

The Travel Society

Vol. 25, No. 6 July/August 2007

Magazine



A Month in Spain
African Dreams
Egypt and Kenya

www.thetravelsociety.com

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Modelling is so very tiring!
(Lynda Swain)

editor's letter ...

A focus on Africa for your summer reading. Our first safari article is long, but how could I cut out any of Lynda Swain's exuberant account? As you read on, you will discover that Heinz and Inge Jaeger covered some of the same ground as Lynda and Jim, but their safari trip was preceded by a trip to Egypt ... two different ways of seeing something of the exotic continent of Africa.

Now that the brouhaha over CBC's Canada's Seven Wonders has died down (I'm a great admirer of canoes and igloos but feel that something a bit more - well - *visit-able* should have been on the list in their place) comes a list from the MasterCard people. Theirs is the Priceless Index, a "barometer of Canadian patriotism that tracks who, what and where is most priceless to Canadians". Apparently over 2,000 Canadians were surveyed. Nearly one in five (19%) of the group chose Vancouver as the number one Canadian city that tourists should not miss. Québec City (which was on the Seven Wonders final list) was a close second at 18%, followed by Montréal, Toronto and Ottawa. Not many surprises there. The Calgary Stampede was named the top must-see event for a tourist, with whale watching on both coasts and skating on Ottawa's Rideau Canal the runners up. The Rocky Mountain region was voted the best place for a road trip, closely followed by the Cabot Trail on Cape Breton Island. Newfoundland's Gros Morne, Alberta's Banff, Ontario's Algonquin and Québec's Laurentian were voted the "best places to pitch a tent".

This is our summer double issue. Time for me to take a few days off, I hope. I'll also tidy my office and think about future issues before I write to you again late in August. September's issue isn't clear in my mind yet, but I do know that I will be bringing you stories of Ottawa and the nearby lovely Outaouais region in good time for fall visits. In the meantime, I hope you all have a wonderful summer. Stay safe and *bon voyage!*



Another British Tour Company

My husband Cam and I have been flying to the United Kingdom, and often on to Continental Europe, at least once a year since 1976. For many years we travelled independently with a rental car and had many wonderful adventures. However, a number of years ago we decided that self-driving holidays were no longer for us, taking into account our advancing age, the ever-increasing traffic on European motorways and the rising costs of travelling independently.

In 2002 we discovered the British tour company Wallace Arnold which, in 2005, merged with another travel firm – Shearings – to form WAShearings and we have enjoyed over 20 European holidays with this firm in the last few years. They offer a wide selection of coach holidays both in the U.K. and continental Europe ranging from five days to over two weeks. Over the years we have particularly enjoyed short holidays to the French Riviera, Bruges in Belgium, the Swiss Alps, Sorrento in Italy and the Dordogne region of France.

We have also enjoyed a number of holidays in England. WAShearings own many large hotels in various seaside resorts, and short stays in Scarborough, Torquay, Eastbourne or the Isle of Wight are especially economical. While staying at these holidays resorts we enjoy 'days out' to a variety of local beauty spots and places of interest. Last fall, when staying at Torquay in Devon, we visited Plymouth, Dartmouth and two lovely Cornish villages – Looe and Polperro – and on our 'free' day we took the local bus into nearby Exeter.

The cost of a WAShearings holiday includes all transportation, luggage handling, accommodation, breakfasts and most dinners. Optional local tours are offered for an additional fee. One very convenient

feature of these tours is that WAShearings will pick you up practically anywhere in England and transfer you by 'feeder coach' to a central meeting point.

In April this year we went on an eight-day tour of the Rhine Valley in Germany for £337 (approx. C\$712) each. We stayed for five nights in a small family-owned hotel in the village of Assmannshausen. From there we visited Heidelberg, went on river cruises on the Rhine and Mosel rivers and went by train to Limburg and Koblenz. We then returned to England for a week before departing again; this time on a nine-day tour of northern Italy, centered on Lake Garda, which cost £459 each (about C\$969). From our base at the Hotel Bristol in Riva del Garda we set out on a number of day trips, including Venice, Verona and Bolzano – in the Italian Alps – where we visited the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology where the 5,000-year-old Ice Man is exhibited.

I have to admit that just occasionally the conditions have been less than perfect: we once stayed in a hotel in Hereford that would rival *Fawlty Towers* and a three-day stay in Andorra left much to be desired.

But most of the time we have had wonderful, trouble-free experiences with WAShearings. The drivers are usually knowledgeable, the coaches are comfortable and our fellow passengers are congenial. Incidentally, in all the tours we have taken, we have never met anyone else from North America, but I am sure there are some other TTS members that might enjoy travelling with WAShearings. I book these tours by phoning the WAShearings reservation line at [011 44] 1942 824 824 and there is also a website at www.washearings.com.uk or the trips can also be reserved through British travel agencies.

Before embarking on a tour to the continent, we always stay in Canterbury, Kent, as it is only a few miles from Dover where we sail on one of the large car ferries to Calais; a crossing that takes less than two hours. In spite of the constant influx of young

daytrippers from the continent, Canterbury remains a delightful city to visit for a few days with its wonderful cathedral, the Marlowe Theatre, many museums, great shopping and a large choice of interesting pubs and restaurants. We always stay right in the centre of Canterbury at Kingsbridge Villa. This is an excellent B&B, run most capably by Peter and Janice Hawken, where we enjoy a comfortable ensuite double room and probably the best breakfast in England for £70 or about C\$148. The B&B is located at 15 Best Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2JB, tel: [011 44] 1227 766 415, e-mail: info@canterburyguesthouse.com, www.canterburyguesthouse.com.

