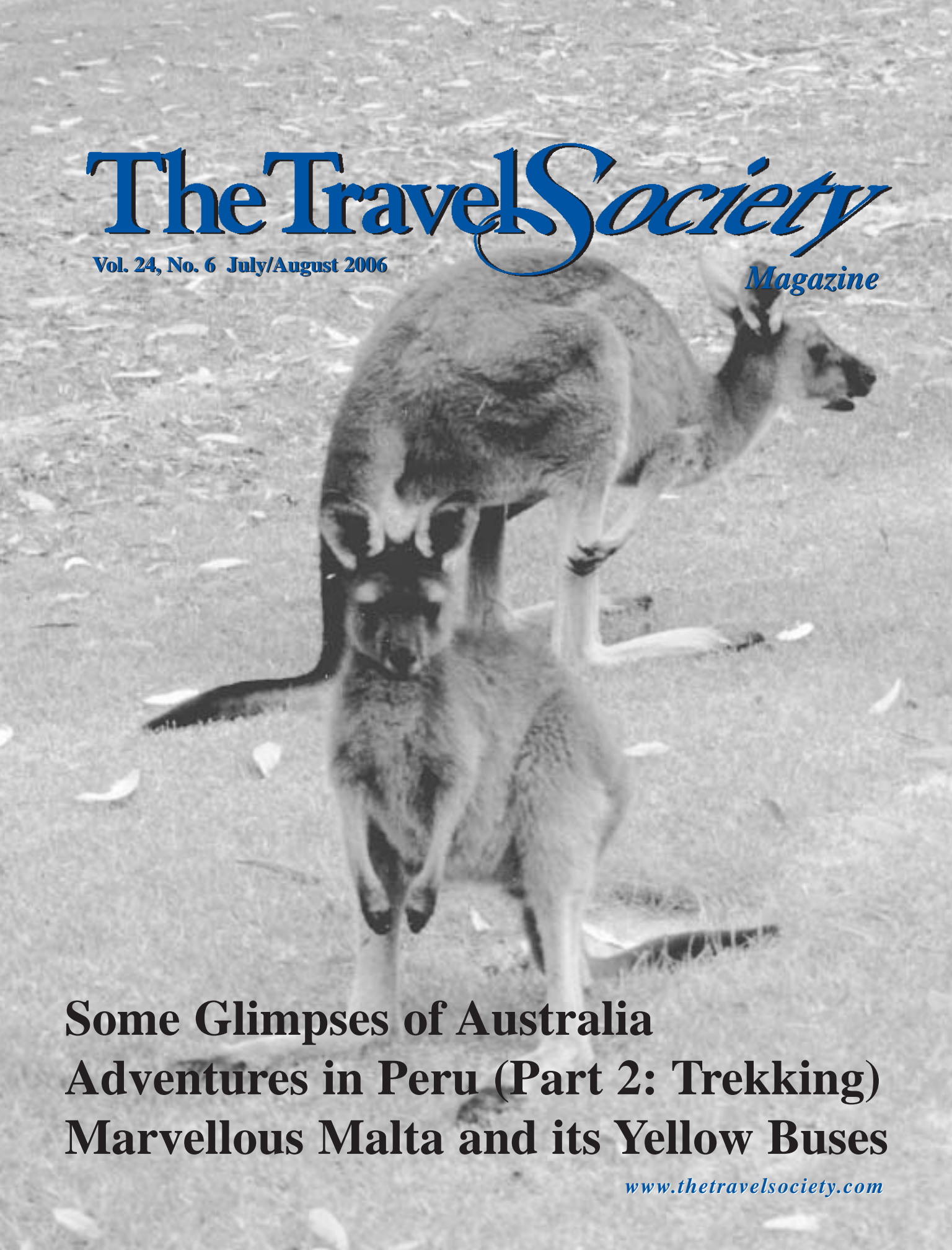


# The Travel Society

Magazine

Vol. 24, No. 6 July/August 2006



**Some Glimpses of Australia**  
**Adventures in Peru (Part 2: Trekking)**  
**Marvellous Malta and its Yellow Buses**

[www.thetravelsociety.com](http://www.thetravelsociety.com)

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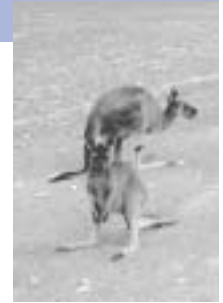
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Residents of  
Australia  
(MacPhersan)

## editor's letter ...

Well, they didn't ask me, and as it was a U.S. poll they probably didn't ask you either. But the news is good ... when over 1,000 "highly-targeted American airline passengers" were asked if cell phones should continue to be banned during flights, 67% voted "yes".

As we all know, cell phones are already banned during the critical stages of flight - take off and landing - because of the possible risks associated with the radio interference of cell phones, as well as other devices such as pagers, palm pilots, CD players and laptops. But according to a study conducted by Carnegie Mellon University earlier this year "The risk posed by these portable devices is higher than previously believed. Radio frequency emitted from these devices can disrupt normal operation of key cockpit instruments, especially Global Positioning Systems (GPS) receivers, which are increasingly vital for safe landings." (It is thought possible that cell phone interference resulted in a fatal accident involving a Crossair flight near Zurich in January 2000, when investigators found false readings given by aircraft instrumentation were later traced to the exact time of a text message received by a passenger.)

Surprisingly, while the above-mentioned poll was based on the issue of safety, more respondents were far more concerned over how disruptive cell phone conversations in flight would be for themselves and other passengers than they were of any safety issue.

Have a great summer ... keep safe ... and I look forward to our August issue.

P.S. We goofed! The cover photo in our last edition was taken by Thelma Sampson, who wrote the article on France.



## Viewpoint B&B, Goderich, Ontario

In our annual travels to enjoy the Blyth Festival in south-west Ontario, Margaret and I have tried, and reported on, several notable B&B's in the Blyth/Clinton/Goderich triangle.

One of the best of the numerous B&B's that we have enjoyed is the Viewpoint B&B which is situated by the Goderich Lighthouse overlooking Lake Huron. Hosts here are Linda and Duncan Jewell and the house is a renovated Victorian farmhouse that belonged to Linda's family. There are only two bedrooms. One is a queen with a three-piece private bathroom on the landing; the other is a king-sized room with a four-piece ensuite bathroom. The latter has a fantastic view looking west past the Lighthouse towards Lake Huron.

As is usual with most Ontario B&B's, breakfast is great. When we were there, Duncan was doing breakfast and I consider him the equal to myself. (In our household Margaret and I have this arrangement: I do all breakfasts, barbecues and washing-up. I am also a Volunteer Historic Cook at Spadina Museum in Toronto.) We have recommended the Viewpoint to others and have always been congratulated on our recommendation. The property has an excellent web site: [www.viewpoint-goderich.com](http://www.viewpoint-goderich.com) or call 1 866 749 3946. And for Festival details visit [www.blythfestival.com](http://www.blythfestival.com). Check it all out and plan a getaway to enjoy this delightful corner of Ontario.

*Ed Lyons  
Toronto, ON*

## Singapore Stopover

If Asia is in your plans, I'm sure many of you will be passing through Singapore's Changi Airport, Terminal 2. It is the centre for many transfers and is well set up to accommodate

those who have a few hours or a day stop-over there.

No need to dread any hours you may have to spend there. By presenting your International Boarding Pass you'll find discounts on many things and many other things that are free. There is a brochure with details of what you can do in 2-4, 4-6, or more than a 5-hour stopover. The over 5-hour stopover gives you time for a free, 2-hour city tour. For this tour, you just register at the Singapore Visitors Centre with your pass. Other free things include: 200 internet kiosks to check your e-mail, free chair massages in the Oasis Lounge, live world news and sports at the Skyplex Entertainment Centre and there is also a children's play area. If you have 4-6 hours, there is a rooftop pool, full body massages, a movie theatre and for \$8.00 (regular price \$23.00) a shower with amenities and drinks as well as a gym with sports attire provided.

In the terminal there are also numerous restaurants and bars (some specialize in Singapore Slings at 50 % off the second drink); lots of shops; a hair, beauty and aromatherapy facility as well as a reflexology 'boutique'. And for pure, quiet relaxation there are also fern and orchid gardens with Koi ponds. For more details and map of the airport visit [www.singaporeair.com/boarding\\_pass\\_transit](http://www.singaporeair.com/boarding_pass_transit). We flew Singapore Air and would certainly recommend it when flying to the East.

*Thelma Sampson  
Dryden, ON*

## Saskatoon Getaway

Early last summer my travels took me on my second visit to Saskatoon. I was attending a tourism conference there, but of course I added a little extra time to explore. What a very pleasant city it is ... graced by the broad sweep of the South Saskatchewan River and more sunny days than any other city in Canada. Here are the few things I enjoyed on my brief visit.

A stroll along the riverside parks and trails is a great way to blow away the travel cobwebs. On the way you can't miss the Mendel Art Gallery, open 9 'til 9, admission free, [www.mendel.ca](http://www.mendel.ca), which offers a permanent collection of Saskatchewan art, innovative exhibitions, a charming conservatory garden and an excellent gift shop.

Across the river in South Saskatoon is an interesting – and vast – attraction: it's the Western Development Museum, featuring the longest indoor museum street in North America, where over 30 'buildings' and their costumed interpreters portray community life during Saskatchewan's early years under the theme *Boomtown 1910*. These 'buildings' include a general store, working photo and blacksmith shops, a newspaper office, drugstore and livery stable. It's fascinating and the people are great fun and love sharing their field of expertise. Several hours can be spent here, so it's good to know about Boomtown Café – a working exhibit with 1910 period décor. Gifts from your visit can also be taken care of here, for the Museum Store is stocked with Saskatchewan-made items such as saskatoon berry syrups and jams. Open daily, admission \$7.25 or less, [www.wdm.ca](http://www.wdm.ca).

More glimpses of Saskatoon's past can be found at the small Meewasin (a Cree word meaning 'beautiful') Valley Centre (free, open 9 – 5), devoted to recording Saskatoon's natural and cultural history ... a great place to start your visit or while away a couple of hours if the weather turns nasty. This is also the place to pick up maps of the many nature trails in the region. The museum is open 9 – 5, admission free, [www.meewasin.com](http://www.meewasin.com).

Across the river from the main city is the ever-changing 'trendy' area around Broadway Avenue. With a free evening ahead of us, a friend and I enquired of some Saskatoon residents about a good place to eat.

Calories Restaurant seemed to be the hands-down favourite! We called. Yes, if we didn't mind going early we could have a table! The casual but pretty restaurant lived up to its accolades, with main course prices from \$15. A vegetarian selection is included each day and although I'm not a vegetarian I couldn't resist trying their 'spinach and chèvre ravioli with sautéed exotic mushrooms in a fire-roasted tomato sauce'. It was delicious. You can check the menu on line at [www.caloriesrestaurants.com](http://www.caloriesrestaurants.com) or call 306 665 7991. Highly recommended.

