive extensions depending on length.

Submission Guidelines: TS welcomes reader submissions but cannot guarantee they will be used. We reserve the right to edit submissions should they be used. It is very important to include specific travel details: costs, discounts, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, etc., for the benefit of other readers. Submissions can be sent by mail, e-mail: ann@thetravelsociety.com or on diskettes.

seven hours later, they will have passed well over 150,000 onlookers, many of whom are profoundly moved by the event.

In case this sounds to you like many Holy Week processions in a number of devout cities and towns around the world, you should know that the unique thing about the processions in Antigua are the *alfombras*, or carpets, which are laid on the route over which the floats are carried. On Palm Sunday there will be many carpets on the streets. They are made of coloured sawdust or of flowers and fruit laid on a bed of pine needles. They take hours to make and are a source of great pride for the families and groups of friends who gather to create them. These carpets are made for Christ and Mary, not for the town's inhabitants or visitors, and they are pristine and exotically beautiful testaments to faith and creativity. When the bearers carry the floats onto the carpets they destroy them and the final event of every procession is the arrival of the crew of city sweepers who gather up the remnants and dump them into garbage trucks.

Because the flowers will wilt in the sun, *alfombras* are completed less than an hour before the processions arrive. So all through the morning the routes of the processions are alive with activity. While the carpets close behind the procession are being swept up, others further along the route are just being started. The entire event is a fascinating study of transience and tradition.

Throughout Holy Week there are processions put on by different *confradias* of different congregations in the city. On one day there is a children's procession where

all the bearers of small, but still significant, floats are under the agent of ten ... the next generation in training!

On every evening during the week a church in Antigua holds a *velacion* or vigil, when its sacred sculptures and art are displayed, usually surrounded by a magnificent *alfombra*. These events are rather like a village fair with food vendors and children's rides filling the courtyard of each church. It is great fun to mingle with the crowds and feel the devotion and energy of the local people who so obviously care deeply about the significance of all the events taking place.

The highlight of Holy Week in Antigua is Good Friday, when two enormous processions are staged. The first starts from La Merced at 6:00 a.m. It again features Romans, who are mounted on horses this time, and the same immense floats seen on Palm Sunday. What is truly extraordinary about this procession, however, is the first three miles of its route, where every foot of every street has been dressed in *alfombras* of extraordinary complexity and beauty. The sight resembles a river of colour. All these carpets were started late Thursday night or early Friday morning, and all will be swept up by 9:00 a.m. The processions will conclude at 1:00 p.m. when the floats return to La Merced and the sculptures are put away for another year.

At 4:00 p.m. on Good Friday there is another procession. This one features the now-dead Christ and also has numerous floats depicting all the events during the last week of his life. These floats are on wheels and are pulled through the streets in advance of

the massive floats bearing sculptures of Christ and Mary. This procession continues until midnight.

When I experienced my first processions a few years ago I acknowledged they were exotic and quite fabulous to see, but I also thought them rather weird. Experiencing Holy Week several times now, however, has changed my impressions, for it is hard not to be moved by the immense human task of organizing them, by the number of people who participate and by the difficulty of their tasks. Those floats are heavy and they are carried for miles. It is also hard not to be moved by the open and sincere expression of religious faith which is felt everywhere here. While the city is full of people from all over the world who have come to watch the processions, it is very clear that nothing is being done to impress them. If no tourists came, the streets would be as beautiful and the processions as large. For many centuries, Holy Week has been the highlight of Antigua's spiritual life and the events are full of beauty, mystery and faith. It is a week to remember.

The details ...

Dates for Holy Week 2003 are 13 – 20 April

How to get there:

Mexicana flies to Mexico City with an easy connection to Guatemala City.

American Airlines flies to Guatemala City from Miami.

United Airlines flies to Guatemala City from Houston.

Guatemala City can also be reached from Los Angeles and Atlanta.

Antigua is a 45-minute ride west of Guatemala City. Transfers are numerous and easy to arrange. The most expensive way is by taxi,

which is negotiable; it should cost around US\$20 per person.

Accommodation

Antigua is a well-developed tourist destination that offers a wide range of excellent hotels and inns in all price ranges. If you would welcome an organized experience, the Ald Partnership of Toronto offers a Holy Week Tour. This trip includes accommodation, most meals and a range of activities designed to let you experience not just all the magic of the week, but also to give you a sense of this intriguing and beautiful country. They can be contacted at 416 703 8800 or 1 877 990 9908, www.alddpar-travel.com

Your Scoops

Rates at Out-of-Canada ATMs

When using foreign ATMs to get cash I have always found it difficult to compare exchange rates and service charges between different financial institutions so, during a recent visit to London, I decided to conduct an experiment. I made three separate withdrawals of £100 each, one right after the other, from three separate accounts. The resulting cost for each of the three £100 withdrawals were as follows:

Royal Bank chequing account: rate 2.4769, fee \$5, total cost \$252.69

Toronto Dominion chequing account: rate 2.4575, fee \$3, total cost \$248.75

CIBC Aerogold Visa: rate 2.4546, fee \$2, total cost \$247.46

So ... we thought Visa would be our future choice as long as we remembered to organize ourselves

ahead of time so we have a credit balance to avoid accruing interest. But ... our November Visa bill has just arrived with a note saying that effective 24 January 2003 the foreign cash advance fee will increase from \$2 to \$5. There's nothing as constant as change.

Incidentally, the rate at Thomas Cook at Calgary Airport the previous evening was \$2.61 plus \$3 service charge.

*Robin Terentiuk
Calgary, AB*

Thanks Robin ... it's worth remembering those fees as they can mount up if one keeps withdrawing small amounts – Ed.

In the September 2002 issue of TravelScoop Dean Feltham told us about his plans to fly with Jetsgo. He promised to tell more after his trip and here, now, is his report.

Flying with Jetsgo

We flew from Toronto to Vancouver, two-for-one on Jetsgo, on 2 November last year, returning at the end of the month. We arrived at Terminal 3 at 8:05 a.m for the 9:30 flight. There were four check-in attendants and no line-up at all. The check-in person was very pleasant and we left on time. In Vancouver we had a similar experience with just two or three people ahead of us as we checked-in in less than 10 minutes.

Passengers are allowed two pieces of carry-on baggage. My checked bag was over weight on the flight from Toronto as I had a suitcase full of files (about 60 lbs) but, as the staff had trouble calculating how much I owed, the bag went free! On the return flight, I had purchased a second carry-on to transfer

some of the weight out of the checked bag. Nevertheless, I was still 35 lbs over weight. However, the staff took the position that as one of the passengers did not have any checked luggage there would be no charge.

We had requested seats in row 22 A & B on both flights (the exit row). The seat configuration is two seats on left and three seats on right. Both seats and aisles are narrow and for most there would be a typical problem with the pitch, but our row was the best in the plane with lots of leg room. The front exit row also has lots of leg room but there the seats do not fully recline. Seats could have had more support and padding and comfort may be a problem for flights longer than Toronto/Vancouver. By the end of flight we were happy to get off.

We noticed substantial wind noise at the front of the plane (avoid rows 1-12) and excessive engine noise at the rear of plane ... don't take those seats if you can avoid them.

There is no doubt this is a discount flight; there were no blankets or pillows on board, nor any reading material. Sandwiches, snacks and drinks are available for sale on board at reasonable prices, but we would recommend bringing something from home or purchasing a sandwich and drinks at the airport (perhaps at Mr. Submarine?) to bring on the flight. And don't forget to bring your own reading materials. However, on the whole we were very impressed ... the service on board was pleasant, the price was right and we would fly with them again within Canada if we can get the right seats.

*Dean Feltham
Thornhill, ON*

Ride a Ferry to Québec City

Stories of Montréal, Québec City and the Eastern Townships in *TravelScoop* recently, have prompted me to tell readers how to go about a rewarding stop if you are travelling the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Every summer we find ourselves, like many others, rushing along Québec's highway 20, looking across the mighty river at Québec City as we come or go to the Maritimes. We always felt we'd like to make a detour into the city - what better way to spend a few hours than in historic old Québec, we reasoned - but didn't fancy navigating the bridge and the city traffic/parking etc. But on our return to Toronto last September (with a stop planned in Montréal that night) we found ourselves well ahead of schedule so decided to investigate if we could reach the city on the north shore speedily.

Exiting at 325N at Levis (opposite the city) we drove to the riverside, parked our car in an inexpensive lot and boarded the Québec-Levis ferry for the short river crossing. What an impressive view of the citadel, the cliffs, and the old city (400 years old on 3 July 2008) as we approached. In 20 minutes or so the ferry docked and we stepped back into history. Before us was Place Royale (declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site). Here one enters narrow cobbled streets lined with boutiques, sidewalk cafes and restaurants and several museums. Some of the stone buildings are built on the foundations of old Québec and a few actually date from the 17th century.

We started our visit with a stop at the Centre d' Interpretation de

Place Royale where a walk through several floors gave us details of the city's economic and social history over 400 years. Nearby stands Maison Chevalier (free admission) with rooms furnished and decorated in the styles of the 17th and 18th century. You can almost picture an active bourgeois family living there. There are other museums in Place Royale (which we saved for another visit) and the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires (1688), built on the very foundations of Champlain's trading post.