Jan Ogilvy
Whitehorse, Yukon

In Search of the Wallops!

Dear Ann

Your note about Winchester which you added to my letter in the April edition of TTS rang a bell and, although we are about to leave for the UK yet again, I feel I must drop you a line before going.

Many years ago we were driving from Winchester to Salisbury when we saw a signpost to the "Wallops". How could anyone resist? Amused and intrigued we turned off the road and soon discovered three quaint villages: Over Wallop, Middle Wallop and Nether Wallop. In one they were filming Agatha Christie's *The Body in the Library* and we spent a very pleasant hour or so watching several 'takes' and talking with the film crew and cast, including 'Miss Marple' – Joan Hickson.

Years later, when driving back to London from an HF holiday in St. Ives, we thought we'd explore this area of Hampshire more fully. May Cottage, where we'd stayed before, was full, but we soon discovered Yew

Tree House in the delightful old village of Broughton, near Stockbridge. The two-bedroom B&B is run by Philip and Janet Mutton in a renovated Georgian building with a dovecote behind that is said to be one of the two oldest in the UK. We planned on revisiting 'The Wallops' as well as Winchester and Romsey, and the Muttons persuaded us to include Mottisfont Abbey in our itinerary. We enjoyed the Abbey building and the lovely gardens so much that we spent a full day there and ending up spending two nights with the Muttons instead of one so that we could cover everything!

We have since returned to the Muttons and Yew Tree Cottage to explore the area further and to repeat one of our two favourite walks in Southern England – through the water meadows at Stockbridge (the other being the River Otter in Devon from Newton Pophelford to Budleigh Salterton).

The details: Yew Tree House, Broughton, Stockbridge, Hampshire, SO20 8AA, tel: [011 44] 1794 301 227. Bed and full breakfast price £58 double. Mottisfont Abbey information can be found at www.national-trust.org.uk, just enter the Abbey in the search field.

*My best regards,
Ralph Carder,
West Vancouver, BC*

Another note to add to Ralph's latest letter. I'm a fan of the Alistair Sawday Special Places to Stay accommodation guides and see that Yew Tree House is listed in the British Bed and Breakfast guide, where it states that Charles Dickens is said to have "escaped the helter-skelter of London for the peace of the Test Valley to write at Yew Tree House." The entry also adds that the property is "understated elegance and deep tranquillity" and that "the garden is gorgeous" – Ed.

As I mentioned in my letter, our September edition will contain an Ottawa story. However, if you're thinking of a summer visit to the capital, this well-priced accommodation suggestion may fit the bill – Ed.

Ottawa's Byward Blue Inn

We decided it was time for an Ottawa visit and chose early October last year. We had seen information on the Byward Blue Inn in one of the earlier issues of *The Travel Society Magazine* and decided to try it for our three days in the capital.

This was a good decision. The Inn is located in the Byward Market area so it is close to all kinds of good French-Canadian and ethnic food

restaurants, ranging in price from the cheapest to the ultra. It is also within reasonable walking distance to the main hub of the Ottawa bus service.

Our double room was rather spartan, but excellent value. It had a small refrigerator, a kettle and cable TV with umpteen channels. Breakfast was much superior to the usual 'continental breakfast' served in small hotels/motels. Every day we had fruit juice, fruit, cheese, yoghurt and croissants or Danish. And there were always lots of packages of tea and instant coffee available. The next time we go to Ottawa we'll definitely stay there again.

The Inn is within walking distance of the National Gallery which occupied our first day. We visited the War Museum the next day and the Museum of Civilization the day after, both easily reached by bus although the system is not transparent to the newcomer. There is one advantage over Toronto – tickets are good for about two hours, so you can get off the bus to do some shopping and re-board another bus without penalty. Another note: one could easily spend at least three days in the Museum of Civilization. A longer visit will have to be for another time.

Byward Blue Inn, 157 Clarence Street, Ottawa, ON K1N 5P7, tel: 1 800 620 8810, www.bywardblueinn.com, rates from \$79 double.

*Ed Lyons
Toronto*

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Hiking in Alaska ... a lifetime wish!

I recently returned from a cruise to Alaska, and fulfilled a lifetime wish, "hiking in Alaska". The ship made three stops: Juneau, Skagway and Ketchikan. As soon as I could disembark, I headed to the port Information Centre where I found appropriate maps to hikes which could be accessed by foot and on my own.

In Juneau, I did the Perseverance Trail, close to the Last Chance Mining Museum. The trail was three miles up and down, with an elevation of 1500 ft. though not difficult. This was a scenic trail with lots of waterfalls.

At Skagway, there were trails starting right behind the docks. I did the Lower Dewey Lake Trail which was fairly short but uphill with loose rocks. There was a further loop trail round the tranquil Dewey Lake which I did not take as I wanted to return to the ship for lunch before taking the train to the White Pass & Yukon Route. This narrow gauge railroad is an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, with a breathtaking panorama of mountains, glaciers, waterfalls, tunnels, trestles and historic sites.

At Ketchikan, I did the Deer Mountain hike. The summit is about 3000ft. It took me 45 minutes to complete the first mile at an elevation of 1500 ft. There, at the first overlook, was a gorgeous view of surrounding islands. Unfortunately, I could not reach the second summit because the trail was covered with snow. However, I was not totally disappointed as this allowed me time to explore this unique town and the famous historic Creek Street along the river.

All the trails were clearly marked and, though caution is needed, one can cover them without a guide. For this hiker, these experiences definitely heightened the cruise to Alaska at no extra cost.