The spacious loft room of the White Pelican B&B, close to the river, is a good place to lay one's head after a day exploring the nearby city or enjoying its riverside walks. There the welcoming hosts, Robert and Janet MacGillivray, will be delighted to tell you about the pelicans that can be seen fishing close to the river weir not far from their property and which, of course, gave the house its name. B&B rates in this pleasant 3-bedroom property from \$75. Tel 306 249 2645, [www.whitepelican.ca](http://www.whitepelican.ca).

Needless to say Saskatoon holds many, many other attractions and a full calendar of events. These are detailed in the city's *Visitor Guide*, available by calling 1 800 567 2444 or at [www.tourismsaskatoon.com](http://www.tourismsaskatoon.com). One of the highlights of my first visit a few years ago was enjoying a performance at the fine Shakespeare on

the Saskatchewan Festival. If your visit is at the height of summer (this year 5 July – 13 August) please don't miss catching a performance. Tel 306 652 9100 or [www.shakespeareonthesaskatchewan.com](http://www.shakespeareonthesaskatchewan.com).

*Ann Wallace, Ed.  
Toronto, ON*

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*Here are the winter/spring long-stay suggestions in the South of France that we promised in our last edition.*

### **Apartment Living on the Riviera**

It goes without saying ... there's a lot to be said for a month on the French Riviera! So we reserved just that – a whole month in a part of the world which has drawn people for centuries. We opted for two weeks in each of two apartments (first in Menton, then in Antibes) owned by a Paris-based company called Pierre & Vacances, [www.pierreetvacances.com](http://www.pierreetvacances.com). Many Canadians are among their tenants during late winter and early spring when prices are lower than in summer. We booked through Renaissance Travel in Toronto (tel: 1 800 461 1614) after comparing their long-stay prices with internet rates and Intair brochures (Intair represents P&V in Canada and offers packages including Air France flights). Our 4-week stay, excluding air, cost \$2,166 or \$77 a night for 28 nights.

We flew Alitalia direct to Milan because that meant the train trip to our first apartment would be shorter (4½ hours) than if we flew to Paris (7 hours). Because of March break, we flew three days early, allowing us a three-day Italian stop in the lovely old port town of Savona, a couple of hours from Milan. Savona, largely overlooked by tourists, has just become the home base for Costa Cruises. As long as you stay close to its historic centre you'll find arcaded streets, ancient towers, a palazzo-turned-art gallery, many smart shops and tempting restaurants. If you follow in our footsteps, we recommend the 3-star Hotel Riviera Suisse, a ten-minute walk from the railway station, where a double room with bath and breakfast costs €70 - 95 per night (€1 = C\$1.40) [www.rivierasuissehotel.it](http://www.rivierasuissehotel.it).

When the day came to claim our first apartment, we went by rail straight from Savona to Menton, a trip of just over two hours. We had France 'n Italy Rail passes ([www.Eurail-ACPRail.com](http://www.Eurail-ACPRail.com) or call 1 866 9EURAIL) which were to provide us with many hours of sightseeing. The Menton apartment was compact and sunny, just a minute's walk from the town's seaside Promenade du Soleil, and about six minutes from the train station. When the trundle bed in the "bedroom" was made up for two, we had wall-to-wall bed, with a pocket door closing off the living room. Kitchen, dining area and living room with television and sofa blended into one area. In total our space was about

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## The Travel Society website

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**To access the site, the password will be up-dated monthly and will appear on the back page of your *Travel Society Magazine* within the address box.**

You can renew your subscription on-line too!

26 square meters. Furnishings and fabrics were modest but clean. Maids came twice a week with fresh sheets and towels. Our kitchen had a 3-burner stove, mini-fridge and dishwasher. Front desk staff were fluent in English and very helpful. Requests were dealt with promptly, e.g. a phone with a data port arrived within hours of our request. Hair dryers are available at no cost.

The town's six-day-a-week market was along the promenade; nearby was a supermarket called Shopi and a smaller food store. We used the stores for basics but enjoyed the fresh pasta, pungent cheeses and calorie-laden pastries of the town's market. Food is more expensive than at home, but acceptable wine can be had for €2 or €3 a bottle. Some things I had to buy: a couple of place mats, face cloths, J-cloths and oven gloves. P&V's laundry in Menton costs about €10 a load, as do public ones. P&V in Antibes does not have a laundry but there are good ones in town. Safety deposit boxes in these apartments cost a whopping €20 a week, just over C\$130 for a four week stay.

Walking Menton's promenade on a Sunday afternoon, we found it leads all the way around Cap Martin to Monaco. In places it becomes stone steps, or a rocky path, but it goes all the way to that city-state of casino, palace and royalty. Menton's slogan is "our city is a garden" and visiting its gardens is a must for visitors. Two are within the town and easy to find with a brochure from the Tourist Office in Palais de l'Europe on Avenue Boyer. We noted the abundance of choral concerts promoted by posters in shop windows and attended a free one in

17<sup>th</sup> century Eglise St. Michel in the Old Town. The Jean Cocteau museum is worth a visit.

As well as exploring Menton we enjoyed sightseeing by rail. Alassio (just under two hours) is a small, touristy town frequented by Hemingway, while an additional seven minutes takes one to Albenga, a totally different town laden with ancient history. On a Saturday, we took the train to San Remo (under an hour) and its vast market selling everything from vegetables to designer luggage. We spent another afternoon touring Nice. I also joined a bus trip with some Canadians vacationing in our building to the tiny medieval town of Eze, perched like an eagle's nest on a hilltop. Its cactus garden and maze-like streets are worth a visit. If you like to find fellow Canadians while abroad check [www.canadiens-sur-la-cote.org](http://www.canadiens-sur-la-cote.org).

After two weeks in Menton, we moved on to P&V's 4-star building in Antibes (their accommodation in Menton is rated 3-star). This property, built on a triangular plot of land, bordered by two moderately busy and one very busy street did not offer the same atmosphere we'd enjoyed in Menton. Despite the architect's attempt to compensate by building various four-storey apartment blocks around a central pool and tropical garden, traffic and construction noise intruded. Our balcony overlooked busy Rue Verdun, a huge yacht basin and in the distance old Fort Carre. However, once oriented, it was easy to walk to the more pleasant part of town: the waterfront promenade or the Old Town with its narrow streets and ancient fortress – now the Picasso Museum. The apartment had a real bedroom well separated from the living

room-kitchen area. The young women at reception coped with questions and complaints patiently but not always efficiently; the "technician" promised for various tasks never arrived!

From Antibes we continued to sightsee by train, even a long day on the TGV to Aix en Provence. The serene town of St. Raphael was a highlight, as was our trip on "Le Train des Merveilles" which leaves Nice every morning at 9 to travel north-eastward through the mountains to the town of Tende. There the air is clear and cool, the streets narrow and the cafés welcoming. The tourist office has a pamphlet in English which details the history of this tiny town which boasts rock carvings from the Bronze and Copper Ages.

Returning home to a mild and pleasant April, we decided apartment living on the Riviera suited us fine and we'd do it again one chilly Canadian March.

*Barbara Bagnell,  
Toronto, ON*

## ***Members are rewarded for sharing!***

*The TravelSociety* rewards members with subscription extensions of varying lengths for all submissions published. So whether you have a letter with a travel tip or a destination to share, please write to us!

**[ann@thetravelsociety.com](mailto:ann@thetravelsociety.com)**

**or**

**218 - 1033 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 3A5**

*Note: If it is possible to include wheelchair-accessible information in your letters and stories I know that would be appreciated by many. Thanks! - Ed.*

### **Reader to Reader**

We will be visiting Bolivia in November and would be interested in hearing from any one who has been there. Any information, especially about hotels, transportation etc., and the city of Sucre, as well as tips for the wary, would be much appreciated. Please e-mail us at [hebilane@shaw.ca](mailto:hebilane@shaw.ca).

Thank you – Helen Lane

# Some Glimpses of Australia

*Story and photos by Dee MacPherson*

*Rose Cottage, Auburn, South Australia*

*Wherever you live in Canada, the summer season is well and truly here and we hope that means fine weather and great excursions. Time, also, to look ahead perhaps and think of the southern hemisphere for some journeys in the winter to come.*

**I**t was winter, and we were looking for a new destination to explore and a place that would be warm and allow us to soak up some sun. We picked Australia. It seemed as though it would be an easy country in which to travel, with the same language and a culture that parallels ours in many ways. We knew ... the flight there and back would be a killer, but we'd plan enough time there to make it worthwhile!

So began the discussions that led four of us to plan a vacation "down under". We departed at the end of January, and stayed for three weeks. Of course there is so much to see and do there, we easily could have stayed three months or three years and not covered it all! But we've saved something for future trips.

Given the size of the continent (about that of

mainland United States), we decided to concentrate our time in a couple of areas, and try to see them well, rather than hopping around too much in a country where distances between places are often great.

We flew on our Aeroplan points: Edmonton, Calgary, San Francisco, Sydney via a combination of Air Canada and United Airlines. Our main aim was to avoid the Los Angeles airport, which we have found unfriendly, dirty and confusing. San Francisco International, by contrast, proved to be modern, clean and comfortable. Depending on the route and airline you choose, however, you may have to overnight en route.

The 14-hour flight from San Francisco to Sydney is long, there's no denying that. But time passes with the help of a couple of meals and a selection of movies and, with any luck, some sleep. We

arrived at the Sydney airport at 7:30 a.m. and after the formalities we were in our taxi by about 8:30. (Note: Do not take any food products to Australia. Most will be confiscated after being spotted by watchful agricultural “sniffer dogs”.) We opted to share a taxi between the four of us, rather than taking the airport shuttle, that stops at each hotel. It was quicker and turned out to be cheaper.

Our accommodation at The Sullivans had been booked over the internet at [www.Sullivans.com.au](http://www.Sullivans.com.au). We found it satisfactory. It is well-located near the Paddington district which is full of shops and restaurants, and a good walk to the Sydney Harbour, or a \$15.00 taxi ride. It is basic, generally clean, but small. The cost was A\$135 per double room per night, which we found to be a bargain in downtown Sydney. (Note: All costs in this article are in Australian dollars and are inclusive of GST. A\$1 = approx. C\$0.82)

We spent two days in Sydney, including the day we arrived, and were determined to make the most of them. Over the next two days we walked through the Royal Botanical Gardens, took ferries to Balmain; Watson’s Bay, for lunch at the famous Doyle’s Restaurant; to Manly Beach for a walk on the beach; explored The Rocks a bit and wandered through the Queen Victoria Building (QVB), a renovated turn-of-the-century shopping mall. Of course, there are many other things

to do in Sydney: tour the Opera House, take the Bridge Climb, visit Darling Harbour, Kings Cross, Paddington, etc. One could spend quite a bit of time (and money) in this great city and an internet search will provide a number of websites that will assist you in planning the activities that best suit you.

There are several things to note about exploring Sydney. The ferries are an interesting and scenic way to explore the harbour area, but the costs can mount up. It is A\$5.00 – A\$7.00 per person, one way, for most trips in the Sydney Harbour area. There are other ticket options such as a Family Pass, but check them carefully; depending on your destinations, they may not offer any savings.