After all this walking we needed nourishment and from the many restaurants that line the cobbled streets we chose one with bright umbrellas on an elevated balcony over the street. A late, leisurely lunch with wine was most enjoyable before we boarded the ferry departing Place Royale for the crossing back to Levis and our drive on to Montréal. As we travelled we promised ourselves that we would stop in Québec City again and this surely is an efficient, time-saving way to do it. It had been a most rewarding three hours.

Directions: take exit 325N from Route 20 at Levis and go north to the river. Follow signs to the ferry. Return fare was \$5 and the ferries run every 30 minutes until 1800 hours and then on the hour until 0200. Parking within a block or two costs \$4 or \$5 a day.

*Archie Bower
Toronto, ON*

Staying in London, England

As everyone knows, hotel prices in London are very high, but I recently discovered that by searching some internet sites much more reasonable prices can be found.

I like to stay at a four-star hotel on the Cromwell Road in Kensington, London, but the hotel was getting so expensive I had stopped staying there. However, by searching in two sites on the net I was able to find a rate of £99 per night at the same hotel instead of the usual £229! I went ahead and booked through the web and encountered no problems whatsoever.

The site I reserved through is www.LondonTown.com and the other site worth visiting is www.LateRooms.com which covers other countries and cities.

One more tip if you're visiting London. The Heathrow Express train from Heathrow to Paddington Station in London is marvelous. It costs £13, runs every 15 minutes and takes a quarter of an hour station-to-station with no stops. Then a taxi from Paddington to my hotel in Kensington cost about £6.

And a reminder about those London Travel Cards. As I was staying in London for eight days I thought I would buy a Travel Card for a week rather than doing it day by day. But, on arriving at the ticket window, I discovered that I needed photo ID for the weekly pass. (Photos from one of the many booths you'll see are quite adequate.) But as I was in a hurry that day I settled for a day pass in zones 1 and 2 which cost £4.10. These zones cover all the major downtown part of London; if you wish to go further afield there are Travel Cards for additional zones. These Cards are well worth the price as they cover travel on buses and the underground all day. Enjoy all that London has to offer ... in any season!

*Carrie Toomey
Kingston, ON*

More on Timesharing

by Carrie Toomey of Kingston, ON

I was interested to read the new section on Timesharing in a recent edition of *TravelScoop*. We have been doing this for some time and thought readers might find something of interest in our experiences. Like Ronald Betty we belong to the Interval International group and have found them satisfactory, although the properties vary considerably which was pretty much what we had expected.

We purchased our first week in 1997 at Calabogie Peaks Resort in Ontario and, as the place was fairly new, had a year in which to purchase another week at a very advantageous price, which we did. It is possible to negotiate quite a bit if purchasing when the property is new, and there are also special incentives for new purchasers.

We didn't expect to use our two weeks at the resort and purchased with the idea that we would use our invested time to trade into properties abroad. I think that it is more sensible to purchase in your home country and thus avoid some very high prices (as we discovered on enquiring about properties elsewhere) and to take advantage of the Canadian laws and stable economy. The properties are re-saleable and having the timeshare in Canada avoids possible unpleasant surprises.

The timeshares we have since used are as follows, with comments about each.

Malta

In 1998 we went for one week to the Galaxy Holiday Club in Sliema. This property is part of a hotel, with the use of all its facilities such as pools, restaurants, etc. It is right in the middle of Sliema and just across the harbour from Valetta. Shops, buses and the sea are

within easy walking distance. Our apartment was spacious and airy, with a large bathroom and balcony. It was a very pleasant introduction to overseas timesharing.

Greece

In 1999 we used our two weeks in Crete at the Villeda Village, Analipsi, near Ierapetra, on the south coast of the island within easy driving distance of Heraklion. This was a medium-sized property with a beautiful beach close by, a large swimming pool and most helpful staff. The apartment itself was compact, but had a large balcony overlooking olive trees and the pool area. The village is small, but had all the shops and restaurants one could want, plus the most relaxed car

rental company! They were very willing to make up a week split into four sections, plus three separate days with a no-charge drop off at the airport ("just leave the keys under the seat"!)) It was a lovely area and our two weeks passed all too quickly.

Spain

In the year 2000 we went to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands, staying at the Oasis

Lanz Club in the Costa Tequise. I wrote about Lanzarote itself in the July/August 2001 edition of *TravelScoop*, but didn't say too much about the property. Our apartment was large and airy and overlooked the pool area. It was very comfortable and clean, with all the facilities one might need either in the complex itself or close by. This was a fairly large property but so arranged that it wasn't overwhelming in any way and, in fact, seemed rather private.

U.S.A.

In 2001 we split our two weeks by taking one week in



The pub at the Grand Vacation Club, Devon, England. The timeshare units are located in the rear. (Toomey)

the United States and the other in the South of France. The American property was the Acadia Village Resort in Ellsworth, Maine. The property was small, but being enlarged during our stay. The unit itself was large and comfortable, but there were few amenities in the complex itself. However, there were plenty of shops and restaurants a short drive or walk away. The Acadia National Park and the Bar Harbor area were close by and the whole region was well worth a visit.

France

The timeshare in the South of France was at Residence Cap Esterel, St. Raphael, and is owned by the Pierre et Vacances group. The place is simply enormous and when we were there in October most of the facilities were not operational, or else only at the weekends. Linens were handed to us on arrival to make up our own beds (and as I had injured my back in Paris this was not well received). And while the apartment itself was basically clean, the walls needed a good scrub where a succession of bugs had been squashed on them. Admittedly it was the end of the season, but we found the place far too big and not at all to our taste. Having said that, the surrounding

area is wonderful and with a car, if one is brave enough to drive, touring is spectacular. One thing we did like about this property (though others might not) is that the residents can bring their well-behaved dogs with them instead of subjecting them to kennels.

Canada

In 2002 we again split up our two weeks in different places and thought we ought to try our Calabogie Peaks itself at least once. Unfortunately we chose black fly season, which made hiking and walking in the woods unpleasant. However, we enjoyed visiting nearby small towns and nature spots and also went to Ottawa a couple of times. The apartment itself is very pleasant and the property is probably best in the winter time as it has a ski hill virtually outside the door. Building and upgrading is going on with an emphasis on making this more of a four-season resort.

England

Our second week was spent in England. England, Ireland and urban timeshares nearly everywhere are the hardest to obtain for an exchange, but by asking some questions when phoning in the requests for an exchange I feel it is always possible to come up with somewhere interesting. We finally selected the Grand Vacation Club at Woodford Bridge Country Club, Holsworthy, Devon. This property is in the countryside, with a very old pub as the main building with the timeshare properties attached and tucked in behind. Very nice accommodation; medium in size but quite adequate for two people. The pub itself had a restaurant and other eating areas as well as the bar, all with very pleasant and helpful staff. The surrounding countryside is wonderful. I know it well, having grown up

some 15 miles away and we both thoroughly enjoyed pottering about visiting familiar places, seaside towns and wonderful gardens. And we took a longer trip down to see the now-famous Eden Project near St. Austell (*it was used as a location in the new James Bond film – Ed*).

Of the above I would especially recommend Malta, Crete, Lanzarote and England. Interval International

has a huge amount of properties all over the world. One of the things we like about timesharing is visiting places we might not have gone to otherwise, such as Lanzarote which I hadn't even heard about before. We certainly feel we've seen more of the world because of our timeshare. Of course, to purchase a timeshare one needs to have some extra cash. This is not an inexpensive venture, and yearly upkeep fees are fairly high. However, the purchased week is re-saleable and it seems that whatever country is chosen one can expect a certain standard in accommodation. The brochures seem to be truthful and need reading carefully to see what would be most suitable for you. We found a rental car to be essential in all our destinations. So think about timesharing and see a little more of the world! 📖



Timeshare property at Cap Esterel, France (Toomey)

continued from page 1

La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, lies in an old volcano crater on the great high plain of the Andes. The airport is at an altitude of over 13,000 ft., the city centre almost 2,000 ft. lower. As the city is built down the sides of the crater, all the streets are steeply up or down hill. Arriving here is quite a shock to the system, and we are quite happy to have the first day at our leisure to begin the acclimatization process. The greatest appeal of the city lies in its authenticity.

Tourism is still a new phenomenon and the infrastructure of hotels and restaurants is limited. The population of the city is highly indigenous, many from the outlying rural areas. Women of almost all ages wear the traditional dress; full skirts over many petticoats, embroidered blouses and bowler hats. They carry their belongings, whether market produce or their infant children, bundled in colourful handwoven shawls knotted around their shoulders. A visit to the market reveals a colourful blend of clothing, fruits and vegetables including many of the thousands of varieties of potatoes grown on the Andes plains, and piles of coca leaves which the locals chew or brew into tea to alleviate the effects of the altitude. During our tour of the city, we visit churches begun by the Spaniards in 1540, the home of one of the founders of the Spanish city and the Gold Museum with some exquisitely made artefacts of pure gold. In the afternoon, we walk through the Valle de la Luna, the Valley of the Moon, a badlands of rock eroded into fantastic shapes just outside the city. We follow the music until we meet a wandering flautist in an orange poncho. Like the Pied Piper, he leads us through the rocky moon landscape.

The following day we travel 50 km by bus to visit the pre-Inca archeological site of Tijuanao. (Inca and pre-Inca names, spelled phonetically, may have several variants.) We admire the Sun Gate and its statue which is lit by the rising sun on the spring equinox, 21 September here. We learn of the symbolism of three animals: the serpent representing the spinal column

and the connection to the earth; the puma (jaguar) strength; the condor the spiritual side of man, the connection to the heavens. Here in this rarefied atmosphere, with very little rain, these structures of the 14th and 15th centuries are amazingly well-preserved.