*Maria Wu
Toronto, ON*

A Memorable Day (and Evening) in Deep Cove

Many of the beautiful areas surrounding Vancouver are accessible by public transportation and I'd like to tell readers – both Vancouver-area residents and visitors - about a great day out of the city.

On a lovely day in May this year I visited Deep Cove, a north shore village, which was about 45 minutes by bus from downtown. Deep Cove is small, yet has a lot to offer. One can walk to the beach along the Malcolm Lowry Trail or take a hike at the Rock for a great view of the cove. For energetic souls, canoe or kayak trips are available at the top of Gallant Avenue. And if you time it right, you can attend a live performance at the Shaw Theatre. There are few eateries, but the Arms Reach Bistro offers delicious food as well as blankets to keep diners warm if it gets chilly while eating on the patio. The food was so good that I went back the next evening (Tuesday) for dinner and live jazz. A friend and I shared the rustic bistro salad (arugula and other greens tossed in white truffle vinaigrette served on bresaola carpaccio), gnocci fungi (assorted mushrooms tossed in a Merlot cream infused with truffle essence) and a decadent chocolate torte. The jazz trio provided a soothing background that enabled us to wine and dine late into the night ... it was truly a memorable evening.

To plan your trip to Deep Cove visit www.deepcovebc.com and – for information on the theatre – www.deepcoverbc.com/shawtheatre-deepcovebc.html or tel: 604 929 3200. The Bistro is located at 4390 Gallant Avenue, tel: 604 929 7442. (If you enter the name of the restaurant in your search engine you'll find lots of great reviews - Ed.) There are two buses going to Deep Cove: No. 290 Deep Cove leaves Burrard Station, Bay 2, or the No. 212 Phibbs Exchange Bay-Deep Cove via Downtown Vancouver. The bus fares are charged by zone. Tickets can be purchased in advance at drug stores or Safeway. Booklets for

the transit system are available where tourist information can be obtained or call 604 929 7442 for information.

I hope other readers discover Deep Cove and enjoy their time there as much as I did.

*Maria Wu
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

or

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*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.*



A Month in Spain

In the Travel Digest section of last July's edition of this magazine there was a mention of Rancho Sentosa in Spain. It looked interesting, so we made a decision to go and in March and April of this year my wife and I spent a month there. We had a wonderful holiday.


The host and hostess – Slawek and born-in-Canada Vanessa – could not have been more accommodating or helpful. Our plane was delayed, as was our luggage. But that was not a problem as Vanessa dealt with the airline and our bags arrived within 24 hours. We are sure it would have been longer without her help. We were even offered garments and items such as shaving accessories to tide us over until our luggage joined us. In addition, Vanessa had prepared a welcome basket which was sufficient for about three good breakfasts and also included other goodies. Vanessa was also very helpful in supply maps and brochures on sightseeing and shopping. Later, we unfortunately had to report some damage to our rental car and again Vanessa was very helpful in providing long distance telephone service to Canada. In short, we felt as though we were visiting with friends.

Rancho Sentosa is situated about half way between Furengirola and Mijas Pueblo about 15 minutes drive from Malaga airport. It's located in quiet countryside, but still conveniently located for shopping. The property offers

guests two one-bedroom apartments with en suite bath, living room and a small equipped kitchen. Weekly cleaning and change of linens are provided, together with a seemingly endless supply of towels. Satellite TV service with UK programmes is available, as well as a library of books and DVDs and a laptop.

The beautifully flower garden was an ideal place to relax, reading in the tree hammock. There was also a pool and a barbecue area and we often encouraged Miska, the resident dog, to visit with us on the patio.

This was one of our most enjoyable stays in Spain and we would highly recommend Rancho Sentosa to anyone contemplating a visit to that region. It is ideally situated for visits to Marbella, Malaga and the Alhambra at Granada via the excellent auto routes. For the season we were there, the monthly cost was €1,600 which we considered excellent value.

Here are all the contact details: Vanessa Schon, Rancho Sentosa, Ctra de Mijas Km. 4, La Alcaparra 7, 29650 Mijas, Spain, tel: [011 34] 952 590 755, fax: 951 232 038, e-mail: info@ranchosentosa.com, www.ranchosentosa.com 

*Denis Cudahy
Ottawa, ON*

AFRICAN DREAMS

story and photos by Lynda Swain

“It is said that God does not subtract from one’s allotted time, those days spent on safari.”



“O hmigosh!” I exclaimed as my husband Jim was about to dig into his seafood chowder. “We’re actually going on a safari!” As he looked around the restaurant and smiled at everyone who had suddenly stopped eating, I realized that I had said that a little *too* loud! But it was hard to control my excitement as we sat in the Vancouver airport eating supper while waiting for our delayed BA flight to London in May last year. I had been dreaming of this moment since I was a young girl; to see the wild animals in their natural habitat, to

wake up to the sound of the lions' roar in the bush, or perhaps the scratching of a hyena at the flap of my tent. We had been planning it for years, but another trip would always crop up, or world events would put it on the back burner. But now it was only hours away.