Australia is a land of BYO (Bring Your Own) restaurants, which is new to many of us in Canada. Sydney is no exception. This means that you can take your wine or beer

to the restaurant and, for a corkage fee, the restaurant will open the bottle and provide the glasses. This can be an economical way to share some wine with dinner without paying the inflated prices of the restaurant wine list. The corkage is often nominal (A\$3 – A\$5.00 per person). However, in some high tourist areas we noticed corkage of A\$10.00 per person, making it an expensive option.

In Sydney, as with many other destinations around the world, the main tourist areas seem to be charging too much for meals and other merchandise. But sometimes, you just *have* to do it, for the view or the atmosphere or the memory. In Sydney, Circular Quay qualifies as one of those places, where the meals are too expensive, but where the idea of lunching in the shadow of the Opera House and the Bay Bridge, seems irresistible! (At least it did to us!)

But for us, there was more of Australia to explore, and the next day we flew out to Adelaide, picked up our rented

car and drove to the Clare Valley. There we had rented (again on the internet) a stone cottage in the heritage village of Auburn. This proved to be an excellent find. Rose Cottage – [www.rosecottageauburn.com.au](http://www.rosecottageauburn.com.au) – is a three-bedroom, self-contained renovated heritage home. It was well-equipped and provided us with a perfect place to cook some great meals, to sit on the porch playing Scrabble and to gaze at the stars. The cost was A\$900 for four people for five



*Along the Great Ocean Road*

nights, which included excellent breakfast provisions of bacon, eggs, juice, bread, coffee, tea, milk, and cereal.

We had five wonderful days there, exploring the area and tasting some unusual wines. The Clare Valley has established a reputation for some very nice, cool-climate white wines (Reislings) and some Shiraz. The wineries are generally small and friendly, some with restaurants, and some with picnic areas. We especially liked the Mintaro and the Kilikanoon Wineries. Sevenhill Winery, a former monastery that produces sacramental wines as well as table wine, and Annie’s Lane were also noteworthy. Their operations are bigger, but still small compared to those of larger wine producers of the Barossa Valley.

Although we purchased several bottles of local wine, we also discovered ‘Cleanskins’. These are bottles of wine, produced in a certain region, from what is left in the vat,

after all the “real” bottles have been filled and labelled. The Cleanskin bottles have labels that describe the kind of wine, and the region from which it was produced, but not the winery. The buyer may get an outstanding wine, or a so-so wine. But at A\$6.00 – \$10.00 a bottle, who is complaining!

The town of Clare, 24 km from Auburn, was the place to buy groceries. There are at least two butcher shops, bakeries, and other grocery stores. If we wished to eat out, there are a couple of good restaurants in Auburn and Clare, as well as at several wineries. It was easy, however, to shop for groceries, and self-contained accommodation is readily available in the region. We found self-catering to be an interesting way to make our holiday more economical and fun. Restaurant meals in Australia can be pricey.

The Clare Valley is a wide dry valley, with lots of sheep grazing the hillsides and vineyards and eucalyptus trees providing green vistas in the summer. Both Auburn and Clare, and all the villages in between, are small – not many activities or nightlife. But this was perfect for us.

In spite of the hot weather, one day we decided to walk part of the Reisling Trail, a looping trail that covers a good part of the valley, sometimes paralleling the road, between Clare and Auburn. We walked 5.6 km on the Father Rugalski loop, which we considered not bad on a 35°C day! Afterwards we rewarded ourselves with a few beers in Clare! There are many trails and loops to be walked or

Jazz Festival were evident. There had been a huge forest fire through the Grampians just a few weeks before, but the town of Hall’s Gap had not been damaged. There is a nice Visitor’s Centre and Aboriginal Interpretive Centre on the outskirts of town, which are very interesting.

We stopped that night in Warnambool, Victoria. The Visitor’s Centre was closed by the time we arrived, so we were on our own in looking for accommodation but soon found a suitable place to stay at the Old Maritime Motor Inn. Here, for A\$190.00 per night, we had a new, two-bedroom unit, with complete cooking facilities. We were happy with this, as the other rooms we looked at in this Inn were a bit old and tired. We felt we’d done well. That night we had a great walk along Logan’s Beach, in an area known as a whale conservation and nursery area. Unfortunately, it was not the right time of year to see whales, but the walk along the beach was still lovely.

Upon leaving Warnambool, you are almost immediately on the Great Ocean Road – with its renowned scenery – the Bay of Islands and the Twelve Apostles, for example. We did not pull off at all of the scenic view points, but where we did stop, we were certainly rewarded. It was a bright sunny day, the ocean was blue, and the limestone cliffs and formations were spectacular. We stopped in Apollo Bay for a walk along the beach and a splash in the water (something I find hard to resist!).

We saw mobs (i.e. many) of kangaroos and emus and had a lovely wander around the village of Hall’s Gap. This was a Friday, and preparations for the weekend Jazz Festival were evident.

cycled, although we had a little trouble deciphering the trail map. (There is a bicycle rental place in Clare, but it didn’t appear to be open when we were there. Perhaps they do not get many customers in the height of summer.)

It was with some sadness, but also anticipation, that we left the Clare Valley after five days. We headed through the Barossa Valley, the Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale – other popular wine regions – and stopped for the night near the Grampian Mountains, en route to the Great Ocean Road. The hills here were lush and the towns were quaint. We stopped for wine tastings at Yalumba Winery in the Barossa Valley and at d’Ahrenberg Wines in McLaren Vale. We arrived in Horsham, Victoria, via the A8 Highway and immediately found a Comfort Inn in the centre of town that had just been renovated. New double rooms were A\$117 per night, which was fine, but we didn’t think the continental breakfast on offer in the restaurant good value at A\$12.50 per person.

The next day our drive took us to Hall’s Gap in the Grampians. We saw mobs (i.e. many) of kangaroos and emus and had a lovely wander around the village of Hall’s Gap. This was a Friday, and preparations for the weekend

Our plan was to spend the night in Lorne (a town on the Great Ocean Road), but unfortunately there was an International Surf Life Saving Competition in the area, and there was no accommodation to be had. We weren’t too disappointed, as the town seemed to cater to young people and had the atmosphere of a big party town. Apollo Bay or Anglesea seemed a bit more laid back and relaxed.

Our saga is that we continued to look for accommodation as we drove along the coast, but could find nothing. We eventually found ourselves in Melbourne, arriving late at night and staying at the Airport Holiday Inn – not very quaint, but very welcome after a long day of driving! Our rate there was A\$140.00 for a double room.

Melbourne, like Sydney, has a lot to offer, and we didn’t even begin to scratch the surface in the one day we had available. We spent it exploring the New Quay, Fitzroy Gardens, (where there was an excellent – and free – Sunday in the Park jazz concert) and Port Melbourne. We travelled around by tram or bus and found it an easy city to explore.

The next leg of our journey took us by Virgin Blue (similar to WestJet) to Hobart, Tasmania, where we picked up our rental car at the airport, and drove to Port Arthur. A

note here about rental cars. We rented from Hertz and Budget and found both companies to be good. We booked our vehicles over the Internet. Costs ranged from A\$59.99 per day for a full size station wagon to A\$61.24 per day for a minivan. Gas is expensive in Australia ... A\$1.10 - \$1.30 per litre. Driving on the left is interesting, but not too difficult, and certainly a driving holiday provides flexibility and a connection with the countryside that you don't get with a plane, train or bus.

In Port Arthur, we thought that we would tour the original penal colony in Australia, but admission was A\$24.00 per person to enter the grounds! We decided that was a little pricey, and opted to read about the history instead. We found a nice self-contained cottage (A\$200.00 per night) complete with wild "potoroos" ... small possum-like wallabies that come out at night.

The next day we set off driving up the east coast of this Island State, stopping first at the Remarkable Cave and Maingon Lookout. The coast line is rugged and scenic. We continued our journey through Swansea and Bicheno, just two of the small villages along the coast. We settled for the night just north of Bicheno and south of St. Helen's at White Sands Resort [www.white-sands.com.au](http://www.white-sands.com.au), located right on the water. It was a terrific find – a two- bedroom self-contained cottage with a huge deck overlooking the water. And at A\$160.00 per night for four in a deluxe unit, the price was right too.

We stayed at White Sands for two nights and explored the area. We went north to the Bay of Fires for a nice walk and swim. The water was a little bit cool, but who could refuse on such a nice sunny day! The beach was pristine and we were the only ones on it! This is also a good place from which to explore Freycinet National Park, an hour or so to the south.

Upon leaving the area, we stopped at the Pyengana Cheese Factory, where we bought some local cheeses. We arrived in Launceston in time (we thought) to find accommodation but, to our surprise, we found everything booked. The Visitor Information Centre would have helped us, but they closed their doors at 5 o'clock sharp and so we were on our own. We finally found a very nice self-contained cottage, attached to a B&B, for A\$210.00 per night for the four of us. Trevallyn House, [www.trevallynhouse.com.au](http://www.trevallynhouse.com.au) was really a one bedroom with

a pull-out couch – perfect for two, but a bit of a squish for four! A cooked breakfast was included in the price and served in the breakfast room of the main house.

From Launceston, we enjoyed a day trip into the Tamar Valley (about a three-hour circle tour) to taste Tasmanian Wine. The wine selection there is not nearly the quality of the Clare Valley, or other areas, but we had a nice time exploring the area and enjoying the scenery. The Lavender House was a good discovery, and although the lavender was not in bloom, they had lovely lavender products for sale, all made in the area of course.

The next day we headed off to Evandale for the National Penny Farthing Race! Evandale is a small town, just out of Launceston, and the Penny Farthing Race is a popular annual event there. It was quite the occasion, with many Penny Farthing races throughout the day. The village is charming and includes many heritage buildings.

And then it was off to Hobart, the capital of Tasmania. We stayed at Wellington Lodge B&B, [www.wwt.com.au/wellingtonlodge/](http://www.wwt.com.au/wellingtonlodge/), which I can highly recommend. This historic property has been thoroughly refitted in Victorian style, with all modern touches in their large and lovely rooms. B&B here cost A\$135 per room. It would have been nice to have an extra day (or two) in Hobart, as this small city seemed to have all the benefits of a large centre, but with the charm of a small town. We

explored the waterfront, Salamanca and Battery Point, all within a short walk of Wellington Lodge.

Sadly, the following morning, we were airport bound for our flights home and back to reality. We had, however, great memories to keep us warm throughout the remainder of winter. We thoroughly enjoyed our experiences in Australia, and were happy with our route and accommodation choices.

Cooking our own meals a good part of the time suited us well, as it helped to keep costs down and was a fun activity for us to share. We would highly recommend travelling in Australia, whatever route you choose. *Bon voyage!* 🇺🇸

*Dee MacPherson is a TS member who lives in Edmonton, AB*



*White Sands Resort, Tasmania*

# ADVENTURES IN PERU

## PART 2: TREKKING

*story and photos by J. Helen Parkyn*



*We conquered Cerro Yayamari!*

**A**s mentioned in Part 1 of my story, which appeared in *The Travel Society Magazine* last month, Andean Treks was our company for this trekking part of trip. We had signed on for a week's adventure, which in fact was a one-day approach drive, five and half days of trekking, and a return drive to Cusco. The cost was US\$672 for everything, and we allowed about US\$40 for tips.