Our fourth and final day in Bolivia takes us northward across the high plateau. From the bus windows we admire the snow-capped peaks of the distant mountains. Closer at hand, we see farmers struggling with old-fashioned methods to farm what appears to be very poor soil. Llamas and alpacas graze amongst the sheep. Lake Titicaca, one of the world's highest lakes,

seems a mirage in this brown and barren landscape. We cross a narrow strait to a rocky peninsula culminating in Copacabana, a pilgrimage town and a large draw for local tourists. The white Church of the Virgin gleams against the deep blue sky; inside all is white and silver and pale blue. The town square is surrounded with shops, there are many restaurants and new resort developments. Soon we leave our bus driver and local guide behind as we complete the exit procedures at Bolivian Customs, then walk across the border to Peruvian Customs.

As we continue along the shores of Lake Titicaca, but on the Peruvian side, we notice that the farms look more prosperous. We even see some old, but mechanized, equipment.

Green becomes the predominant colour. Our first night in Peru is spent in a newly-built hotel overlooking the lake in the village of Chiquito. Some of us go for a walk to see the two Inca faces carved into the rocks along the road which we had noticed from the bus. We meet villagers who greet us as we pass, two teen-aged boys who smile shyly, show us their homework, and accept the proffered chewing gum with thanks. This warm greeting is typical of the Peruvian indigenous peoples, whereas the Bolivians seem more taciturn. In the morning we board a boat which will take us to Taquile Island, three hours away. Life on this island has changed very little over the centuries. Everyone,



A Bolivian woman in traditional dress (van der Veen)

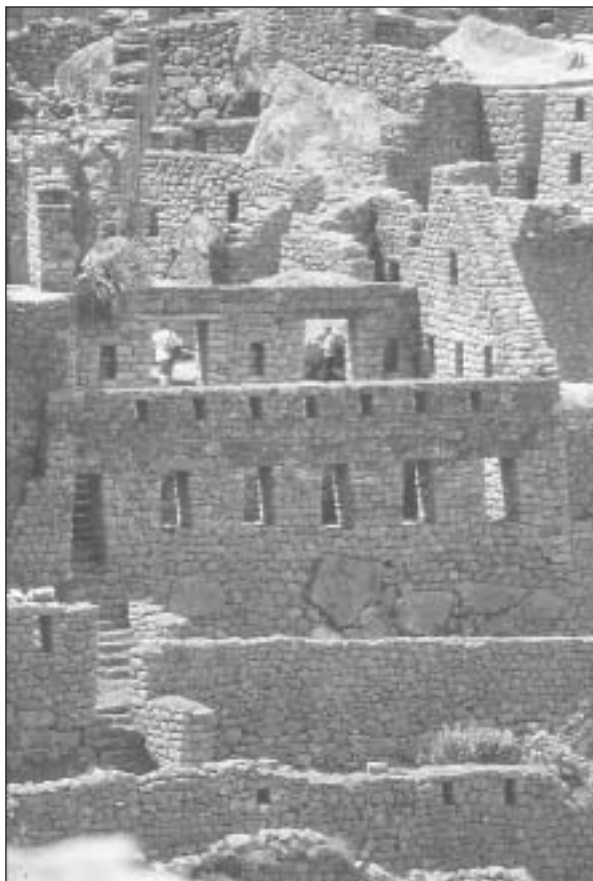
men, women and children, wear their native dress. Most of the island residents live in or near the one village, going out by day to work their fields. Many live in small, low, dark houses made of sticks and mud.

There are no hotels on the island. As tourism has developed in the area, the government has provided money for people to build additional rooms for tourist homestays. The family with whom we stayed have one of the larger guesthouses with several rooms and some facilities. There are modern toilets, for example, but as there is no running water, one uses a bucket from the rain barrel to flush them. There is also a large room for dining and group meetings. The daughter of the family does the cooking, her husband serves. As we walk into the village, we notice that the men are always knitting and the women weaving if they are not involved in domestic or farming chores. The people are friendly, yet they speak always in whispers which makes us feel very loud. In the village square, we see the clinic where a doctor comes weekly, we meet the mayor, we are invited to visit the village co-operative where most of our group buy knitted or woven goods. However, there is absolutely no pressure to buy, and the villagers join in the fun when all the married men in our group decide to pose for photos wearing the style of hat worn by bachelors. Many homes have small solar-powered generators which allow some light for the evening meal, but we are all abed immediately after dinner. In the morning we hear a radio. After breakfast, some of us hike to the highest point of the island, carrying with us a stone to place on the altar at the top. During the boat trip back most of us doze off in the sun. We stop at one of the floating reed islands, but this visit is very commercial. As our boat approaches, the people all run to uncover their display of handicrafts; there is a constant barrage of

“Look! Buy!”. Even the children tug at your arm to show a drawing they hope to sell. To be honest, I must say this is the only time in Peru that the locals would not accept a firm “No.”

It is a full day’s drive from Puno on Lake Titicaca to Cusco, the ancient Inca capital, for our first night’s stay. In the morning, we are off to the airport for a half hour flight into the jungle. We land at Puerto Maldonado in a torrential downpour. Fortunately the rain lets up as we wait to board the long motorized canoe that will take us up-river, two and a half hours, to our jungle lodge on the Tambopata River. The Pousada Amazonas is one of the new eco-lodges in this

still developing region of the Upper Amazon. This one, partially owned by the native community, has been built with some Canadian funding. The rooms are spacious, airy and open on one side to the jungle. I spend most of our free time lying in the hammock watching for wildlife. The beds have mosquito nets, each room has its en-suite bathroom (cold showers), and in the evening kerosene lamps are lit. The lounge and dining areas are spacious and open, with books on the jungle and its animals, a display of artefacts, and a small selection of items for sale. The only electricity on site is for the kitchen. Our first chore is to find boots of the right size in the racks outside each lodge building. Our first morning here we rise



Machu Picchu (van der Veen)

early to walk to the tower overlooking the forest canopy.

We watch the mist burn off and see some parrots and other birds in the distance. The chattering of monkeys accompanies us along the trail. After breakfast we walk to the clay lick where we watch six brightly-coloured macaws for an hour. An afternoon walk through the jungle to a giant kapok tree (the buttressing roots are higher than any of us) reveals birds, but-

terflies, beetles, and interesting plants. Our second day, we go up-river, then hike across to one of the oxbow lakes for almost two hours, floating along on a catamaran, admiring many colourful birds, but we have no luck in seeing the otters which inhabit the lake. An afternoon excursion takes us to a farm where we pick pineapples, papayas and limes. Three of us join one of our guides for a night walk where we see and hear several kinds of frogs and see one snake curled up asleep in a tree just over our heads. The next morning we head back down-river for our flight back into the mountains. It is 38° when we leave Puerto Maldonado, 21° when we arrive in Cusco for our second overnight. (Instead of the jungle tour, there is the option of hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. This is a demanding three-day trek for experienced hikers only. None of our group elected to do so.)

It is now Day 12 of our trip, and the moment I have awaited for forty years is about to arrive. We board the 6:00 a.m. train at Cusco station for the three-hour trip to Aguas Calientes, the village at the end of the line below Machu Picchu. Breakfast is served in this modern and comfortable train. We marvel at Inca terracing on the hillsides as we enter the Sacred Valley, see rope bridges crossing the river anchored in Inca rock structures and glimpse Inca ruins above us until at last we arrive. After settling in the delightful Machu Picchu Pueblo hotel with its lovely gardens and the sound of rushing water from the river, we take the bus up the 9 km of the sharpest switchback road we have ever seen to the legendary site. We have our tickets stamped at the gate house, walk up and around the bend, and there before us lies ... Machu Picchu, the lost city! To say it is exactly as pictured is one thing, but it is also much more once the third perspective has been added.

This incredibly beautiful city spreads over the mountain, but on all sides there is a steep drop to deep valleys that completely surround the site. Under a bright sun and cloudless sky, we follow our guide as he explains this marvel to us, the mystery of its origins, its rediscovery in 1911 by the American archaeologist, Hiram Bingham, the opening up of access in the late 20th century as tourism started to flourish. There are many other people here, but the site is vast enough that we never feel crowded. We have an hour of free time after our tour before taking the bus back down the mountain. And yet the adventure continues. A young boy dressed as an Inca courier runs down the hiking trail and greets us with a wave and a cry at every switchback. It is no surprise when he boards the bus as

we approach the village and we are quite happy to oblige; an unexpected bonus, he has earned his tip. The next morning we return to the lost city, now completely enshrouded in fog. We hike to the Sun Gate where trekkers on the Inca Trail get their first glimpse of the city.

For over an hour, we are quite content to wait here and watch as the fog lifts. At one moment we see nothing, the next we glimpse the river far below, then the city through the mist, then again clearly, until the next wave of fog rolls in. The experience is quite mystical, the panorama breath-taking. Finally, the skies clear and we begin our descent back to the city. We have another hour here to roam at will before we must return to Aguas Calientes for lunch, shopping for the inveterate shoppers, and the mid-afternoon return train to Cusco. I have realized my dream, and reality was everything I had dreamed and more. It is dark when we finally descend into Cusco and we admire the flood-lit town square from above.