Here's the scoop on the background information. We booked our 14-day safari to Kenya and Tanzania, along with a four-day extension to Zanzibar, with a long-established company – Micato Safaris of Nairobi with an office in New York, www.micato.com. For years we had our eye on this particular trip – the 'Stanley Wing Safari' – as it seemed to include many of the popular Kenya and Tanzania game parks. It was a group trip, not a private safari, which suited us just fine as we are very sociable people and love to have company. If you prefer you can do a private safari, given the right research tools, for about the same price as a group safari, but 14 days with just us and a driver didn't appeal to us. We wanted the camaraderie of a group, not too big, nor too small. Micato usually closes their group safaris at 18 and this sounded like a nice number to us. Some of the factors that led us to choose Micato were the good name and reputation that they seemed to have in the travel world, the fact that they were still privately owned and run by a family (Felix and Jane Pinto), their wonderful brochure that made me feel that I was on safari every time I picked it up, their reputation for luxury travel at a reasonable price and their personalized 'member-of-the-family' philosophy.

Once we had made reservations with Micato the previous August, and booked our international flights in November, there wasn't much that we needed to do except sit back and wait for the departure date to arrive. I, as usual, chose to spend all of my available hours researching the destinations, but it's really not a necessity as Micato takes care of all the details, from start to finish. For instance, Jim wasn't even aware of exactly where we were going until I asked him to fill out his visa applications in March. "Kenya and Tanzania? Really?" he said, obviously very surprised and pleased. Aside from applying for these visas, the only other pre-trip task was a trip to our local travel health clinic to make sure that we had all the shots that were recommended (at this time, none were required, but a few were recommended), as well as a prescription for a malaria-prevention pill. Micato took care of everything else for us, including sending us each a huge green duffel bag.

Packing. Ah yes, now here is something that needs a paragraph or two. The trick, you see, is that you have to pack light, very light. The duffel bag they send you is huge (and of course not all companies send you one) but don't let that fool you. If you have any intra-Africa flights, you

are only allowed to pack a maximum of 33 lbs into one soft sided bag each, as per airline regulations. And, other than a 'small' shoulder bag or back pack as a carry-on, that is your ONE bag. This is a challenge, as I was to find out. I spent the better part of the week prior to leaving packing and repacking our bags ... 33 lbs just isn't a lot!

We bought a few special items for the safari, but not many. I bought a lightweight multi-pocket safari vest; not because I wanted to look the part, but because I wanted to fill my pockets on game drives and not take a day bag. I also bought a pair of wash 'n' wear convertible pants, and LIVED in them. They owe me nothing now. Jim, who has dressed in Tilley clothes exclusively for the last 20 years didn't need to buy anything, as he always looks as though he is ready to go on safari! A good, but small pair of binoculars for each person is a must, unless you know for sure that your outfitter, like Micato does, will provide one pair per person in the vehicle. Believe me, no one, not even your spouse, will share the binoculars when you come across that mother cheetah with her five incredibly cute, fluffy newborn cubs playing in the grass!

Our flights were long, each leg was nine hours, but they were smooth, and of the type everyone likes – uneventful. We flew British Airways World Traveller Plus class as the seats are wider, have a longer pitch, more leg room, have the old business class 2-3-2 configuration, and have leg rests. The price tag is bigger too, but since we had some American Express points that we could convert into a discount off any flight booked through an American Express agent, we treated it as a 'freebie'. We left Friday evening from Vancouver and arrived Saturday afternoon at London Heathrow with a five-hour layover. One thing I wish I had known at the time was that you can pre-book a spot in a private lounge at any



above: ... dealing with an itchy nose
left: ... looking for supper

terminal in Heathrow for £39.50 per couple. This would have been a more comfortable alternative to hanging around the airport on those uncomfortable public seats. Our flight to Nairobi left Heathrow in the evening, and arrived at 7:05 Sunday morning. I was thrilled to be there! After clearing the passport control desk we picked up our luggage and went through final baggage customs with ease. Jim had noticed a sign in the baggage handlers' area "Every bag you handle lifts Kenya higher."

We stepped through the door to the outside and breathed our first breath of hot African air. We found ourselves faced with a throng of safari outfitters that were waiting for their guests, as well as the touts that were hoping for some, and easily picked out the Micato guide and driver that were there to meet us. There was so much to take in on that short ride to Nairobi that I just didn't know where to look first! People, many, many people walking on the road; a tree full of Maribou storks and egrets; the colourful matatus (public buses, but smaller than what we are used to) that were bouncing along the roads, chock full of local people going here, there, and everywhere. To me, it was breathtaking, and we had just begun! Arriving at our hotel, the Grand Regency, we sat down in one of the comfortable chairs at Micato's concierge desk, while they went to check us in and get our keys. Never

had we been so happy to see a hotel room at 8 o'clock in the morning and a shower after two days of travel was most welcome.

We were the only ones in our group that had come in early, all of the others were arriving that evening, when the trip was 'officially' to start. But, we had a mission. In my research, I had found a few things in Nairobi that I was dying to see, so we had arranged for a private guide and driver for the day. His name was Kennedy, owner of Waymark Safaris of Kenya (e-mail waymarkt@nbnet.co.ke, www.waymarksafari.com and click on Nairobi Excursions), and his job was to keep us awake all day until it was time to go to bed on Nairobi time. We had been e-mailing back and forth for several months so I felt as though I knew him well when he walked in to meet us. An incredible big hug for the initial greeting did not seem out of place at all!

And what was our mission? Well, it was to go to two orphanages that I had read about: Daphne Sheldrick's Wildlife Trust where they rear orphaned elephants from the wild for re-entry, and the Kenya Wildlife Service's (KWS)

Animal Orphanage at Nairobi National Park where one can pet the cheetahs. One of Kennedy's specialties is to take his clients (if they wish) to hug the cheetahs at the KWS Orphanage! What an incredible experience this was. We were taken into a pen by one of the handlers to spend some time petting, hugging and receiving sandpaper kisses from three wonderful 'girls' – Sharon, Misa and Teva. I could have stayed there all day!