We cannot praise Andean Treks enough – there was nothing else they could have done to make our trek more comfortable and safe. They carried a satellite phone, oxygen and a portable decompression unit. There was an extra riding horse at all times in case we or our daypacks needed a lift over one of the passes. We were surprised at the trek briefing to discover there were only three of us in the party – my friend and I, plus a younger lady from Scotland. This company only cancels if there are less than two people. The trekking and altitude require participants to be in good physical condition, however age is not necessarily a barrier ... I am a retired senior, though a fit one.

The first day, Dimas, our Peruvian guide, collected us from the hotel at 8.30 a.m. in an expedition-type vehicle

necessary for the very bad roads to and from the trailheads. Our cook and assistant cook were also in the vehicle. We drove for an hour up the Sacred Valley to Uros and then climbed out of the valley over a 3,800 ft. pass. In Uros we stopped at the market to buy toilet buckets for our tents to save getting out at night. Lunch was a picnic en route consisting of cheese sandwiches and potato salad. We were introduced at this time to Dimas' high standards of hygiene for food safety. Everyone – staff and trekkers – before going near food, always had to wash hands in hot water and dry with paper towels. Water was boiled for both drinking at meals and for filling water bottles three times a day, while vegetables were washed in disinfected water. Needless to say no-one got sick at all on the trek. We arrived at trailhead Tinquí (12,646 ft.) at about 4 p.m. This is where we were to camp the first night. My friend and I shared a good-sized tent with room between our thermarests to fit our duffel bags. The company provided the thermarests and we could either bring our own winter-weight sleeping bags or rent them for US\$30. I rented and was issued with a good US-made bag, however I preferred to use my own silk liner rather than the coarse flannel one provided. There was a cooking and eating tent combined for our small group. In

addition there was a toilet tent with two portable seats on stands: one for “No.1” and the other provided with composting crystals for “No.2”. Toilet paper was provided.

Soon after our arrival we were given basins of hot water for a wash, followed by tea and popcorn. Dinner was at 6 p.m. and consisted of minestrone soup, trout with rice and flambé bananas for dessert. There was also a sip of mulled wine each night, with a few drops being offered outside to Mama Katcha (Mother Earth) for good weather the next day! Dimas allowed no more than a sip because of the altitude. We went to bed around 7.30 p.m. eagerly looking forward to the following day.

Every morning we had the same routine: wake up at 6 with one’s choice of tea – regular, herbal or matte – being brought to the tents. We chose matte tea as it is supposed to help with altitude. Hot water for washing arrived next, followed by breakfast with camp departure around 7.50 a.m. Breakfasts were varied: porridge, French toast, cream of wheat, pancakes or eggs each day plus buns with jam always available. Drinks were anything that can be made with hot water: instant coffee, chocolate and a variety of teas. Before leaving camp we were given a snack pack for the trail with raisins/nuts, chocolate bar, fruit and candy. Also on this first day, our three local animal herders (two for horses and one for llamas) made a small ceremony for a good trip. Incidentally the llamas just carried our personal gear with the horses carrying the tents, cooking pots, propane for the stove, etc.

Our first trekking day was spectacular. We started up the wide trail and soon met many locals coming down from the highlands in their Sunday best heading for market, socializing and church in Tinquí. As we progressed, Mt. Ausangate came more and more prominently into view. At 6,374 metres, or 20,906 ft., this is the highest peak in the Vilnacota range. We stopped for lunch at a hamlet that had a natural hot spring and our Scottish companion jumped in! This hamlet, at around 14,000ft., is as high as it is possible to grow potatoes ... further up we just saw sheep, alpaca and llama herding. We also saw our last westerners here when a party of French hikers passed us coming off a tangential trail. Lunch was again sandwiches, which we made up ourselves from tomatoes, cheese, onions and avocado. The sun was out all day and the temperatures were comfortable for just a long-sleeve shirt and no jacket required until around 4 p.m.

After lunch we turned away from Mt. Ausangate and headed for our campsite overlooking a lake with Pukapunta Peak behind. We had climbed to 4,570 metres now (15,000

ft), but our pace was never hurried and Dimas always stopped at least twice in the morning and once in the afternoon. We arrived about 4 p.m. and followed the same routine as the previous day of hot water and tea. Our dinner that night was pumpkin soup, beef stroganoff and a sort of rice pudding. It was early to bed again as the evening was chilly and dark.

The next day we started out by hiking past glacial lakes and then heading up Pukapunta Pass with glaciers before us the whole way up. We went through the 5,050 metre (16,560 ft.) pass on a moraine with a glacier slightly below us. We dropped quite a bit through a broad valley before lunch, which included a noodle salad as well as the usual sandwiches. We then continued through alpaca and sheep-herding land, turning out of the main valley to a side plateau. Some clouds behind us later in the day looked quite threatening but came to nothing. We arrived at camp at 4.50 p.m. after 9 hours of trekking and 17 km – our longest day.

Dinner that night was spinach soup, chicken and rice Chinese style followed by chocolate pudding.

After a cold night we awoke to bright sun and a fine view of the south face of Ausangate as we sat outside eating breakfast. After breakfast, we went to a nearby hamlet of seven families to visit the wife of the headman with whom Dimas was on friendly terms. Maria’s one-room house, with a bed at one end and an open cooking area (using alpaca dung for fuel) at



*A lakeside campsite*

the other, was enough to make us appreciate what we have at home in Canada. And she is considered well off, as she had a small window in the house and a radio! After our cordial visit we walked past their herd of alpaca and sheep then started our climb up Condor Pass. This pass lies at 5,100 metres (16,728 ft.) and gave us great views in all directions. A herd of wild vicuna went running past as we crested the top. We descended down another long valley to our campsite near a small lake at 16,367 ft. We had to cross one stream on the way where it was likely we would get our feet wet. However, we decided that Blankito, our riding horse, had done no work so far so we turned him into a ferry to shuttle us across the water and keep our boots dry.

The fourth day of trekking took us around a ridge to see the head of Lake Sibinacocha, a 15 km-long glacial lake. What a sight! The water was turquoise with a pinkish outflow from the glacier coming off Mt. Chumpu flowing into it. We even spotted four pink flamingos on the pinkish beach. We had to walk quite a long way round the head of the lake to get to the other side, including another river crossing on our trusty steed Blankito. We found out here

that, while Dimas was a great hiking guide, he was no horseman – Blankito tossed him off onto the sand beside the lake! Fortunately he was not wet or hurt. We followed a trail along the lake and saw our first vizcacha or rock rabbits. These live in high rocky places and have long agile bodies and the faces of rabbits. We had a hot stir-fry for lunch as our sandwich buns were getting stale by now, followed by the luxury of a half-hour siesta. Leaving this great lake we struck out cross country to find our camp beside another river. On the way we had our first close view of Cerro Yayamari, our trekking option for the next day. I must admit that I had developed a few qualms as it was obviously a scramble not a hike. However my travelling companion really wanted to attempt this ascent – it was her Everest – so we ‘signed on’ for the next day.

We awoke to clouds on the summit however Mauro, head wrangler and the local expert, said they would burn off. So, after two helpings of cream-of-wheat with canned peaches, we set off at 7.30. Our Scots companion came with us on the approach hike to Yayamari – a trip of about one hour – but as we drew closer she decided to watch the rock rabbits and us from the bottom! Mauro came with us as well as Dimas in case one of us quit before the top and so neither of us would be left alone. Dimas also carried a rope in case we needed extra support, but it was not used. Mauro, who like most locals is very small and agile, led the way with me, my friend and Dimas following. Up the rocks and scree we scrambled to a sharp ridge and then the summit. We needed to use one hand frequently and two a few times, but once started the route did not get significantly harder and we all made the summit at 5,449 metres (17,876 ft). We were rewarded with an incredible view and could count 14 tongues of glaciers in sight at once. The descent was mostly down quite user-friendly scree.

Feeling very satisfied with ourselves, we arrived back at camp at noon to enjoy another hot lunch of soup and a tuna rice mixture. In the afternoon we relaxed, writing and reading, until it was time for our much-looked-forward-to lamb roast. We watched the staff make a hot oven with shrubs and grasses two hours before they put the potatoes and lamb in. Then they covered the food with wet grass and a tarp and left it all to cook for about an hour. (It could have done with a bit longer for our tastes.) During this special cooking event several of the local herding woman and children came to watch and also get some of the food. That night, to celebrate our trek, we were offered *Pisco Rockets* instead of wine. I did not like mine, so Dimas offered it to Mama Katcha. But

she must not have liked it either as we awoke to clouds on the mountains and snow on the ground!

We were up at 5 o’clock the next day for the hike out to the trailhead village and drive back to Cusco. In view of the change of weather, we were motivated to hike out at good speed. Dimas abandoned his position at the front, where he had kept the speed to an altitude-friendly pace, and let us go as fast as we could since it was nearly all downhill. We made it out in 3 hours and 10 minutes. Apparently on a finer day the hike usually takes about 4 hours with more stops. We reached our vehicle before 10 o’clock and had a little ceremony of saying goodbye to the crew and also giving out the tips according to the guidelines provided by Andean treks. We had planned ahead and brought the right change with us for this.

We then had another very rough drive on a “road” with washouts, water bars, ruts and potholes for the first couple of hours. We met a public bus going the other way to the vil-

lage we had left, a once-a-day link for the villagers where we had met our vehicle. On this day our picnic lunch of cold chicken and potatoes had been brought out from Cusco the day before by the driver. However, I thought it wise to play safe and did not eat the chicken, which had obviously not been refrigerated for 24 hours or so. We arrived in Cusco at 5.05 pm. where we said “goodbye” to Dimas. A hot shower was oh-so-very welcome and then we hastily repacked to leave early the



*Our baggage llamas and Mt. Chumpa*

next day.

We had planned from Canada to fly out at 2.30 in the afternoon. However, Andean Treks changed this for us for two reasons. One is that flying from Cusco’s altitude is better arranged for the morning when fewer flights get cancelled. Secondly, we had missed out on our Lima sightseeing on our first day due to our being rerouted via Miami. We could now do this on the last day with our luggage deposited at Lima Airport’s Left Luggage facility. Thus it was that we later found ourselves taking a taxi to central Lima where we explored the Church of San Francisco and its ossuary, the main squares and colonial houses. We then took another taxi to the Gold Museum. While we were happy to fill in time this way, we would not have felt deprived if we had missed Lima as we had seen so many fine churches and colonial buildings in both Arequipa and Cusco. Our flight out was at 1 a.m. which still involved a bit of a wait at the airport, to which we returned after a leisurely dinner back in our old neighborhood of Miraflores. We were happy to fit Lima in at the end like this. Our originally-planned afternoon flight would not have allowed for a day in the city but would have

# Marvellous Malta and its Yellow Buses

*by Juliet Gill*

**M**alta is a tiny island nation lying far out in the Mediterranean. It's a fascinating world of contrasts: prehistoric temples and world-class shopping; crusader castles and luxury hotels; cruise ships and brilliantly-painted fishing boats whose design goes as far back as the Phoenicians. It's different from anywhere else I've ever been, with an atmosphere I can't put my finger on. Perhaps it's the shimmering light. Perhaps it's those primitive undertones of unspoken secrets and ancient traditions reaching back thousands of years. But enough of waxing poetical ... it also happens to have a public transit system we in North America can only dream about!