Our third stay in Cusco gives us two full days to appreciate this lovely city and its surroundings. It is small enough that we feel safe wandering on our own. A tour of the city reveals that its most important structures are built on Inca foundations. The precision of the stonework never ceases to amaze us. This 15th century people, who did not know the wheel, cut massive stones, some weighing many tons, and moved them into place with joints so tight that not even a piece of paper can be inserted between the stones. One stone has 18 different angles cut to fit the adjoining stones perfectly. They used no mortar, yet the walls have withstood several centuries of earthquakes and seasonal changes. With a keen knowledge of geometry, they knew the strength of the trapezoid; doors, windows and walls all exhibit this shape. The effect is so perfect that the Spanish stonework above looks sloppy and amateurish, and shows cracks from earthquakes. One afternoon we visit the nearby sites: Sacsayhuaman, the House of the Sun, the largest Inca construction with stones weighing up to 300 tons; the sacrificial temple of Kenko; the holy fountain and natural spring of Tambo Machay.

Our final day in Cusco sees us return to the Sacred Valley, by bus this time, to visit the outlying villages of Písac and Ollantaytambo. (It is also possible to catch the train to Machu Picchu from here rather than from Cusco.) The modern village of Ollantaytambo adjoins the Inca ruins and makes use of the same system of canals as its water source. The village is built on the

ancient Inca model with four or more houses surrounding a central courtyard. We visit one of these houses and note the blend of cultures. It is one large room with guinea pigs (a food source) raised in one corner, an altar with a candle and the darkened skulls of ancestors in a niche. In all of these places we find local Indians, mostly women and children, and some men, in their colourful traditional dress, happy to pose for photos for a few small coins. Some sing for us or illustrate their back-loom weaving. Everywhere too are entrepreneurial types selling their wares. Unfortunately there are so many of them that we wonder how anyone can make a living; the small number of potential buyers forces them to offer lower and lower prices in an attempt to get one's custom. But they are not too persistent, they do accept "No, thanks", and they are polite and friendly. Yes, there is some begging, there is high unemployment, but no one seems to lack for food and clothing. We saw no signs of the extreme poverty one sees in parts of Africa and the Asian sub-continent.

As our adventure nears its end, we spend a day flying to Lima, then on a bus riding south along the barren coast to a seaside resort in the town of Paracas. From here the next morning we take a short boat excursion to the wildlife refuge of the Ballestas Islands. Sometimes called the Peruvian Galapagos, the islands are home to thousands of sea birds, terns, gannets, pelicans and penguins among others, also sea lions. The cold Humboldt current from Antarctica makes the area rich in food sources for these animals. From the boat we see the Candelabro etched into the sand dunes, an ancient marker of unknown origin visible for miles from sea. After lunch at a seaside restaurant, we board our bus again for the drive further south to Ica and another resort hotel in the dunes. From here we take the short flight over the Nazca Lines, the remnants of a civilization that dwelt along the coast over 2000 years ago. No one has yet explained how or why these lines, visible only from the air, were etched into the desert. It is difficult to photograph, but quite easy to see the images of the condor, the hummingbird, the monkey, the flower, the "astronaut" and others. Another long bus ride back to Lima brings us to the end of the trip, our farewell dinner and departure for home.

Now a caveat about geography and health. We spent 12 of our 18 days at an altitude greater than 9000 feet. Altitude sickness is a real possibility. Anyone with heart, blood pressure or breathing difficulties must discuss this trip with their doctor and take this

factor into serious account. All hotels and restaurants serve coca tea, which is said to help with altitude sickness. Most tourist class hotels have oxygen available. There are also medications that one can take which are available locally, but is this really recommended if you are already on medication for hypertension or heart disease? Visit a health clinic to check about recommended inoculations or anti-malarial medication. (We had shots for hepatitis, typhoid and yellow fever, took malaria pills, and of course checked that our tetanus shots were still current.)

We used the services of Eldertreks, a Toronto-based company offering adventure travel around the world for those over 50. They can be contacted at 416 588 5000 or 1 800 741 7956, www.eldertreks.com. Their maximum group size is 16, we were 13, eight from Ontario and five from the United States. The trip was all-inclusive except for international flights from home. The company will find flights for you, but we found that our local travel agent was able to get us a better price. Hotels were all three star or better. Food was plentiful (we ate too much!) and usually very well-prepared, although there was not always much variety. We enjoyed folklore shows in several restaurants. Except for shopping money, the only need for cash was for tips for the drivers, local guides and our tour leader. All local guides were excellent, knowledgeable and with a good command of English. 📖

Ted & Judy van der Veen are avid travellers and frequent contributors to TravelScoop. They live in Campbellville, ON.

TravelScoop readers will have noticed that The Travel Society now also offers a trip to Ecuador (including the Galapagos), Machu Picchu and to Kapawi Lodge on the Amazon (which is not the same lodge as Ted and Judy van der Veen stayed in).

Our first participants have just returned from the Galapagos and the Amazon and have reported that it was wonderful. Galapagos was everything they had expected and the stay in the Amazon was "unforgettable ... rustic but so fascinating, with a nighttime alligator-watching canoe excursion being the highlight."

For details of these trips please turn to page 21 - Ed.

A Fair and Fragile Place

by Ann Wallace

Calling all bird watchers, lighthouse lovers and aviation buffs! Especially – this year – aviation buffs! There’s a long, fragile strip of constantly changing and shifting land waiting for you. It’s the Outer Banks of North Carolina and, one hundred years ago this year, an event occurred there that would change the world for ever.

The event took place at 10:35 a.m. on 17 December 1903. The episode lasted for twelve seconds. During those brief seconds two Ohio brothers rose from the sands of Kill Devil Hills near the village of Kitty Hawk into the history books. They were Orville and Wilbur Wright and it was on that day that the first manned, heavier-than-air flight was recorded.

“They have done it! Damned if they ain’t flew!” a witness is reported to have said. But the international press didn’t share his enthusiasm. Around the world, journalists ignored the event, or relegated the story to a few inches on an inside page, unaware that a new age had dawned. Only the *Virginian-Pilot*, published in Norfolk, placed the story on their front page, declaring “Flying Machine Soars 3 Miles in Teeth of High Wind Over Sand Hills and Waves at Kitty Hawk on Carolina Coast [with] No Balloon Attached to Aid It”.

It was in 1899 that the young Ohio Wright Brothers started searching for a site for their flying experiments. They learned from the U.S. Weather Bureau that Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, might offer the right combination of wind velocity and terrain.

Answering an inquiry made by Wilbur Wright, Captain Bill Tate, Postmaster of Kitty Hawk replied, “This in my opinion would be a fine place; our winds are always steady ... If you decide to try your machine here and come, I will take pleasure in doing all I can for your convenience, success and pleasure and, I assure you, you will find a hospitable people when you come among us.”



The plaque and - in the distance - the official memorial honouring Wilbur and Orville Wright (Wallace)

That warm Southern welcome holds true to this day, as visitors continue to flock to the Outer Banks. They come for the steady wind so loved by windsurfers and – the new sport – kite sailing or kite boarding, for fishing trips, to take a hang-gliding lesson on the high dunes of Jockey’s Ridge State Park, for the long, long dune-bordered beaches alive with shore birds and to explore the fascinating history of the lighthouses as well, of course, as the Wright brothers’ story. A long road – Hwy. 158, which becomes 12 – runs the length of the Outer Banks, passing through commercial strips that are not pretty, as well as long deserted stretches of National Seashore.

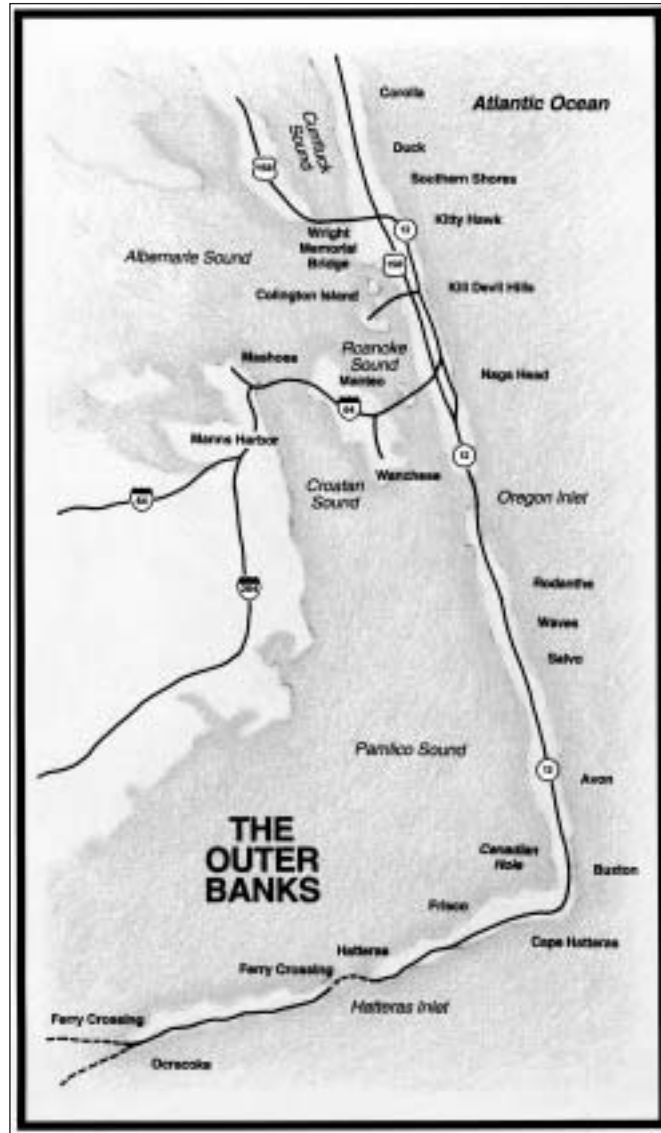
But I haven’t finished with the flying brothers yet.