The next morning, after a delicious buffet breakfast, we 'reported' for duty in one of the conference rooms, received a wonderful carved wooden animal necklace featuring the Big Five (rhino, leopard, lion, buffalo and elephant) for good luck, along with our olive green Micato hats; and met our 'family' for the next 14 days. Jumping ahead I just have to say that a better 'family' we couldn't have asked for: Daniel, our 24/7 concierge from Micato (the 'head' of the family) and 13 other people – a group of six friends from

Massachusetts, a couple from New York, a couple from Florida, a mom and a just-graduated-from-university daughter (they looked like sisters, not mother and daughter!) from New Mexico, and a single guy from Michigan. All, with the exception of the mom and daughter, were around our own age (in their 50s) or a little older.

The scheduled events that day were to explore Nairobi and the surrounding area in a comfortable



Our deck at Mt. Kenya Safari Club Riverside Cottages

mid-size Micato bus. Off we went to visit the Langata Giraffe Center where we could learn about, pet and get a 'kiss' from a Rothschild giraffe; the Karen Blixen Cottage where history sprung alive (even though Denys Finch Hatton looked nothing like Robert Redford); and a tea plantation out in the country where we were served a delicious homemade lunch outside in the garden while the friendly Colobus monkeys watched us. Lunch included fresh vegetables from the garden, hand-churned butter and homemade ice cream. In the afternoon, while others shopped, some of us rested up at the hotel in preparation for our 'signature' family supper at Felix and Jane Pinto's house, which Micato offers all of its out-of-town guests. Over dinner, which featured African and Indian dishes, we got to know our safari mates, our concierge, guides and drivers in a social setting. And dessert was very special to us: the lights were dimmed, the house went quiet and then out came a procession of all of the Micato staff, carrying a huge cake and singing 'Jambo Bwana' – a song that we were to hear many times over the next three weeks. It is used to welcome visitors to Kenya, as well as for all special occasions. And what was this spe-

cial occasion? The procession, to our surprise and delight, stopped in front of Jim and me when we saw on the cake “HAPPY 30th ANNIVERSARY!” Fran, our agent at Micato in NYC must have marked it on the file when I mentioned that our 30th anniversary was imminent!

The next morning dawned bright and early for us. That morning, as I would find for all the rest of them, I had no interest in sleeping in anyway, as my dream was about to begin in earnest. “What is a typical safari day like?” you may ask. Well, as someone once remarked, it’s like opening a new present everyday. It’s the break of dawn, and you awake with the gentle sound of your alarm clock buzzing. With a great burst of energy you jump out of bed, thinking “Another day! What animals will I see today, what adventures await me?” Answering the soft rap at the door, you delight in seeing a pot of coffee and some muffins or cookies on a tray, just enough to sustain you for your early-morning game drive. You race through your shower, anxious to jump into your vehicle with your guide and travel mates. You set off as the sun is rising, snap a few pictures of the lovely sunrise with the acacia trees in the foreground, when you hear your guide say softly “Look over there, to your right”. You feel your heart racing and you catch your breath as you see a whole pride of lions just lying on the side of the road, the male looking straight at you, not with curiosity, but seemingly to pose for your photos. A stir behind him reveals a cub just awakening under the mother’s watchful eye. The cub begins to play with his siblings, and before you know it, you have taken 43 frames and are silently thanking yourself for changing over to digital before coming on this safari. For the next hour you watch the pride go about their everyday life while your knowledgeable guide tells you so much more than you could possibly absorb from reading a book about their habits.

Reluctantly, you move on, but with the hope that you will experience many more incredible groups of animals all waiting to show you their best sides. A herd of elephants grazing on the leaves of their favourite trees, a journey of giraffes standing in the savannah grass watching every move you make as you are watching them, a tiny mongoose darting across the road with his family in tow, a troop of baboons teaching their young to climb a tree.

A hearty buffet breakfast of made-to-order omelets, fruits, bacon and sausages awaits us back at the lodge, and never has breakfast tasted so good. The rest of the morning is spent wandering around the lodge, talking to the staff about their lifestyle or getting to know our fellow safari mates. We meet up with another guest that happens to be from close to our hometown, we sit down to chat, and before we know it,

it’s time to eat again!

Lunch today features barbecued beef kabobs with roasted vegetables, but this morning you promised yourself that you were going to be adventurous and try some of the delicious-looking African fare that is always present on the buffet, along with fresh salads. Plenty of time to eat standard North American food you think! You try to skip dessert, but the chocolate macadamia nut flan beckons and you give in.

After lunch, I took my journal to the viewing deck in front of the waterhole to write down all the animals that I’d seen in the morning. One mustn’t delay this task too long or you will mix up all of the animals that you have seen in the day. A local Maasai, who works at the lodge, came over to speak to me about his way of life. He is fascinating to listen to as he tells you of his family’s long-time traditions. After he leaves, I looked over at the pool, and thought, ‘hmmmm ... I still have an hour left before the afternoon game drive to wear off some of that macadamia-nut flan ...’. The dip in the pool is refreshing, the water is just the right temperature and there is only one other person in the pool. A perfect afternoon soaking in the warm African sun.