Pulling back the curtains on your first morning in Malta you'll take in the sunlight and the blue sea crashing on the rocks and perhaps you'll see a small, yellow, single-decker bus beetling slowly up the hill, now and then disappearing among the trees. Although you may not realize it, you're looking at one of Malta's minor miracles – the bus service. All the magic that Malta offers – the history, the knock-out scenery, the age-old architecture with its amazing churches, the beaches, the fishing villages – all these attractions are like beads on a necklace, carefully strung together on the thread that the bus service provides.

The buses, over fifty years old, were made in England. Their longevity is a tribute to local mechanics who, discovering the parts unavailable, have machined all their own replacements. These buses have become works of art. Perhaps your first chariot will be bright daffodil yellow with orange accents and masses of glittering, customized chrome trim fore and aft. The bodywork gleams – it's obvious that each one is somebody's baby. They're reliable, frequent and cheap, costing pennies to get you where you want to go, which is pretty much all over the island. Screw up your courage, arm yourself with a bus map from your hotel and

pick the day's destination, keeping an eye out for the time of the last bus home. Locate your nearest bus stop, gather the ingredients for a picnic (Malta has some mouth-watering local goat cheeses, and small bakeries with wonderful crusty loaves and sinful pastries), check your small change, and set off.

The small change is important. The bus driver is the absolute monarch of all he surveys. Other drivers live in fear of him, not least on the steep hills. Most of the bus drivers have the charm of Attila the Hun, and do not like to make change. If you proffer him a large bill you may not get on his bus. Coins, maybe; bills rarely. If he doesn't like the cut of your jib you may not be allowed on board at all, but that's rare. So hop on. The first thing you'll notice is the hand-painted invitation by the door – "Welcome Aboard" – in English. And then you'll realize there's no door. Sitting opposite the doorway gets risky when rounding corners at speed, thanks to slippery leather seats, burnished to a fine shine by years of use, so hold on tight. Once aboard, you begin to notice how these old chariots are patched together. The gear lever is long and spindly, like a daffodil stalk, and has to be coaxed into position, with much grinding of gears, before the cogs mesh. As the bus rattles over the narrow roads, you marvel at how every part of its being seems to articulate independently: the whole vehicle shimmies. It toils up the steeper hills, accompanied by much grinding of gears and other disconcerting sounds that cause the uninitiated to exchange wild glances.

The driver's cab, the holy of holies, is decorated like a shrine: garlands of lights, statues, holy pictures, prayers, family portraits, everything. Beside the driver's seat, on the passenger side, a bench seat runs fore and aft. This is the men's club, tacitly reserved for cronies of the driver, who will exchange friendly banter with him. Seldom will a woman occupy a seat there, except perhaps a tourist, who may be excused as being unaware of the males-only con-

vention. Occasionally you'll see an older passenger climb slowly aboard, sink thankfully into a seat and promptly cross himself. Or an elderly nun will pull out a rosary and begin to pray. This is disconcerting on the one hand, but reassuring when you consider their age. These people have lived with the buses for many years and have seen it all and survived.

Your trip may take you to Valletta, the island capital. This is antique-bus heaven. Not only can you get a bus here to undiscovered parts of Malta, but a true devotee could spend many happy hours in the open-air terminal, admiring and photographing the different models of buses. Each has its own personalized chrome and some sport slogans on the front.

With its membership in the European Union, Malta is on the brink of change. There will be the inevitable regulating and modernization. Some of what makes this spectacular island unique will vanish, including the yellow buses, which probably violate every safety and pollution code in the book. Whatever replaces them will be streamlined, safe, homogeneous ... and more expensive. But something irreplaceable will have been lost forever. Maybe someone on Malta will have the foresight to create a bus museum, with the best of these beautiful old beasts on display. Right now,

breathtaking cathedrals you can pause for a cappuccino and some people-watching in one of the sidewalk cafés. And for lunch or dinner you'll discover the Maltese excel at seafood, even in the most modest café. A plaque in the main square of Valletta commemorates the courage of the Maltese in World War II, when they withstood nightly bombing and near-starvation to defy the German Luftwaffe. The whole island – every man, woman and child – was awarded the George Cross, Britain's highest civilian medal, for bravery.

Resorts on Malta vary. Quiet Mellieha has fabulous views and a couple of fascinating shrines to the Virgin Mary. In one, set in a cave, there is a collection of baby clothes in testament to miraculous cures of sick children. In the other, at street level, there is the familiar collection of child-size crutches and braces, and a portrait of Mary said to have been painted by St. Luke. Other resorts include St. Julian, Bugibba and Sliema. These tend to be busier, with less character, but they have great nightlife, casinos, good restaurants and shopping malls if that's what you are looking for.

Many Mediterranean cruises call at Malta, but that only gives you a day to explore. The best and easiest way to visit the islands is to arrange a side-trip from Europe, especially from Britain where it has been a popular destination for Brits for decades. Thomas Cook ([www.thomascook.com](http://www.thomascook.com)) or

## The driver's cab, the holy of holies, is decorated like a shrine: garlands of lights, statues, holy pictures, prayers, family portraits, everything.

however, there is a window of opportunity to experience the old Malta, with the bus system that lets you explore these incredible islands in an unforgettable way.

Malta is alive with experiences you'll find nowhere else. Ever since the apostle Paul was shipwrecked on its eastern coast – even before that – invaders have wanted to seize the island because of its huge sheltered and strategic harbour. The local language, Malti, is thus a strange blend of Latin and Arabic, though English is widely spoken.


The islands are heaven for photographers. The best sites include Mdina, the silent city, with its narrow, labyrinthine streets built by crusader knights, all in gorgeous honey-coloured stone, complete with cathedral and citadel offering wonderful views. Or there's Marsaxlokk (pronounced Marsash-lock), a lively, unspoiled fishing village on the south coast, its harbour filled with brilliantly-painted, gracefully-curved boats of ancient design, bobbing gently on the tide. Here you'll see fishermen mending their nets, sitting cross-legged on the quay, and take in the colourful, open-air market and its unusual and reasonably-priced local crafts. Even on a stroll round any neighbourhood, you'll spot the pretty ceramic plaques decorating the walls of the houses, usually with a religious theme, each one different.

The capital Valletta is a must-see. Put on some comfortable walking shoes – the streets are mostly cobblestone – and explore its thousand-year-old history right alongside world-class shopping and a street market. Between visiting

Thomson Holidays ([www.thomson.co.uk](http://www.thomson.co.uk)) offer one-week flight and hotel packages that are good deals, especially in spring or fall. These are the best seasons anyway ... you will avoid the heat and find the sandy beaches (though lovely they are few in number) less crowded. We stayed in Mellieha, in a budget hotel booked through Thomson Holidays; I've since revisited the website and it's no longer featured, but both the above websites have a good selection to choose from. Bugibba, Sliema and St. Julian seem to be inhabited only by tourists, but then again they have plenty of facilities to delight vacationers to compensate for what they lack in local colour. And you can always explore on those yellow buses!

Information on Malta is available from the **Consulate General of Malta**, Clarica Centre, 730 -3300 Bloor Street W., Toronto M8X 2X2, tel: 416 207 0922, fax: 207 0986 or visit [www.visitmalta.com](http://www.visitmalta.com) or [www.mta.com.mt/](http://www.mta.com.mt/).

For bus timetables on Malta: [www.atp.com.mt/](http://www.atp.com.mt/).

We find some of the best transatlantic fares are at [www.canadian-affair.com](http://www.canadian-affair.com). A useful site for inexpensive trips to Malta from the United Kingdom is [www.thomascook.com](http://www.thomascook.com). Valletta is a port of call on Mediterranean cruises with the following companies: [costacruises.com](http://costacruises.com), [msccruises.com](http://msccruises.com), [seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com) and [oceaniacruises.com](http://oceaniacruises.com) 

*No plans yet for a summer vacation? Our advice? Stay right here in Canada and enjoy one or more of our wonderful destinations, whether near or far. Here are some ideas ...*

## ACROSS CANADA

*compiled by Ann Wallace*

\* Let's start in (and near) the **nation's capital**, home of so many cultural attractions. Now 10 of these establishments have combined to offer local residents and visitors a Passport Savings Programme, which means 50% off regular admission fees at all the national museums in **Ottawa** and **Hull**. The Passport costs \$30 per adult or \$75 for a family and can be purchased at any of the participating museums as well as at the National Capital Commission's Infocentre, located opposite Parliament Buildings. Participants include the Canada Agriculture Museum, Canada Aviation Museum, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Canadian Museum of Nature, Canada Science and Technology Museum, Canadian War Museum, Laurier House, National Gallery of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mint. The Passport is valid for seven days following the first museum visit. In addition, to complete any visit to the capital, passport holders can enjoy a 20% discount on theatre, dance or orchestra performances at the National Arts Centre. Ballet lovers may like to schedule their Ottawa visit between 26 and 29 October, when the Kirov Ballet, with the Kirov Orchestra, will be performing *Swan Lake* (three evening and two matinee performances). For more details of the passport visit [www.virtualmuseum.ca/passport](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/passport) and for the National Arts Centre log on to [www.nac-cna.ca](http://www.nac-cna.ca) or call 1 866 850 ARTS. Lovers of Canadian art may like to make a note of this summer's special exhibition at the National Gallery (2 June – 4 September) when **Emily Carr: New Perspectives** will be featured. This exhibition will include some 200 objects – paintings, caricatures, ceramics, sculpture, hooked rugs, books, maps, photographs and more – most celebrating the north-west Pacific Coast and including about 150 works of art by Carr herself. For details of this and the many other exhibitions planned for the coming months visit [www.nationalgallery.ca](http://www.nationalgallery.ca) or call 1 800 319 ARTS for brochures.

\* For your Ottawa visit you'll also need the new *2006-2007 Ottawa Visitor Guide*. This 100-page reference

guide of Ottawa and area details attractions, accommodation and events as well as photographs, feature articles and valuable coupons. Call 1 800 363 4465 for your free copy or visit [www.ottawatourism.ca](http://www.ottawatourism.ca).