The Wright Brothers National Memorial is a “must” on any visit to the Banks. Even if you’re not an aviation buff, you’ll be intrigued by this historic story, told through exhibits and a full-scale reproduction of the 1903 flying machine in the site’s Visitor Center and in the brothers’ reconstructed camp buildings. On the site you’ll also find the official memorial atop Big Kill

Devil Hill as well as a granite boulder marking the spot where the plane left the ground and numbered markers indicating the distance of the first 120 ft flight and the three subsequent, and longer, ones made on the same day. The fourth flight covered 852 ft in 59 seconds.

The brothers had extended a neighbourly invitation to the residents of Kitty Hawk to be present for the first attempts to fly in their powered machine. Only five persons responded: three life savers, a resident of the nearby old town of Manteo

and a young man who happened to be in the vicinity of the brothers' camp that big day. If only the brothers could see the crowds that are expected to attend the 100th Anniversary of Flight celebrations to be held 13 – 17 December this year, as well as all the events that have been planned in their honour throughout the whole year: a special St. Patrick's Day Parade, a Wright Brothers Road Rally, a Women in Aviation History Program, an Aviation World's Fair, an Antique Airplane Exhibition, a Symphony of Flight performance, a train and boat trip retracing the Wrights' journey from their home in Dayton, Ohio, to Kitty Hawk and even the unveiling of a new hybrid rose: the rich red First Flight Rose that will be on sale on the Outer Banks throughout the year. The huge December celebration will be centred on, but not limited to, the grounds of the Wright Brothers Memorial, where exhibits and programmes will feature "Life on the Outer Banks at the Turn of the Century", "The Brothers as Engineers", "Glider Experiments" and additional topics, as well as aviation flyovers and other events. Normal admission to this memorial site is \$3 per person or \$5 per vehicle (all prices U.S.) although special arrangements will be in place for the forthcoming big events (for a start ...



the site's car park will not be large enough to accommodate the expected visitors).

There's an excellent official "Wright Stuff" website at www.celebrate100.org and the Outer Banks Visitor's Bureau is an active marketing and promotional agency for the region (Dare County). Accommodations are taking reservations now for December, so don't delay if you would like to be there. The Outer Banks offers hotels, motels, camping, bed

and breakfasts and a vast array of rental homes. To find accommodations, order brochures and to find the answers to all of your travel needs contact the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau at 1 877 298 4373 or www.outerbanks.org Free Getaway Cards are available for off-season savings in accommodation, restaurants, attractions etc., and each year Attractions Passes lessen the cost of visiting all the historic sites.

"On the edge of the world you will find a place of enchantment." So starts the video at the excellent Outer Banks Visitor Center located just as you leave the Wright Memorial Bridge, on Hwy. 158 which links the

Banks with the mainland. Well, I must warn you that it isn't all enchanted. Rampant development has taken place, mainly between Kitty Hawk and the Nag's Head area. There are no high-rises, but cheek-by-jowl, multi-storey holiday homes build on stilts to both afford a glimpse of the ocean over the sand dunes and to protect the properties in the event of flooding. Then

there's the strip the locals call "French fry alley", offering not only a representative of what must be almost every fast-food outlet on the planet but also go-carts, mini-golf, video stores and so on. I'm sure you get the picture. But drive away from this area and things change radically.

There's still development in the form of fancy housing sub-divisions to be found to the north and south of busy Nag's Head (the north being 'fancier', with villa-style homes and boutique-filled villages such as Duck), but there are also large tracts of land preserved as State Parks and Wildlife Refuges (though not large enough for avid conservationists who would like to stop all further development on the banks). In a few areas on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands one is also allowed to drive on the beach – and many do, especially the region's many fisherfolk – but these areas are clearly signed on the appropriate beach access ramps and people obey the rules, so it's still possible to find miles and miles of beaches that are free of vehicles, where one can walk and enjoy the antics of the countless shore birds scurrying daintily ahead of the surf.

A word about the beach driving. This is a practice I'm not really in favour of, but I should point out that it is well regulated on the Outer Banks (with the authorities carefully watching for turtle nests, etc.) and the beaches are so vast that those who don't approve do not need to go near vehicular areas. Those who do drive on the beach mainly do so in order to fish; their vehicles are well-equipped and it seems popular to line up, park and spend the day here with the family. It's also an excellent way to access the beach if you have someone handicapped with you. At no time did I see reckless driving on the beaches. Four-wheel-drive cars are available for rent from Norfolk Airport.

The area from South Nag's Head to Hatteras Inlet,

70 miles away, is called the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. It covers 30,000 acres and includes many national and historic attractions. As you set out to explore you'll drive on the soaring, three-mile-long bridge over Oregon Inlet, you'll pass watersports and fishing outfitters, you'll spy funky seafood restaurants and old bars frequented by folks with tall sea stories and tales of 'the one that got away'. Everything is as casual as can be, with 'shirt, shorts and shoes' the only rule to remember in restaurants. There are good grocery stores in each of the towns, too, for self-caterers.

And, of course, in this unique geographical location, you'll see lighthouses and life-saving stations, symbols of the area's long history of concern for people in distress. In fact the treacherous waters that lie off the coast of the Outer Banks bear the grim name Graveyard of the Atlantic and the area is full of ghosts and terrible seafaring stories. It is estimated over 2,300 ships have been lost along this shore since colonial days, but without the lighthouses, live-saving stations and the islanders who were always willing to lend a hand, the loss of life would have been even greater than it was. Some of the lighthouses can be climbed, while the museums and gift stores, usually located in the old lighthouse keepers' quarters, are well worth a visit. Not only do the museums have dramatic stories to tell, but their shops contain a

good selection of unusual books: books about women lighthouse keepers, books about gallant lifesaving attempts, books about the area's part in the arena of the Civil and World Wars, and books on the area's unique wildlife. The famous Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is of special interest as this tallest brick beacon on the American coast – 208 ft – was relocated away from the encroaching sea in 1998, a remarkable engineering feat that is well documented in the museum there.

Time now to briefly mention all the birds. The



A reconstruction of the Wright brothers' camp kitchen at the Memorial Site. Note the sleeping section in the rafters where one man slept, alongside his brother (Wallace)

Outer Banks is located midway on the Atlantic Flyway and is a haven for more than 265 species. Spring and Fall, the times of migration, are especially rewarding. The Pea Island Wildlife Refuge, on the north end of Hatteras Island is a renowned birding area, with a visitor centre, observation platforms, regular guided bird walks and excellent printed birding information.

While the towns and villages on the Banks south of Nag's Head, such as Avon, Buxton, Frisco and Hatteras, tend to be wind-beaten, sand-between-the-toes kinds of places, the historic town of Manteo on Roanoke Island, just five minutes' drive across the bridges of the Sound from Nags Head, offers quite a different atmosphere. Gracious clapboard homes with white fences stand under old trees, lining pretty streets and the village contains trendy ice-cream parlours and fancy gift shops.

I do not use the word 'historic' lightly here. Roanoke Island is the site of the first English settlement in America and there are plenty of attractions here celebrating the fact. There's a Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, an *Elizabeth II* (a 69-ft square-rigged sailing vessel representative of those that brought the first colonists to the New World), the Elizabethan Gardens created by the Garden Club of North Carolina, a Festival Park and Museum, the North Carolina Aquarium and an outdoor drama – the Pulitzer-prize winning *The Lost Colony* – to mark the events that took place here. The drama, running since 1937 apart from four war years when the coast was blacked-out, has a history of its own as "America's Oldest Outdoor Drama" and I was sorry that, being there out of the summer season, I did not get to witness it. Virginia Dare, who gave her name to Dare County, was the first English child born in America and the fate of the "lost colony" into which she was born has intrigued many throughout America's history.

It was 1584 when Queen Elizabeth granted Sir

Walter Raleigh a patent to discover territory in the New World and, later that year, a voyage captained by Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe set sail and, three months later, landed on Roanoke Island. Barlowe wrote home to England about the beautiful and fertile island and the "friendly natives". More ships, containing over 500 men, left for Roanoke "in Virginia" the following year and in 1587 a third expedition of 116, this time comprised of women and children too, set sail intending to establish a permanent colony. They arrived too late to plant crops, so Governor John White returned to England for supplies and, during his absence, his daughter, Eleanor Dare, gave birth to Virginia. War with Spain prevented Governor White from returning for three years, and when he finally arrived once again

on the shores of Roanoke Island it was to find that the colony had disappeared without a trace. It wasn't until 1607 that England established a permanent foothold in the New World at Jamestown, Virginia, but it is Roanoke Island, North Carolina, that lays claim to being "America's Beginning".