The late-afternoon game run starts out slowly, as most of the predators seem to be sleeping. Our driver points out the various colourful birds and, even though we had never previously had an interest in watching birds, we now enjoy looking at them and taking pictures of them. We see a pair of crowned cranes and watch while they start their exuberant dance together. And then a call comes over the radio, a ‘dangling tail’ has been sighted! We race over to where the other guide has spotted a leopard in the tree and held our collective breaths while scanning the tree with our binoculars. ‘There, there he is!’ all exclaim excitedly, ‘and he’s



above: our crater view at Ngorongoro, Tanzania



left: pool at Amboseli Serena Lodge, Kenya

coming down!” For the next hour we watch as the leopard wander around, first at the base of the tree, and later quite close to our vehicles. Just his way of passing an afternoon we think, as we take hundreds of pictures of our first leopard sighting.

Many more animals came out to pose as dusk begins to settle. A bachelor herd of impalas turned to stare at us as we drove slowly by. These beautiful animals are so amazing to watch. A crossing of zebras wander by while you ponder the age old question of whether they are white with black stripes, or black with white stripes. You are amazed that the herds of wildebeest and Cape buffalo that you pass are so ‘at home’ with the presence of the vehicles and all their occupants.

Back at the lodge, after a quick shower to get the dust off, you realize that you seemed to have worked up an appetite again. The lodge is serving dinner à la carte tonight. There are four delicious choices: meat or poultry, a fish, a vegetarian dish or an African dish, along with soup, salad and a dessert. Tonight you decide to try the lakefish, and you are not sorry, it just melts in your mouth. You skip dessert tonight though, as you are anxious to get to the lounge area of the lodge where you have promised some of your safari mates that you will meet them for a nightcap. A roaring fire is going, the talk is of all you saw today, and what you hope you will see tomorrow. Exhausted, you return to your comfortable room that is decorated in a soft African décor, and you fall asleep, anxious to start all over again tomorrow.

There are many different types of accommodation offered on safari – from the intimate ‘fly’ camp (a mobile camp that is set up where the game viewing is best and comes complete with your own cook and portable loo) through to the permanent luxurious tented camps that have flush toilets in the tent, to lodges that accommodate 100 to 200 people at a time. Transportation to and from the different camps could be by plane, either chartered or scheduled; or by vehicle, either private, usually by 4-wheel drive, or in a group which is usually a pop-top mini van.

To give you a brief overview, here are some details and highlights of our incredible trip. We flew to our first destination, Amboseli National Park in Kenya, where we stayed at the Serena Lodge. Highlights of the two days there included sighting our first lions, which crossed right in front of us; our first sighting of a family of elephants; watching a troop of baboons and their young; and having our first ‘sun-

downers’ while gazing at the incredible Mt. Kilimanjaro. After our two days there, we drove to the Tanzanian border, passed through customs, and drove to Arusha, the major ‘safari-start’ town in Tanzania. After a nice lunch, we flew to Tarangire National Park for a night at the Sopa Lodge. Highlights here included an outdoor buffet lunch around the pool, a family of bat-eared foxes on the runway at the airstrip, and the incredible ‘upside down’ baobob trees for which this park is famous. One of them, known as the ‘Poacher’s Baobob’, is said to be 3,000 years old.

We drove to the famous Ngorongoro Crater next. Ngorongoro Crater is the largest unbroken caldera (collapsed volcanic core) in the world. The rim is 2,200 m above sea level; the drop to the centre is 600 m, and it’s 11 miles across. All of the lodges and camps are on the rim of the crater. In the morning you take the 4 x 4 down into the caldera and experience the most incredible amount of animals concentrated in any one place – my first thought was that it was like opening a box of raisin bran and getting all raisins! We stayed two nights here, both at the Sopa Lodge,

so that we could enjoy one full day down in the crater – a ‘not to be missed’ event. Lions and hyenas are just lyin’ around on the road, hippos are plentiful at the hippo pool, and the flamingoes are incredibly photogenic on the soda lake with the walls of the crater rising in the background. And watching the sunset over the crater from your balcony is an experience you will never forget.

We drove along the dusty roads to the Serengeti from the crater, passing through the ‘Cradle of Mankind’ and stopping at the Leakey museum at Oldupai Gorge, where the famous Nutcracker Man was unearthed by Louis and Mary Leakey in 1959. We stayed here for two nights at another Sopa Lodge, a comfortable property set in the middle of the vast endless plains of the Serengeti. Cats and other predators are plentiful amongst the three million animals that live here. Watch carefully for those ‘dangling tails’ (leopards) in the trees you pass. Another of the highlights of our stay was seeing the mighty wildebeest migration. It held us in awe as we stood in our vehicle looking at the long lines of wildebeest and zebras. Every year, twice a year, triggered by the rains, 1.3 million wildebeests, and 200,000 zebra migrate between the Maasai Mara in Kenya and the Serengeti in Tanzania. Moving in columns up to 40 km long, it is yet another sight not to be missed.

From there we flew north to the eastern shores of Lake



Lounge at Sopa Lodge, Tarangire, Tanzania

Victoria, changed planes a few times, and ended up on Kichwa Tembo's private airstrip in the Maasai Mara. Kichwa Tembo is a wonderful, permanent tented camp with the most incredibly comfortable tents that include private 'facilities' in a discreetly sectioned off area at the rear of the tent. There is no roughing it here: the shower is a slate walk-in type, the towels are as lush as in a five star hotel and the food is incredible. The twice-daily game runs can be done off-road, which is a real bonus, enabling one to get closer to observe the animals. Highlights of our time here included a visit to a local Maasai Village to learn their culture first-hand, and an incredible peaceful early morning hot-air balloon ride over the Mara River, followed by the most delicious breakfast.