\* While you're visiting the capital region, or if you live close, you may also like to include the small town of **Carp, Ontario**, only a 30-minute drive west of Ottawa, in your itinerary. Carp is home to one of Canada's most fascinating-sounding museums – the **Diefenbunker, Canada's Cold War Museum**. It appears to be just like any farmer's field from afar, but, look hard and you can see its hidden entrance – a monument to what Canada was like in the Cold War days of the '60s and '70s. The Diefenbunker, now designated as a National Historic Site, is an underground nuclear bomb-proof bunker. This immense structure was built in secrecy during the height of the Cold War between 1959 and 1961, and was meant to house the top officials of the Canadian government and military during a nuclear attack. This huge, four-storey bunker was closed by the Canadian Government in the 1990s and sold to a privately-funded museum group who now operate the building as an underground museum. Exhibits and recreated areas provide a startling glimpse into the mindset of Canada's government at a time when the heavily-armed super powers glared at each over the Iron Curtain. Even though it is called the Diefenbunker, there is no record of former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker actually visiting it. In fact Pierre Trudeau is the only Canadian prime minister on record to have visited the Diefenbunker. During the summer season (1 July – 4 September) the museum is open 7 days a week and guided tours are available at 11, 12, 1, 2 and 3 o'clock, but visitors must call ahead to book the tour. After passing through the museum's airlock it takes about 1½ hours to tour the facility. Visitors will see the emergency CBC Radio Studio and Control Room; the Bank of Canada vault with its 2 ft. thick, 15 ton door; the Prime Minister's Suite consisting of office and bedroom; a small jail; a spacious cafeteria and kitchen; the Emergency Government Operations Centre and the War Cabinet Room. There is also a mock-up of a basement family fallout shelter, and a special photographic exhibition about the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. The Museum and its staff of volunteers (some of them retired government employees who worked in the bunker) host a number of special programming events throughout the summer. These include Cold War themed movie nights, lectures, and even a "spy day-

camp” for children. Admission is \$14 or less. For information, directions and a list of events call 613 839 0007 or visit [www.diefenbunker.ca](http://www.diefenbunker.ca).

\* When you’ve enjoyed the capital and, perhaps, the Diefenbunker, how about heading to a resort in Ontario? Many of them are marketed under the ‘Resorts of Ontario’ umbrella with the slogan ‘Come on up to our place’.

**Killarney Mountain Lodge**, located amongst the spectacular scenery of Georgian Bay and run for 45 years by seniors Maury and Annabelle East,



is one of the special gems in this collection of resorts. For details of all these properties, which number over 200 and range from luxurious to rustic, visit [www.resortsofontario.com](http://www.resortsofontario.com) to order a *Great Escapes Guide 2006* or call 1 800 363 7227. Gift certificates are available for those hard-to-please people on your list.

\* Still in **Ontario**, and with outdoor adventures in mind, you may like to visit [www.voyageurquest.com](http://www.voyageurquest.com) or call 416 486 3605 or 1 800 794 9660 for details of a variety of getaways in **Algonquin Park** and **Georgian Bay**. You can choose active trips or decide to relax in Voyageur Quest’s cozy Algonquin cabin. All of these trips are well priced and highly recommended by *TTS* as Editor Ann enjoyed an excursion with them several years ago and the company has gone from success to success.

\* Close to or visiting Toronto? The free 1-2 hour **guided walks** offered by the **Royal Ontario Museum** every Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoon until 27 September are a great way to explore and learn about Canada’s largest city. Themes among the 18 different walks offered include ‘ROM and its Neighbours’, ‘Cathedrals of Wealth and Commerce’ (i.e. early and modern banks and the Old Stock Exchange), ‘Historic Toronto’, ‘Hidden Treasures’, ‘Rosedale’ and many others. Here at *TTS* we try to enjoy them whenever time permits. Details at

[www.rom.on.ca](http://www.rom.on.ca) or by calling 416 586 8097.

\* Lovers of art, Canada and the Arctic may like to plan a trip to the historic town of Unionville, about an hour’s drive from Toronto where this summer (until 1 October) the Varley Art Gallery of Markham is staging the exhibition *Artists’ Odysseys – The Arctic*. This unusual exhibition includes Northwest passage books and artifacts; carvings, prints and dolls made by a variety of Inuit artists as well as paintings by A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Fred Varley, Doris McCarthy and dozens of others; 115

works in all. Details at [www.varleygallery.ca](http://www.varleygallery.ca) or by calling 905 477 9511. When you go, Blacksmith’s Bistro at 166 Main Street, Unionville (905 305 0503) would be a good spot for lunch or dinner.

\* Let’s think about **Québec** now. A *Québec Resorts and Country Inns Guide* would be a good place to start and a copy can be yours free by visiting [www.resort-squebec.com](http://www.resort-squebec.com) where it can be downloaded or a copy ordered, or call 1 800 861 4024. Lots of tempting ideas and special packages to be found there.

\* Perhaps a tour in Québec appeals? A company called Québec Arts Tours has a small but tempting selection of trips. They cover gardens (and so much more) in **Montréal**, culinary explorations in **Québec City** and – for fall – a 5-day trip entitled ‘**Autumn Dreams in Charlevoix**’ – a trip that takes participants from Québec City to explore the splendours of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in Charlevoix. On this trip (priced at around C\$1,545 pp. dbl.) participants will stay the night in a boutique hotel and tour Old Québec City with a historian before travelling on to stay 3 nights in Auberge La Muse in Baie Saint-Paul. From there participants will enjoy art tours, museums and, of course, wonderful cuisine. Highlight of the tour is a boat trip on the Malbaie River to admire the fall colours while travelling through the Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie National Park – one of the most dramatic valleys in the province – where a

naturalist will explain why this region was the first site in Canada to be designated a Biosphere Reserve. For details visit [www.QuebecArtsTours.com](http://www.QuebecArtsTours.com) or call 1 888 569 4040.

\* Garden lovers may like to make their way independently to **Montréal** to enjoy that city's first **International Flora** exhibition which has just opened to many accolades. Described as a "window onto the art of gardens" there are 45 gardens on show, created by landscape architects and garden designers from across Canada as well as England, France and Australia. The location for this exhibition is the Old Port of Montréal, where the gardens are grouped according to themes such as 'City Gardens', 'Avant-Garde', 'Balcony' and 'Rooftop Gardens'. The show runs from 16 June to 9 October and will henceforth become an annual event. Details can be found at [www.floramontreal.ca](http://www.floramontreal.ca) or 1 866 55 FLORA.

\* Here at TTS we love **Québec's Eastern Township** in all seasons. (Note: if you do not wish to drive to the region, Air Sherbrooke may be the answer. See your agent, call 819 832 1223 or log on to [www.airsherbrooke.com](http://www.airsherbrooke.com) for details.) Now there's a new brochure to help you plan your explorations of this beautiful region. It's called *Exquisite Travel – Charming Bed & Breakfasts and Country Inns* and it includes colour photographs of each property and details of six 'routes' which lead to agritourism produces where you can sample the bounty of the land and fill your picnic basket. Call 1 800 355 5755 or visit [www.eastertownships.org](http://www.eastertownships.org). **Train lovers** may like to enjoy a trip on the **Orford Express**, a tourist train that reveals the beautiful scenery between Bromont and Sherbrooke, with historical commentary, music, meals and drinks en route. The train can accommodate 140 passengers and there is access for persons with reduced mobility. Details at [www.letrain.ca](http://www.letrain.ca) or call 1 888 747 2844. **Spa lovers** can also find all their hearts' desire in this region (and elsewhere in Québec) with a special guide designed for them listing the 17 certified spas in the province's tourist regions. Your bilingual *Spas Relais Santé* brochure can be obtained by calling 1 800 788 7594 or visit [www.spasrelaissante.com](http://www.spasrelaissante.com).

\* If **Victoria B.C.** is in your plans you may like to consider spending some pleasant hours at the 565-acre **Hatley Park Estate**, located about 25 minutes' drive from Victoria on Sooke Road, overlooking Esquimalt Lagoon and the Juan de Fuca Strait. At this National

Historic Site you can enjoy tours of Hatley Castle and its Edwardian gardens, ancient forests and museum. In addition to these regular tours, the site also offers a variety of programmes, including ocean and meadow birdwatching, sketching, ecosystem explorations, wetland discoveries and more. Information at [www.hatleypark.ca](http://www.hatleypark.ca) or 1 866 241 0674.

\* For something complete different for your BC getaway, how about exploring some Aboriginal culture or heading out to paddle, bird or animal watch or enjoy a variety of events with a First Nations guide? Visit the website of the **Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia** – [www.aboriginalbc.com](http://www.aboriginalbc.com) – where you'll find a wide range of interesting activities: watch native artists carve a totem pole, explore traditional lands and waters with an Aboriginal guide and experience a First Nations healing and purification lodge with a native elder. Exquisite Pacific Northwest native art is on view and for sale in many art galleries, cultural centres and museums. In addition, there are traditional foods and award-winning wines to sample; native-owned resorts, campgrounds, log cabins and bed & breakfast inns to relax in and even golf to enjoy on a native-owned championship golf course!

\* We mentioned Toronto walks above, and now here's news of a special walking tour in **Vancouver**. It's the **Historic Chinatown Walking Tour** (\$10) which takes place every Sunday at 7 p.m. and introduces participants to the stories, sights, smells – and shopping at the Night Market – of Vancouver's Chinatown. Registration is required 2 days ahead – call 604 662 3207 or visit [www.vancouverchinesegarden.com](http://www.vancouverchinesegarden.com). The tours begin at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden.

\* On the other side of the country – **Newfoundland** to be exact – news of a property that may appeal to readers. It's the **Fishers' Loft Inn** located in the tiny outport of **Port Exton** on Trinity Bay, about 3 hours' drive from St. John's. Looks great and its restaurant has earned a star in *Where to Eat in Canada 2006*, one of only two restaurants in Newfoundland to be so recognized. Some of the activities offered here are iceberg watching (May to mid-July), hiking, whale watching and live theatre at the nearby Rising Tide Theatre. Rates at the 21-room inn range from \$99 (dbl., without meals) to \$308 (dbl, including breakfast and dinner). For more information call 1 877 464 3240 or be tempted by visiting [www.fishersloft.com](http://www.fishersloft.com).

## BRITAIN

\* Heading to Britain to see friends? Why not include them in your train journeys? Travellers purchasing a first class BritRail Pass this year can receive a 50% discount on special "BritRail Guest Passes" from Rail Europe. The offer applies to passes purchased between now and the end of the year and travel must take place up to six months from the date of purchase. The **BritRail Guest Pass** promotion applies to the BritRail Consecutive Passes, FlexiPass, and BritRail London Plus Pass. The UK guest, who must be resident in Britain and accompany the Canadian passholder, will receive a 50% discount on any of these passes. Prices start at \$386 for a BritRail Consecutive Pass for four consecutive rail travel days in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Your travel agent can help you sort out the labyrinth of passes, or call Rail Europe at 1 800 361 7245 or visit [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com).

\* There's a new website that claims to help travellers keep an eye on their budgets while in London. Log onto [www.londonvacationguide.com](http://www.londonvacationguide.com) if that city is in your plans and see if you think the site may be helpful to you. Another site helps visitors find hotels near London Underground Stations ... a time- and money-saving arrangement. The website is rather unpleasantly called [www.tubehotels.com](http://www.tubehotels.com).

## KOREA

If Korea is in your plans before 3 September you may like to include Seoul's Museum of Art in your itinerary. For there you'll find a major Picasso exhibition – *The People of Picasso* – presenting some 140 works from 20 museums and individuals around the world. Several of the works have not been shown in public before. Information at [www.picassokorea.com](http://www.picassokorea.com) and excellent tourism information from [www.tour2korea.com](http://www.tour2korea.com).