The Elizabethan Gardens, Roanoke Island (Wallace)

The story of this lost colony is also told at the fine museum in Festival Park, where the 45-minute introductory movie *The Legend of Two Paths* is of special interest to Canadians as the actors are mainly First Nations performers from Canada. And take a tour of the *Elizabeth II* with an entertaining costumed guide. The Aquarium is another venue that should not be missed. The theme there is the waters of the Outer Banks revealed through a drop of rain falling in a swamp and eventually becoming part of the ocean. Of great delight to children is the diver in a large fish-filled tank, behind 6 inches of acrylic 'glass', who answers questions posed in chalk on slates! And when I was there, an enormous amount of interest was being shown in an osprey family that was nesting on a platform in the grounds. Their little home had been invaded by a "bird's-eye-view-camera" and the images were

being transmitted into the museum to the delight of all. And garden lovers will enjoy a visit to the beautiful Elizabethan Gardens here, dedicated to the monarch who encouraged the expeditions to the New World

If you favour accommodation in quaint inns and B&B's Manteo is the place for you. There's a wide choice and some are listed below.

A daytrip to Ocracoke Island is a 'must' during your Outer Banks sojourn. Free car ferries leave from Hatteras regularly for the 40-minute ride, on which you will be accompanied by an honour guard of gulls who will expect a share of your picnic! You can pick up a good sandwich at the store by the ferry dock in Hatteras, or you can plan to arrive in Ocracoke village in time to choose one of its many little restaurants in which to pause for lunch. The village is a 12-mile drive from the ferry dock on a fine straight road that passes pine forests, sand dunes, marshes and pretty inlets. The island is 16 miles long and an average half-mile wide. The majority of Ocracoke, with the exception of Ocracoke Village, is part of the National Seashore, and its beaches are consistently ranked among the best in the United States.

In Ocracoke itself you'll find a picturesque fishing village of about 800 residents that has a very special atmosphere. Drive right through, keeping Silver Lake Harbor on your left, and you'll find an enormous free car park adjacent to the Visitor Center. Then you can explore on foot: there's another lighthouse here, a museum, a British Cemetery containing the graves of four Royal Navy Sailors who were torpedoed offshore here in 1942, narrow streets lined with pretty houses and gardens, and lots of history that the friendly locals love to share if you pause to chat. There are many quaint places to rest your head if you'd like to stay overnight in Ocracoke; again a few are listed below.

Yes, the Outer Banks is an unusual destination. It offers countless memorable and very relaxed experiences against a backdrop of unusual natural beauty (as long as you venture away from the highly-developed

areas). You'll glimpse a map or a globe one day after you have left; you'll see this fine but easily-distinguishable strip of barrier islands along the edge of the eastern seaboard and you'll say to yourself with simple satisfaction, "I've been there."

Some details ...

Getting there: Travellers can reach the Outer Banks via bridges just north of Kitty Hawk or via Roanoke Island, while a soaring bridge over the wide Oregon Inlet provides access to Hatteras Island from the north. If you plan to fly and rent a car, Norfolk, Virginia, about 90 miles away, is your closest airport. If you are touring in the U.S. and approaching the Banks from the south you can take advantage of the many ferries (some of them free) that link the islands with the main-

land. The tourism literature is full of travel information.

Accommodation: all along the Banks there is an incredibly wide choice of rental properties, especially out of the high summer season. Unless you like to be in the middle of the action and don't mind staying in a location closely surrounded by other properties, avoid the Kitty Hawk/Nags Head area. The areas to

the south are far nicer. Either way, you will have to cover a few miles to see all the Outer Banks attractions. Wherever you choose, prices are higher for water-side properties. On the ocean side, living rooms are usually on the top floor of tall 'cottages' so the inhabitants can enjoy a view of the ocean over the high sand dunes. I prefer the Sound side, which offers gentler scenery, calm water and, of course, the sunset. But wherever you decide, you can be pretty sure of excellent facilities in the house of your choice. The internet is an excellent source for these properties. Efficient Sun Realty will send a comprehensive rental guide with a map indicating the locations of their over 1,300 privately-owned properties if you call 1 800 334 4745 or you can view all the properties at www.sunrealtync.com Then, when you arrive on the Banks, they have six locations to serve you with linens,



Roanoke Island Inn, Manteo (wallace)

keys, advice and so on. A similar service is offered by Hatteras Realty at 1 800 428 8372, www.hatterasrealty.com Many of these rental cottages are large and are owned by Americans for big-family vacations or rented for family reunions. The cost of sharing a large one with family and friends can work out very reasonably. But smaller properties, and condominiums, are available too ... just browse the brochure or the website closely. They give all accommodation details, whether there's a pool, whether pets are allowed and so on.

If, perhaps, your planned visit is too short for a rental, or if you don't wish to self-cater and you'd like a B&B in historic **Manteo** I can recommend **The White Doe Inn B&B**, an 1896 home just a block from the village. This inn is open all year. Tel: 1 800 473 6091, www.whitedoeinn.com, prices from \$135.

Another gracious property, this one waterside, is the **Roanoke Island Inn**, which is closed during the winter. Tel: 1 877 473 5511, www.roanokeislandinn.com, prices from \$118. This property has been in the same family for over a hundred years and it looks very inviting.

Down on **Ocracoke Island** I was warmly greeted at **The Castle on Silver Lake B&B** and shown around the property that offers rooms with old furniture and harbour views as well as self-catering courtyard villa suites. Rooms from \$119. Tel: 1 800 471 8848, www.thecastlebb.com

Nearby, the sprawling old **Island Inn & Dining Room** offers rooms for the more budget conscious. Call 1877 456 3466 or visit www.ocracokeislandinn.com and see what the out-of-season rates of about \$64 will bring you.

Many other properties along the whole length of the Outer Banks are listed and, it seems, accurately described in the guide book mentioned below.

Food: you'll find lots of family-style restaurants serving chowders, oysters, crab cakes, fish, buckets of shrimps and so on all along the Outer Banks. Most are very informal. There are a few slightly fancier places. One of these is over-50-year-old Owen's on Hwy.12 in Nag's Head – one of the oldest restaurants on the Banks – where the food is inventive and delicious. Reservations recommended at 252 441 7309.

And for *the* oldest eatery on the Banks, find Sam & Omies near the junction of routes 158 and 12, South Nag's Head, for an enormous breakfast originally intended to set seafaring folk up for a long day on the water.

Climate: In my opinion Spring and Fall are the best

times to visit the Banks, when the summer crowds have gone and the weather is pleasant. I've been in March, on a press invitation, when Nature did a flip-flop and turned my first few quite hot days back almost to chilly winter overnight. But I heard that by April temperatures should be in the high sixties F. Then I returned for a family vacation, renting a cottage Sound-side in Frisco over Canadian Thanksgiving which, with temperatures in the low seventies F., was perfect for windsurfing, picnics on the beach and sight-seeing. There's often a breeze which, along with the wide but calm Sound, makes this a perfect area for windsurfers. In fact, so many Canadians head down to windsurf here that there's even a cove in Buxton that's officially called Canadian Hole. Every day that the wind is "up" you'll see lots of Canadian license plates ... especially from Quebec and Ontario. You'll also see sports and fishing outfitters all along the highway, and if you'd like to try your hand at the exciting new sport of kite boarding call in at Real Kiteboarding in Buxton and arrange for a few lessons. (See www.realkiteboarding.com.)

Drama Tickets: for advance tickets to *the Lost Colony* (nightly except Sunday in June, July and August) call 252 473 3414, www.thelostcolony.org Best seats are \$20.

Guide Book: an invaluable guide to exploring the region is the Insiders' Guide *North Carolina's Outer Banks* which surely contains every fact available on the area. By Linda Lauby, E.M. Corsa and Karen Bachman it's published by The Globe Pequot Press at US\$16.95 for 474 fact-filled pages. www.insiders.com

Information: those details again of the efficient Outer Banks Visitors Bureau: 1 877 298 4373, www.outerbanks.org A vast amount of tourism literature is produced on the Outer Banks. 📖



Travel Digest

Britain

If you are off to Britain, let some British celebrities guide you to some hidden corners you might otherwise not discover. Available in British bookshops is a volume entitled *English Country Lanes*, edited by Elisabeth Chidsey (pb. £19.95) wherein such people as actors Jeremy Irons, Sir Michael Caine and the late Dudley Moore reveal their favourite country-lane walks. Caine describes **Coombe End**, which runs alongside the River Thames in **Oxfordshire** as “a glorious, gold, carefree lane ... wherever I was in the world my thoughts always returned there.”

Are you an orchid lover? The **Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew**, just outside central London, will stage an orchid festival from 15 February – 16 March, supported by the Singapore Botanic Gardens, which is to supply 15,000 of the exotic blooms. For details visit www.kew.org

Events throughout Britain this year will mark the 400 years since the death of **Queen Elizabeth I**. An exhibition at Elizabeth’s birthplace – **Greenwich Palace, London**, alongside the **National Maritime Museum**, from 1 May to 14 September – will be the greatest collection of personal items, paintings and other relics linked with the monarch ever assembled. For details visit www.nmm.ac.uk. And some of the five locations that comprise the Historic Royal Palaces – the **Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace, Banqueting House** and

Kew Palace – will be staging events to celebrate Elizabeth I and her time. Visit www.hrp.org.uk for full details.