Two days later we were on the road again, flying back to Nairobi, and then driving through the lush countryside up to the slopes of Mt. Kenya. Straddling the equator, nestled against the backdrop of Mt. Kenya was our next destination, the famous (and infamous) Mt. Kenya Safari Club. Originally established by Hollywood legend, William Holden and a Texas millionaire, Ray Ryan, the club still whispers elegance, class and serenity. We would stay here for two days, to relax and enjoy the facilities, or to explore the animal orphanage or nearby Sweetwaters Game Reserve at our pleasure. Our accommodations were in the Riverside Cottages, luxurious mini-suites with a separate bedroom, a private deck with comfortable lounge chairs, an awesome fireplace that was lit each night for us, and, best of all – a sunken bathtub built for two.

All good things must come to an end. Our last day was spent back in Nairobi, shopping for souvenirs, enjoying the famous Carnivore Restaurant, and, for most, repacking their bags for their flights home. But not for us. Long before we left on our trip, we had asked to participate in the "America Shares" programme. Micato, as one small way to give back to the community, supports an orphanage that is in the Mokuru slums of Nairobi. When they sent us our duffel bags they also sent a huge blue duffel bag labelled "America Shares" with the request that we pack as much into that as we could: new or used clothing, toys, school supplies, sewing supplies, in fact anything that we thought an orphanage could use. I had such fun cramming that duffel bag full of school supplies, clothes, toys and bears! We checked it on the plane from Canada with us, but from Nairobi, Micato took care of it. They kept it in storage for us during our safari until this last day when Jim and I were picked up by Benedict, the person in charge of the orphanage, and taken there. It was, without a doubt, the most eye-opening experience I have ever had as we drove slowly through the slums; bumping

and twisting over the piles of garbage and around the thousands of people and the tin shanties that served both as store fronts and houses. Once in the orphanage, Benedict showed us around, introduced us to everyone, and then sat us down, like royalty, while some of the kids danced, sang and recited poetry for us. I could barely see through the lens of my camera to take pictures as the tears welled up in my eyes! We then presented our bag, full of goodies and watched with delight as the kids chose an item each.

At supper, there were tears again as we said goodbyes to our 'family' from the last 14 days, as most were going home that night. But not Jim and I! We stayed the night in Nairobi, and then flew out early the next morning to Zanzibar along with Chad, the solo guy from Michigan who had been on the safari with us. Catching sight of our hotel from the air as we flew in over it we had to catch our breath. The lovely white Serena Inn, one of the "Small Luxury Hotels of the World", sits on the edge of the incredibly blue Indian Ocean. There was no mistaking it.

We spent four wonderful, luxurious days there with Mussa, a private guide, and with a driver hired by Micato just for us. Mussa took us to enjoy many wonders: a walking tour of Stonetown, the old part of the city of Zanzibar Town which hasn't changed in hundreds of years; the colourful and busy central marketplace; a spice farm, and – in the pouring rain – a mangrove swamp and the Jozani Forest, the only place in the world the not-so-shy Red Colobus monkeys lives. In between all of the activities we relaxed and enjoyed the facilities at the Serena. We ate lobster in the restaurant while watching the tide come in from the open window beside our table, we relaxed on the outdoor terrace over sundowners while listening to a fabulous *tarab* band (*tarab* is a fusion of Swahili tunes spiced with Arab



above: Crossing off #2 on our list ... priceless!



left: We break for refreshment on safari.

melodies), we watched the sun set over the Indian Ocean dotted with dhows, we swam in the refreshing pool, and enjoyed the incredible view from our balcony while listening to the echoing Muslim calls to prayers.

And then, reluctantly, it was time to go. Vowing to return, we boarded the flight to London, stayed a few days there to relax and explore, and arrived home with some incredible stories to tell whoever would listen.

It was, without a doubt, the best vacation of our lives. We have found that we have changed as we settle back into our lives here in Canada and we think of the people and our experiences in Africa. In East Africa, we noticed it is unheard of to just quickly say "I'm fine" when someone asks how you are. The people there really want to *know* how you are, they want to know how your kids are, your mom, dad, and so on and it's not just to be polite. East Africans would

consider it very rude to run into the corner dry cleaner that you go to every Friday and say "Here's my tag, where's my cleaning?" There is plenty of time for business after a nice little chat. Jim and I decided that was one souvenir we were definitely going to bring home with us. And we made friends that we will hold dear for the rest of our lives: Kennedy, our guide from the beginning of the trip, along with his family that we met; Daniel,

our 24/7 concierge that Micato provided to smooth out any wrinkles that occurred; Mussa, our guide in Zanzibar who was forever rescuing me from falling into 'little scams'; and Michael, one of the managers at Mt. Kenya Safari Club with whom we talked long into the night. Most of all, we came to the conclusion that everyone should experience the animals in their natural habitat; it was the most incredible experience to sit and watch them for hours on end.

Have I piqued your interest in a safari of any kind? Want to know more? The best place to start to plan your safari is on the internet – not just by doing a Google search for a safari, but to read and learn, or to participate in a public forum on the internet. The most active Africa forum that I have found is under the Fodors name at <http://www.fodors.com/forums/threadselect.jsp?fid=4>. Here you will find a wealth of knowledge from various Africa enthusiasts who will answer questions and help you plan the trip you would like; either a group trip like we did,

or more commonly, a private trip where you set your own itinerary and go with a private guide/driver. You can check out the different agents, tour operators, types of accommodation, and the different types of safaris, as well as reading about people's first time – or twelfth time experiences. And, if you'd like to read more, I invite you to check out my *really detailed* trip report which you can find at: <http://www.fodors.com/forums/threadselect.jsp?fid=4&tid=34822022>. Enjoy!