## SPAIN

\* Independent travellers may like to investigate Nolitours' "Fly & Drive" holidays in Spain, offered from 19 June to 23 October. Starting from \$1,099 for seven nights these vacations include roundtrip airfare from Toronto and a one-week Alamo car rental which includes unlimited kilometres, CDW, TP, Third Party Liability, air-conditioning, AM/FM stereo, manual or automatic transmission, convenient pick-up and drop-off locations and 24-hour emergency assistance. Nolitours' Splendid Spain programme also offers escorted tours, hotel packages, nightly hotel rates, daily excursions and car rentals. Your travel agent will have brochures, or visit [www.nolitours.com](http://www.nolitours.com). Nolitours is the new name of World of Vacations.

\* Travellers to Spain may like to check out the website of **Rancho Sentosa**, an Andalucian house with two self-contained apartments in the hills near Malaga. One of Editor

Ann's friends is planning to go there soon and will write a report about it for us, but in the meantime we thought it worth mentioning for your summer/fall travels as it looks wonderful. Owner Vanessa Schon was born in Canada, so she'd love to hear from you. Take a peek at [www.ranchosentosa.com](http://www.ranchosentosa.com), call [011 34] 952 590 755 or fax: 951 232 038.

## SWITZERLAND

Planning to explore beautiful Switzerland with a Swiss Pass (for trains, lake steamers, etc)? Now you'll discover that this popular pass includes admissions to over 400 museums and attractions around the country (such as the new Paul Klee Center in Bern and ancient Chillon Castle on Lake Geneva) and also 50% discounts (up from the previous 25%) on most cable car rides and cogwheel trains. Other Swiss Pass bonuses include free use of city transportation systems and discounts on many hotels and city tours. Information from 1 800 361 7245 or at [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com). (And if you're flying Swiss Air Lines check our Airline News column.) Switzerland Tourism has a wonderful *Our Alpine Summer* brochure, as well as comprehensive literature and special packages for almost every region and city. They can be contacted at 416 695 3496 or visit [www.MySwitzerland.com](http://www.MySwitzerland.com).

## U.S.A.

\* **Governors Island**, out in **New York Harbour**, has recently been opened to the public and is now accessible via a free ferry service every hour from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m on Fridays and Saturdays until 2 September 2006. The Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (GIPEC), along with the National Park Service (NPS), will provide a variety of public activities on Governors Island that showcase the Island's past and future. In addition to the Friday and Saturday programme for the general public, guided walking tours of the National Historic Landmark District will be given on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, throughout August at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. These tours are limited to 40 persons on a first come, first served basis. They are led by Rangers from the NPS, are 1½ hours in duration and cover approximately 1½ miles. Apart from the lucky 40, there will be no general public access on these days and the Island is closed to all on Sundays and Mondays. Be among the first to enjoy this green space, just 7 minutes from Lower Manhattan, and its magnificent city views. Take a picnic, perhaps! (In fact, all visitors to the island are encouraged to take snacks and drinks, as such items are limited there. Sun and weather protection and appropriate footwear for the pedestrian-only island are also advised.) For information, visit [www.govisland.com](http://www.govisland.com) or call 212 440 2202. Especially important is the 'directions' link to help you find the ferry dock in

Manhattan and reach it via public transportation.

\* **Virginia's Loonie Savers Programme** is being offered to Canadians again this year and through 31 January 2007. Many of the 67 coupons offer two-for-one deals or discounts up to 50%, which represent better savings these days than "at-par" offers. The coupon booklet can be downloaded directly from [www.virginia.org/loonie](http://www.virginia.org/loonie).

\* There are similar deals on offer in **North Carolina**, where 53 participants – accommodations, golf, attractions, shops and restaurants – are taking part in the **North Carolina Drives Home the Value for Canadians** until the end of the year. If well used, the brochures can represent over US\$1,000 in savings. The booklet can be obtained by calling Jeanette Faria in Toronto at 416 622 1680, e-mail:

[jfaria@melainecomunications.com](mailto:jfaria@melainecomunications.com) or it can be downloaded from [www.travelsouthusa.com](http://www.travelsouthusa.com), click on the Trip Ideas section for North Carolina.

\* It's often hard getting around without a car in the States. Not so in the **San Francisco Bay Area** where there's a free pocket guide to riding public transit in the nine-county region. With details of ferries, cable cars, buses and the rail system, as well as a list of 250 popular destinations, this guide makes exploring this area a breeze. The guide also includes a directory of paratransit van and taxi services for the disabled and elderly. The guide can be viewed online at [www.mtc.ca.gov/library](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/library), or send an e-mail with your name and address to [library@mtc.ca.gov](mailto:library@mtc.ca.gov) (or call 510 817 5836) and a copy will be sent to you.

## airline news

● **Air Canada** has some new routes. **Toronto/Shanghai**, thrice weekly, is the only non-stop flight from eastern North America to Shanghai and offers the fastest flying time from Toronto. With an elapsed time of 14 hours, 45 minutes westbound and 13 hours, 40 minutes eastbound, the route will save travellers three hours in each direction compared to the Vancouver routing.

● **AC** also has a new daily non-stop service between **Montreal** and **Mexico City**. AC officials claim the flights are conveniently timed to offer travellers a range of connecting flights from Montreal throughout the province of Québec, as well as to and from Atlantic Canada, including Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John and St. John's. On the domestic front, **AC** has launched non-stop service from **Abbotsford, BC** to **Toronto**, using Embraer E190 aircraft offering nine executive class and 84 economy class seats. In addition to the new Abbotsford-Toronto flight, **AC** and **AC Jazz** also offer three daily scheduled, non-stop flights from **Abbotsford** to **Calgary**, complementing Air Canada's 20 daily flights to Toronto and 18 daily flights to Calgary offered from its Vancouver hub.

● UK tour operator **Canadian Affair** has opened its first Canadian office in downtown Vancouver and has launched its new summer schedule, featuring more than 40 weekly flights from seven Canadian airports to four major UK cities. Canadian Affair flies from **Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, and Halifax to London (Gatwick), Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow**. Flights from Toronto to London, Glasgow and Manchester start at \$99 one way, excluding taxes, and to Birmingham at \$139. Non-stop flights from Calgary and Vancouver to London and Manchester start at \$249 one way, excluding taxes. Founded in 1995, Canadian Affair carries more than 200,000 passengers a year between Canada and the UK. Information at 1 8778 FLY2UK and [www.canadian-affair.ca](http://www.canadian-affair.ca).

● **CanJet Airlines** and **Harmony Airways** have formed a

marketing partnership to provide travellers with increased options for coast-to-coast service across Canada, starting 1 June. [www.canjet.com](http://www.canjet.com) and [www.harmonyairways.com](http://www.harmonyairways.com) or 1 800 809 7777. Also worth noting is Harmony Airways' new non-stop routes to New York (JFK) and the San Francisco Bay Area from Vancouver.

● There's a luxurious deal coming from **Cathay Pacific Airways**, but you'll have to decide quickly! To celebrate its 60th anniversary, travellers who purchase a qualifying Cathay Pacific Business Class round-trip ticket for travel from Vancouver or Toronto to Hong Kong between 1 August and 30 September can take a companion for only \$60. Tickets must be purchased by July 16 with travel completed by 31 October. Both passengers must travel at the same time and must reside in Canada. [www.cathaypacific.ca](http://www.cathaypacific.ca)

● **Japan Airlines** has announced it will join *oneworld*, the airline alliance led by British Airways and American Airlines, in early 2007.

● Delays or long waits for international connections in Toronto can now be more pleasant, as long as you're using Terminal 3 and don't mind parting with C\$25. That's the charge to use **KLM's** Crown Lounge, an offer that is now open to all international travellers, no matter which airline or class of service they may be flying. The 140-seat KLM lounge offers a self-service buffet, drinks, two TV rooms (one located in a separate smoking area) and a business centre offering individual workstations equipped with electrical outlets and wireless internet connection. In addition, the use of printers, copiers and fax machines are provided free of charge to the passengers. Lounge access passes can be purchased in advance or on day of departure at KLM's ticket counter in the departure hall or in the lounge itself, which is open 24 hours/seven days a week.

● This coming winter tour operator **Sunquest** will have two new Canadian gateways – **Québec City** (with flights to **Cancun**) and St. John's, Nfld., (with flights to **Puerto Plata**). They will also be returning to **Hamilton** with

flights to **Cancun** and the **Mayan Coast** and **Punta Cana**. The tour company will also be offering three new Caribbean destinations: **St. Kitts, Barbados** and **Samana** in the **Dominican Republic**. St. Kitts and Barbados are being served out of **Toronto** with departures on Mondays, beginning Dec. 25, 2006, while to the D.R., Sunquest will be offering weekly flights out of **Toronto** on Mondays, **Montreal** on Thursdays, and out of **Ottawa** on Tuesdays. Other Sunquest departure airports include **Vancouver, Winnipeg, Kelowna, Victoria** and **Kitchener-Waterloo**. Your agent will have Sunquest's winter brochure, or visit [www.sunquest.ca](http://www.sunquest.ca).

● If **Switzerland** is in your plans and if you're flying with **SWISS** (daily flights from Toronto – codesharing with Air Canada – and Montreal) you'll discover that the airline is now a Star Alliance member, offering affiliated routes and points on the Miles & More programme. 1 877 FLY SWISS, [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com) and [www.miles-and-more.com](http://www.miles-and-more.com).

● **ZOOM Airlines** has been mentioned in our pages before. This spring, Editor Ann took her first flights with them, overnight from Toronto to London (Gatwick) and back again on an afternoon flight. "I was impressed. The plane was very clean and the staff relaxed but helpful and efficient. I treated myself to the up-grade – nowhere near the cost of business class on the big airlines – and enjoyed a dedicated cabin and spacious seat. Had I required it, this upgrade would have meant an increased baggage

allowance too. Drinks were generously offered: I enjoyed a vodka/o.j. soon after take-off and wine with the tasty dinner. There were even a couple of after-dinner drinks available for those who wanted them. On the flight over we stopped in Cardiff, Wales, when well over half the passengers disembarked, before the rest of us continued for about half an hour on to Gatwick. On my return our departure out of Gatwick was delayed a little, but this was for our safety as a light in one of the washrooms was not functioning properly and a repair and then a check was required to see that all electrical systems were working properly. This low-cost airline to the U.K. suits me well because most members of my family live in the southern counties of Surrey and Sussex and that's just where Gatwick is located. If friends in London are my first destination I take the train. There's a train to Central London (Victoria Station) every 15 minutes (hourly during the night) for £8 (C\$16.50) each way and the trip takes about half an hour. There are also frequent trains to Brighton on the South Coast and to various junctions with links to the rest of the U.K. Try Zoom on your next UK visit ... and, perhaps, plan to pause a while in lovely Surrey and Sussex – Ann." Call 1 866 FLY ZOOM or visit [www.flyzoom.com](http://www.flyzoom.com) for details of their scheduled service to London, Cardiff, Glasgow, Manchester, Belfast and Paris from major airports across Canada. 🇬🇧

*Peru ... continued from page 12*

had us sitting at Lima Airport through the evening and into the night for 9 or 10 hours ... a ghastly thought.