Canada

Accolades for Canada at British Airways’ ‘Tourism for Tomorrow’ Awards announced in London at the end of November last year. The **Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre**, a 20 minute drive north of **Winnipeg**, was awarded “Best Environmental Experience”. The Centre is a joint project of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Government of Manitoba. Bob Laidler, General Manager of the Centre, who attended the ceremony said he considers the award “the Oscar of ecotourism”. The Centre welcomes 200,000 people a year to its trails, observation mounds, viewing blinds and recreational possibilities dedicated to fostering knowledge of the values of wetland ecosystems. For more information on the Centre call 204 467 3000 or visit www.ducks.ca/ohmic And for full details of all British Airways’ awards visit www.britishairways.com/tourism/index.shtml

There’s a new **BC** website designed especially for skiers this season. If you’re thinking of hitting the slopes in the west visit www.HelloBC.com/ski

Skiers who live in the Toronto area may be interested to know that this winter they can catch a flight with a new charter service called FlyTremblant to, of course, **Québec’s Mont Tremblant**. Flights on a 48 passenger Dash-7 will travel from and to Toronto Island Airport on Thursday and

Sunday evenings for the 90-minute flight. Ultimate Ski Vacations are offering packages using this flight. Ask your agent for their brochure, or visit www.FlyTremblant.com

For a variety of winter getaway packages (not necessarily sporting ones) in Ontario visit the **Ontario Backroads & Getaways** website at www.ontariocanadatravel.com

A strange and important exhibition is being staged at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Québec until 1 September 2003 (and thereafter at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary). It’s **The Mysterious Bog People: Rituals and Sacrifice in Ancient Europe**, the first-ever international exhibition of significant archaeological finds from European bogs, which includes the oldest preserved wheel, the remains of an ancient temple and the Pesse wooden dugout canoe, the oldest known boat in the world, which has been carbon dated to between 8,040 and 7,510 B.C. The bogs of ancient times covered vast expanses of northwestern Europe and have yielded many treasures and the exhibition literature promises “archaeology, mystery and discovery at their best”. The exhibition has already been staged in Germany and will travel to the Netherlands after its tour in North America. For more details visit www.civilization.ca or call 1 800 555 5621.

Editor Ann recently had the pleasure of meeting Anne Fraser who, together with forester and botanist Dr Marc Bell (who started the Environmental Studies Programme at the University of Victoria, BC), plans a small selection of travel study and nature field trips every

year. These include 'Autumn Explorations at Yellow Point Lodge, Ladysmith, Vancouver Island' (now in its fifteenth year), 'Environmental Explorations at Pacific Rim Park from Middle Beach Lodge, Tofino', and 'The Rockies and Alpine Meadows, Rivers and Glaciers' from the Banff Centre for the Arts'. The lodges, located in glorious surroundings, offer "crackling log fires and home-style cooking" together with outstanding naturalist experiences in the woods, mountains and along the coast. The brochure will be ready soon and Anne would love to talk to any *TravelScoop* subscribers who call her in Calgary at 403 247 4161

Germany

Looking ahead to summer, opera lovers will like to know that Munich will be celebrating 350 years of opera from 27 June – 31 July with a variety of performances and concerts, including a joint concert with the Israel Philharmonic and Bavarian State Orchestra under the baton of Zubin Mehta. For lots more information on Germany contact

the Tourist Office at 1 877 315 6237 or visit www.germany-tourism.de and www.visits-to-germany.com

Holland

Idyll, Ltd., the company that offers "Untours" has two specials for the winter. One is US\$999 per person for a 14-day stay in beautiful, canal-laced Leiden, Holland. This figure includes round-trip airfare from New York, Newark or Boston, 14 days in a fully-furnished apartment, a 10-day Holland Rail Companion Pass and Untours' pre-trip guidance (their local support team are not available in winter). The Dutch Winter Untour is available for arrivals before 26 February 2003. For full details call 1 888 868 6871 or visit www.untours.com. The company's other winter/spring offer is detailed under "Spain" below.

Spain

How about two weeks in an Andalusian farm house? This special can be yours for US\$1,429 per person, double, for arrivals between 26 February and 26 March. Prices fall for larger groups as many of the accommodations are larger farm-

houses (e.g. US\$1,146 per person for a group of four). This packages includes the 14 nights' accommodation, one night in a 4-star Madrid hotel, a 2-week car rental with Hertz, transatlantic flights to Malaga from New York or Boston (other SWISS departure cities available at additional cost), some on-site activities such as a paella dinner and an olive oil factory tour, local support and orientation. This area of Spain is know for its mountainous bueauty picturesque vil-lages and proximity to Cordoba and Granada, both of which are within easy day-trip range. Contact details under "Holland" above.

U.S.A.

For museum and theatre lovers, winter is a good time for a getaway to New York. And from now until 31 March you can take advantage of the city's "Paint the Town" winter travel savings: hotel/show packages and lots of discounts on attractions, museums, restaurants and shopping. Accommodation is offered in three hotel levels ranging from affordable to luxury. For your copy of the *Paint the Town Guide* call 1 800 NYC GUIDE or visit www.nycvisit.com

We have a file listing several single travellers who wish to take a Travel Society trip next year. Destinations include: China, Australia, Turkey and Galapagos.

If you would like to share with another member please contact us. We will put you in touch with each other so that you can chat - or meet - and see if you would be compatible.

Call 416 926 2500, ex.25 or 1 877 926 2500

How about giving a subscription to *TravelScoop* as a gift when birthdays come around this year? Call us and we can arrange it for you without delay.

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members and their friends.

NEW

Galapagos Islands and Ecuador

with options to Kapawi Lodge in the Amazon and Machu Picchu, Peru

Each tour is limited to 20 people

14 days departing 18 February, 18 March, 22 April 14 October & 4 November 2003

The Travel Society is proud to be able to offer its members an outstanding trip to some of the world's most spectacular destinations. Who hasn't dreamed of cruising to the Galapagos Islands and seeing wildlife as Darwin witnessed it? Think of the unique adventure you will enjoy, of the stories you will have to tell and the photographs you will take! You will spend a week aboard your first-class 20-passenger ship, taking daily shore excursions to a variety of the islands with experienced naturalists in groups of no more than 10 people per guide.

But of course there's more to Ecuador than the Galapagos. On this tour you will also visit Quito, Calderon (where you'll stay in one of the oldest haciendas in Ecuador) and Cotacachi. You'll travel through spectacular countryside with mountains, lakes and colourful Indian communities ... whose markets you will visit.

The optional extensions to this trip are equally exciting. Spend four nights in the Amazon's premier luxury ecological lodge – the magical paradise know as Kapawi – and experience the river and the rainforest up close. Machu Picchu in Peru is probably also on your wish list and we are offering a 4-day trip there too. You can travel from Quito to Lima and then on to Cuzco for a visit to this breathtaking Lost City of the Incas. We'll take care of all the travel details. All you have to do is marvel and enjoy!

PRICES INCLUDE AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto	\$7,476.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$7,476.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$7,797.00 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$7,797.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$7,394.00 pp/dbl

GREAT ADD-ONS INCLUDING AIR:

Kapawi - from all departure points	\$1,680.00 pp/dbl
Machu Picchu - : Toronto	\$1,642.00 pp/dbl
When departing from : Ottawa, Montreal	\$1,642.00 pp/dbl
: Vancouver, Calgary	\$1,547.00 pp/dbl
: Halifax	\$1,694.00 pp/dbl

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip air transportation
- All domestic air transportation
- All accommodation
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Admissions to all sites
- Expert Galapagos guides
- Transfers & baggage handling
- Islands Park Entrance Fee (US100)

The Kingdom of Thailand

with optional Angkor Wat (Cambodia) pre-tour and Pattaya post-tour extensions

17 days departing 21 April & 20 October 2003

"Thailand is magical." So say the increasing number of travellers who journey to this exotic land, a land of majestic palaces, ornate temples, quaint cities, beautiful landscapes and charming, gentle people. Come with The Travel Society and over 14 memorable days we'll show you bustling Bangkok, the floating market and legendary canals of Damnoen Saduak, the Bridge on the River Kwai at Kanchanaburi, Ayutthaya – Thailand's ancient capital, the cool hills and forests of Chiang Mai with their Hill Tribes and working elephants and so much more. You'll shop for unique items, enjoy a Thai cooking class, witness cultural shows, take river trips, visit museums AND still have plenty of time at leisure to follow your own interests.

However, before your arrival in Thailand, you may like to enjoy a unique experience in Cambodia where you'll visit fascinating Angkor Wat. You'll view the Wats and Terraces at sunset and spend a day among the fascinating temple structures that formed the former capital and religious centre of the Khmer Empire.

And an optional post-tour will take you to relax at Pattaya – known as the Riviera of Thailand, where you can enjoy exquisite tropical gardens, a visit to the Mini Siam miniature display of Thai heritage and a catamaran cruise as well as the inviting beach. This trip is scheduled for Spring and Fall, 2003. Give us a call ... we'll add you to the list of those interested and send a full itinerary and applicable prices.

PRICES INCLUDE AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg & Montreal	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver & Calgary	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$3,100.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$3,560.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$4,095.00 pp/dbl

GREAT ADD-ONS:

Angkor Wat	\$919.00 pp/dbl - plus air
Pattaya	\$839.00 pp/dbl - plus air

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip transpacific and domestic air
- All domestic flights
- Canadian domestic air fares
- Fully escorted by knowledgeable tour guides
- All transfers
- All sightseeing tours, boat trips and fees to parks & sites

Please call **The Travel Society** 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for *Travel Society* members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members and their friends.