Overall this had been a wonderful holiday. Both parts – the sightseeing with Explore and the trekking with

Andean Treks – were very special and could be enjoyed separately or together as we did. Peru is a fascinating destination. 🇵🇪

## News from VIA

**VIA Rail** has a great summer promotion, on offer until 4 September. Take **VIA 1** between Toronto and Montréal or Ottawa and you'll discover the fare for this first-class trip is just \$139. You'll enjoy access to the Panorama Lounge, pre-boarding privileges, an at-your-seat meal and drinks service. For more information visit [www.viarail.ca/139](http://www.viarail.ca/139).

VIA also has a permanent fare plan system-wide for seniors. The **Senior's Companion Fare** allows passengers 60 and over travelling in Economy class at the regular senior's fare to bring along a companion absolutely free. If you wish to travel VIA 1 or Sleeper class, your travel companion receives a 75% discount off the regular adult fare.

Tickets must be booked five days or more before departure and are subject to limited availability. There are no restrictions on the age of the companion. For more information visit [www.viarail.ca/2for1](http://www.viarail.ca/2for1).

And if you're travelling with children, those over 18 who purchase an adult-fare, senior or student Comfort Class (Economy) ticket can take along a child aged 2-11 free. This programme is available until 15 September on every VIA train system. [Information at www.viarail.ca/kids](http://www.viarail.ca/kids).

**Niagara** in your plans? It's no good pretending it's a pretty drive from Toronto to Niagara. But there's an alternative: take the train ... the Niagara Falls station is only minutes from the Falls. There are three departures daily and the Seniors' 2 for 1 and Kids Travel Free programmes apply. There's also another treat on some departures: **VIA Rail**, in partnership with **Peller Estates Winery** and **Fallsview Casino Resort**, has unveiled the Fallsview Casino Car. Through the summer, until 8 September, this special car will be the scene for a variety of activities that have made the Niagara region so popular with visitors: a little wine tasting and a touch of gambling or 'learn-to-play' sessions. Reports are it's good fun and the time flies by! For more information visit [www.viarail.ca](http://www.viarail.ca).

**22 days from \$5,995**

Limited to 20 Members  
A few places left!

# A Traveller's Turkey

*Departing: 12 September 2006, Spring & Fall 2007*

It is one of the cradles of civilization and one of the most wonderful countries on the planet. Here 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 of Turkey exclusively for Travel Society members. We have combined our extensive knowledge with careful research 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: 22 Days

Toronto	\$5,995.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,175.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,175.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$6,245.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,295.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.) Prices are subject to confirmation



### Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic flights with Air Canada/Lufthansa/British Airways
- All domestic flights
- 20 nights' accommodation
- All 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
- All Taxes

**Please call 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the complete itineraries**

## Copper Canyon and Mexico City

*Departing: 11 September; 9 October; 6 November;  
4 December 2006 & Spring 2007*

New  
itinerary!

We are offering a new 9-day tour to Mexico City and the Copper Canyon. 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:

Toronto, Ottawa & Montreal	\$3,760 pp/dbl
Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg	\$3,994 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$748 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Prices are subject to confirmation

### Your tour includes:

- All air on Mexicana/Air Canada
- Canadian domestic air
- Bilingual guides
- 8 nights first class accommodation
- All transfers, baggage handling & tips
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All train trips and tours as per the itinerary
- All taxes

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.  

## a 19-day tour with Cyril Payle at an incredible price ...

# Spectacular South Africa

No charge  
London stopover

Departure: 21 September 2006 & 1 March & 11 October 2007

Come with The Travel Society to a land of wonder ... on a South African trip unlike any other. Designed especially for our members, this trip takes in all the highlights: Kruger National Park for game watching, the famous Garden Route, the beautiful wine region of Stellenbosch and the sights of incomparable Cape Town, including Cape Point, Chapman's Peak Drive and Robben Island. But on our trip you will do far more. You will tour the Great Escarpment of Eastern Transvaal – a place so beautiful writers run out of adjectives – where you will visit God's Window, the Blyde River Canyon and historical towns like Pilgrims Rest. You'll see Johannesburg and be escorted to Soweto for lunch in a Township house and jazz in a famous nightspot. You'll enter the Kingdom of Swaziland to meet the people and enjoy more game watching. Zululand is also on the itinerary, with its historical sites and unique entertainment traditions. You'll be driven through the Valley of a Thousand Hills to East London and

take the famous Outeniqua Choo-Toe train from Knysna to George. You'll visit the Addo Elephant National Park and traverse the Little Karoo Desert – flanked by great mountain ranges – to see the Cango Caves. You'll travel in a luxury air-conditioned coach, you'll stay in lovely properties ranging from good hotels to charming chalets, you'll enjoy a wide variety of entertainment and you'll enjoy South Africa's delicious cuisine and wines and you'll be escorted all the way by Satour-accredited guides. Here at The Travel Society we know South Africa well ... and we can't imagine a more comprehensive, in-depth and fascinating tour of South Africa.

### PRICES INCLUDING AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa \$7,315 pp/dbl

Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax \$7,675 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$790.00 (sharing can be arranged)

Prices are subject to confirmation

### Your tour includes:

- Return international airfare on British Airways
- First-class accommodation throughout
- Luxury a/c coach
- Experienced Satour-accredited tour guides
- Special Travel Society experiences
- All meals breakfast, light lunch and dinner
- All transfers with full luggage service
- All sightseeing fees (with no hidden extras)
- All taxes

### Small Ship

## Galapagos Islands Cruise & Ecuador

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

14 days departing 7 September, 12 October, 2 November & 7 December 2006,

4 January, 15 February, 8 March & 5 April 2007

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.

You'll also visit other destinations in Ecuador, and then you can choose to enjoy the exciting optional extensions: to Kapawi - a ecological lodge in the Amazon and/or a visit Machu Picchu in Peru. We'll take care of all the travel details. All you have to do is enjoy!

PRICES INCLUDE AIR: Toronto \$5,995.00 pp/dbl

prices are available from all major cities

### GREAT ADD-ONS, INCLUDING AIR:

Kapawi - from all departure points \$1,680.00 pp/dbl

Machu Picchu from \$1,996.00 pp/dbl

Prices are subject to confirmation

### Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international air
- All domestic air transportation
- All accommodation
- First class Galapagos small ship cruise
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Admissions to all sites
- Expert Galapagos guides
- Transfers & baggage handling
- All taxes

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. TICO ACTA

New itinerary  
for 2006 & 2007

# China ... Yangtze Spectacular

## \$4,145 FOR 18 DAYS!

Departing: 6 September, 4 October 2006,  
Spring & Fall 2007



### Please call for the full itinerary

**I**t 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 (now in the process of changing 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 Chongqing 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!

#### AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES:

<b>Departing:</b>	
Vancouver	\$4,145 pp/dbl
Victoria/Nanaimo/Kamloops	\$4,195 pp/dbl
Calgary/Edmonton	\$4,420 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,420 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,590 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,490 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,490 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec City/London	\$4,850 pp/dbl
St. John's	\$4,850 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$1,195 (Sharing can be arranged.)	
Taxes and visas extra.	

#### ADD-ON HONG KONG

4 days/3 nights	\$1,288 pp/dbl
Single supplement	\$544

#### ADD-ON BANGKOK

4 days/3 nights	\$1,185 pp/dbl
Single supplement	\$350

#### ADD-ON TOKYO

4 days/3 nights	\$1,375 pp/dbl
Single supplement	\$299

#### ADD-ON KYOTO

4 days/3 nights	\$1,450 pp/dbl
Single supplement	\$325

Editor Ann Wallace took the China Yangtze trip and her 14-page, illustrated account is available. For your copy please send \$5 with your address.

#### Your tour costs includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air fares on **Japan Airlines or Air Canada**
- 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 time in Beijing & Shanghai

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.



**A New  
Tour**

# India's Golden Triangle

21 days departing 9 October 2006, Spring & Fall 2007

No charge  
London  
stopover

India is one of the world's greatest travel destinations. But unless you're a young backpacker, a tour is the way to go! And The Travel Society is offering the ultimate tour of India's fabled northwestern region known as The Golden Triangle. This tour will show you all the highlights and more, including camel and elephant rides ... guaranteed to give wonderful photographs! You'll start your tour in Mumbai (once known as Bombay) where you'll visit Dhobi Ghat, the Gateway of India, Marine Drive, the Hanging Gardens, Jain Temple and the Prince of Wales Museum. There will be free time also, perhaps for a little shopping, before you fly to Udaipur, home of the Maharna City Palace, the Jagdish Temple, Garden of Maidens and so many other sites. And here you'll dine in the spectacular 250-year-old Lake Palace that seems to float on an island on Lake Pichola.

A drive to Mount Abu, a beautiful hill resort, comes next, followed by fabled Ranakpur, home of the beautiful Ranakpur Temples. Ancient Jodhpur is next on the itinerary, then it's on to the pilgrimage city of Pushkar with its temple dedicated to Lord Brahma. It's in Pushkar that, if you wish, you will take a camel ride into the sand dunes. The famous Pink City - Jaipur - the capital of Rajasthan comes next and you will spend two nights there, with days full of exciting sightseeing and an excursion to the Amber Fort by elephant. Jaipur is also famous for its bazaar full of wonderful gifts ... and of course you'll spend time there.

Agra is the home of the Taj Mahal and so, of course, it's on our itinerary too. You'll have an early night and leave before dawn to watch the beautiful Taj revealed by the rising

sun. Then it's on to Jhansi by the famous Shatabdi Express train - an incredible excursion. You'll be met by your bus there and driven on to Khajuraho, site of the World Heritage Temples - the eternal images of love. Varansi has been requested by many of our members and we've arranged for this destination to come next. You'll never forget your early-morning boat ride on the River Ganges here, nor the narrow by-lanes of this, one of the most ancient living cities. Your last destination is Delhi, reached by air to allow for plenty of time to see the sights and do some last-minute shopping.

Throughout this trip you will stay in first-class hotels; travel in de luxe a/c, fully-equipped coaches and enjoy wonderful meals, banquets and entertainment. Many days will be full, but there's plenty of free time too. Haven't you always wanted to visit India? Make this the year! Twenty-one days! A life-time time of memories! Come with The Travel Society and enjoy the best of Rajasthan with fellow members!



**Fully  
Escorted**

### Your tour includes:

- All international flights with British Airways
- Domestic flights
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- Shatabdi Train Fare
- State transport taxes
- All taxes
- All meals
- English-speaking guides and escort
- All entrance fees
- Elephant ride and Camel safari
- Baggage handling

### AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES: 22 Days

Toronto	\$6,055.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,154.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,154.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,296.00 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$6,296.00 pp/dbl	Winnipeg	\$6,296.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$6,296.00 pp/dbl		

Single supplement \$1,480 (Sharing can be arranged.) Prices are subject to confirmation

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