NEW

Copper Canyon & Guadalajara

9 days departing 14 March & 11 April 2003

We are offering a new 9-day tour to the Copper Canyon, together with a stay in Mexico's wonderful city of Guadalajara. The Copper Canyon is four times larger than the Grand Canyon, and you'll enjoy a journey that is considered by many to be the world's most exciting train trip, with its 87 tunnels, 39 bridges and uncountable spectacular views. You'll meet the people, stay in unique accommodations and explore the present and the past in this astonishing region.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,245 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$3,245 pp/dbl
Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg	\$3,460 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$600 (Sharing can be arranged.) Taxes extra.

Please call for prices from other departure cities

Your tour includes:

- All air transportation on Mexicana
- Canadian domestic air
- 8 nights first class accommodation
- All transfers,
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All train trips and tours as per the itinerary

NEW

Chile, Patagonia and Easter Island

Departing 3 April & 5 September 2003

Come with The Travel Society to one of South America's most popular destinations – Chile. During this 9-day trip you'll spend 5 exciting days touring the historic city of Santiago, visiting some beautiful vineyards and taking excursions to some popular beach destinations. Then you'll fly south to Puerto Montt to discover more history, mingle in the local markets, search out special handicrafts and explore the region's beautiful lakes, waterfalls and rivers.

Add-ons which you won't want to miss are a 5-night trip to Patagonia, romantically called 'South of Silence', where you'll stay in the renowned Termas de Puyuhuapi Hotel & Spa, and/or a 3-night trip to unique Easter Island, where our guides will show you all this incredible destination has to offer.

Departing from: Toronto Ottawa & Montreal

Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg \$1,698 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$744 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Great add-ons:

Easter Island	4 days/3 nights	\$894.00 pp/dbl
Patagonia	6 days/5 nights	\$1,794.00 pp/dbl

Canadian domestic & international flights additional
All prices are subject to confirmation
Taxes extra.

Your tour includes:

- First-class accommodation
- All transfers
- Meals as per itinerary
- All tours and boat trips
- Local guides
- Domestic air

NEW

Panama Highlights

~ see this beautiful land before it is over-run by "tourists"

Departing 21 March & 11 April 2003

Imagine discovering colourful Panama during the coming February. Come with The Travel Society for 10 exciting days in four different locations. You'll stay at Fort Amador, famous for its views of the Pacific and the entrance to the Panama Canal. Then you'll travel on to a luxurious rainforest resort – the Gamboa – close to the Canal in the heart of the lush Panamanian rainforest. There you'll discover the secrets of the upper forest canopy – its flowers, mammals and splendid birds – on a unique aerial tram ride. A flight to the San Blas Islands is next on the itinerary, described in the October 2000 edition of TravelScoop as "A paradise ... truly special and beautiful." A stay in a resort on the Costa Blanca and a chance of explore Panama City will bring your trip to a close. What an unusual winter getaway!

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,480 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$3,480 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$3,564 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$3,564 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$3,580 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$1,620.0 (Sharing can be arranged.) Taxes extra.

Please call for prices from other departure cities

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international airfares
- Canadian domestic air
- 9 nights' accommodation in 4 different properties
- all land transfers
- flights to San Blas
- all breakfasts
- 4 lunches, 4 dinners
- rainforest aerial tram tour

NEW

Costa Rica – "Nature's Museum"

11 days departing 7 February 2003

Costa Rica is known as Nature's Museum and with good reason. Come for a visit and you'll be impressed by this country that is dedicated to preserving its delicate ecology for all to enjoy and by its warm friendly people who are waiting to show it to you. During your 10-day tour you'll visit historic San Jose, stay in a tropical rain forest at a thermal spa resort; visit a vast jungle preserve; take a river boat trip to watch and photograph the wildlife; soak in the thermal pools of Arenal Paraiso and visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. And after all this you'll relax or play on the beach at Guanacaste Also available is a 3-night jungle odyssey post tour extension, an exciting soft-adventure to Tortuguero, the Amazon of Costa Rica.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$2,920 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$2,920 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$2,990 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$2,990 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$3,036 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$464 (Sharing can be arranged.) Taxes extra.

Please call for prices from other departure cities

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international airfares
- Canadian domestic air
- 9 nights' accommodation in 4 different properties
- all land transfers
- flights to San Blas
- all breakfasts
- 4 lunches, 4 dinners
- rainforest aerial tram tour

from \$3,924 for 18 days

China ... Yangtze Spectacular ~ 18 days!

Come with us on our most popular, unique tour and spend 18 days in China still at an amazingly low price. Reserve now for departures on

06 April, 22 April, 09 September & 12 October 2003

It is vast, fascinating and mysterious and it has beckoned travellers from the west for centuries. Mention it to avid travellers and they are sure to say, "Yes, I hope to visit China one day." And what would they choose to experience? A **cruise on the mighty Yangtze River (soon to be changed for ever)**; a look at the work-in-progress on the massive **Three Gorges Dam**; a walk on the ancient **Great Wall**; views of charming villages, lush terraced hillsides and magnificent mountain peaks; visits to the great cities of **Shanghai** and **Beijing**; a trip to view one of the world's greatest archaeological finds ... the 6,000 terra-cotta warriors at **Xi'an**; scenes of palaces, pagodas, pavilions and pandas; tastes of Peking duck and Chinese banquets and so much more. So how do you choose? When you decide on The Travel Society's tour there's no need to choose because all these highlights are included. Yes, in these remarkable 18 days you'll stay in Beijing; you'll take a 4-day first-class cruise on the Yangtze with many shore excursions; you'll fly to see those centuries-old terra-cotta warriors in Xi'an; you'll visit bustling Chongquin and see its pandas; stay in Hangzhou and travel into the hills covered with tea plantations; explore the exquisite gardens of Suzhou, and visit Nanjing and Wuzhen. And you'll have time to explore spectacular Shanghai. Throughout the trip you'll see magnificent architecture, you'll be entertained at cultural events, you'll join your hosts at a variety of banquets, you'll have time to shop, and you'll marvel at some of the most wonderful scenery on earth, all in the company of English-speaking guides. You'll travel by plane, by luxury bus, cruise ship and river boat. Many of our members have told us it's an experience of a lifetime ... and all at an amazing price!

So many members have said:
"We don't know how you do such a first class tour at this price!"

Your tour costs includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air fares on Japan Airlines
- Chinese domestic airfares
- Canadian domestic airfares
- First-class hotel accommodation
- First-class 4 days/3 nights Yangtze River cruise aboard a deluxe cruise ship
- All transfers
- Daily sightseeing
- Three meals daily
- 2 Western style dinners.
- Special banquets in Hangzhou, Xi'an and Beijing
- Evening cultural shows
- Fully escorted by English/Chinese-speaking tour guide
- English-speaking local guides
- Free day and evening in Beijing & Shanghai

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Vancouver	\$3,986 pp/dbl
Victoria/Nanaimo/Kamloops	\$4,099 pp/dbl
Calgary/Edmonton	\$4,224 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,428 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,392 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,320 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,426 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec City/London	\$4,540 pp/dbl
Thunder Bay/St. John's	\$4,688 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$1,090 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Taxes and visas extra.

GREAT ADD-ONS:

Hong Kong	4 days/3 nights	\$1,094.00
Tokyo	4 days/3 nights	\$892.00

Prices are subject to confirmation

Our editor, Ann Wallace took the April 2002 China Yangtze trip and her 14-page, illustrated (and honest) account is available. For your copy please send \$5 with your address.

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members and their friends.

NEW
from \$4,950
for 21 days
including all airmfares

A Traveller's Turkey

Departing: ~~5 October~~ & 4 May 2003

Space limited to **20** people

It is one of the cradles of civilization and one of the most wonderful countries on the planet. Here there are fabled cities, unique landscapes, incomparable historic sites and calm, friendly people who are eager to show that their land is, indeed, both historic and modern.

Ann Wallace, our editor, has travelled extensively in Turkey and always returns claiming it is one of her favourite destinations. So now we have organized a luxurious tour exclusively for Travel Society members. It is due to take place in October 2003 for a maximum of 20 people.

No expense has been spared to ensure you see the very best that Turkey has to offer. You'll stay in first-class historic or very specialized hotels, travel in a 40-seat air-conditioned luxury bus, enjoy cruises on private boats, sample fine food and be entertained by cultural performances. And the itinerary? Magical Istanbul (plenty of time there); Ankara, home of one of the world's finest museums; the unique 'geological poem' called Kapadokya (or Cappadocia); mysterious and lovely ruins such as Aphrodisias, Pergamum and, of course, Ephesus; the fabled and beautiful Aegean coast; the peaceful Princes Isles in the Sea of Marmara and so much more.

Ann says, "This is the most perfect tour of Turkey imaginable; you will have an unforgettable time ... and such a small group, too! Sign up now!"

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton & Calgary	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$5,125.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$5,125.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.) Taxes included, visa extra.

Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic and domestic flights with Air Canada
- 20 nights' accommodation
- Most meals as per itinerary
- All domestic transportation
- 40 seat air conditioned luxury bus
- Admission to all sites
- An English-speaking guide/director and a Travel Society host

In order to prepare participants for their visit to this historic land, an annotated reading list will be sent to all applicants and comprehensive tour kits will be sent 30 days before departure.

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

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