A few prices:

The safari for us was US\$5,990 per person. We booked about a year and a half in advance, so enjoyed the previous year's (2005) rates. We also travelled in the low season. This year's rate in low season is US\$7,665 per person. This rate includes all accommodation, internal air flying from

camp to camp, all meals right from the time they pick you up at the airport, to the time they drop you back at the airport. It also includes all tips for porters and for all lodge and camp staff. The only extras are laundry, alcoholic drinks and tips for the Micato guide/driver and safari director. The balloon ride in the Mara was an add on too – US\$425.00 per person (and worth every penny). I see it is the same price this year. The Zanzibar

extension this year is US\$1,745, again inclusive of all meals & flights.

Our international flights came to approximately C\$7,000 for two, but we did fly World Traveller Plus. Economy would have been around C\$4,000 for two. The Tanzania and Kenya visas cost about C\$150.00 per person from both embassies in Ottawa, including express post there and back. No, it wasn't a cheap trip, but it was worth every penny! 📧



At the 'America Shares' orphanage in Nairobi

Lynda Swain is a Travel Society member who lives in Vancouver, BC. Lynda tells us she has enjoyed this magazine for many years. Since writing this account of her first safari, Lynda and Jim returned to Africa again in May this year, once more travelling with Micato. They chose a different itinerary, and although some of the parks were the same they stayed in different lodges, so everything was new! Lynda reports it was, once again, fabulous!

Egypt and Kenya:

Two Contrasting Countries in Africa

story and photos by Heinz and Inge Jaeger

We had long had Egypt in our thoughts, but felt that three weeks filled with only antiquities would be too much for us. So when we saw an itinerary offered by Bestway Tours and Safaris that visited both Egypt and Kenya over 22 days we were sold. An additional incentive was the small group size – we were only five people with our own guides and transportation.

We set out in November last year via the direct Egypt Air connection from New York's J.F. Kennedy Airport which arrived in Cairo at noon. The afternoon was free, allowing us to recover in the very comfortable Pyramisa Hotel in the centre of the city.

Egypt's economy depends on tourists; without the 8 to 9 million visitors per year the country would likely starve. It is therefore not surprising that the safety of the tourists is of highest priority to the government. This desert country, where most of the population of 80 million live on only 4% of its total area, is still under martial law and roadblocks, metal detectors, army patrols and the 'Tourism Police' are everywhere. Although it is safe, we would not recommend travelling far within the country without a reliable local guide; the road layout is confusing, road signs are in Arabic script and driving and parking seems to follow inscrutable rules.

In Cairo and vicinity our excellent guide was Anan, who was provided by the local tour operator, South Sinai Travel. She also suggested restaurants for lunch, which provided enormous varieties of local delicacies at reasonable costs, usually about US\$10 per person without alcoholic drinks.



The Pyramids and Sphinx

Cairo is expanding rapidly in all directions to accommodate its 22 million or so inhabitants; there are three or four lines of cars on every two-lane road and the city is under a constant yellowish-brown haze. On the large plain that at one time separated the city from the site of the pyramids at Giza, hundreds of new ramshackle

apartment buildings, most six to eight storeys high, have been illegally built and now stand very close to the pyramids, so we found the site less imposing than we had expected. When the pyramids were built around 2,500 B.C they were close to the River Nile, but four-and-a-half thousand years of flooding since then has deposited so much silt that the river has receded and is now more than a kilometre away, contributing to the desolation of the area.

There are a number of smaller pyramids and tombs nearby; the most famous is the step pyramid of Zoser at Saqqara. Next to it is a beautifully decorated tomb of an unknown high official from the court of an early pharaoh. Memphis, about 16 km south of Cairo, was the royal capital of Egypt in the third century B.C. but little evidence of that period remains. However, a colossal statue of Ramesses II, who lived 1500 years later, was excavated here and left where it was found, protected by a modern shelter. He was a busy man! It is said he had 102 sons and 94 daughters from more than 100 wives, some of which were his own daughters. He loved to travel and reunited what are now Israel, Syria and Lebanon with Egypt. According to some scholars he was associated with Moses, though little hard evidence of this exists.

One of Egypt's oldest products is papyrus, and its pro-

duction was demonstrated to us in one of the government-run shops. Foot-long slices of the papyrus reed are soaked for several days and then woven by hand into a mat, which is then pressed for several days between weights. The finished product was used like paper and is astoundingly strong and durable. It is still used by some artists today.

On a small hilltop in generally flat Cairo sit the Citadel and the Mohamed Ali Mosque, also called the Alabaster Mosque. The citadel at one time was the seat of the government and the stronghold of the Mameluks. The beautiful mosque was built during the reign of Mohamed Ali 1868 to 1908 and was designed to replicate the Hagia Sophia Mosque in Istanbul. Its five domes are covered with lead.

The original trading area of Cairo, where goods from other areas were exchanged, covers several blocks of narrow streets and is known as the Khan Ahalili Market; nowadays it is a tourist trap with generally shoddy and overpriced goods.

Before it was conquered by the Islamic Byzantine Empire, which introduced the Arabic language, Egypt was a part of the Christian Roman Empire and it still has a small but active Coptic Christian community. In Cairo the Coptic area is centered on an old Roman fort. In the first century, early Christians while still being persecuted, built a church here designated to San Sergius, with a secret tunnel to allow a quick escape. Below the church is a crypt where, according to legend, the holy family spent three months while on their flight from Bethlehem.

A visit to Cairo is incomplete without seeing the magnificent Egyptian Museum, which houses the entire content of the tomb of Tutankhamun. His tomb, discovered in 1922 in the Valley of the Kings, is the only royal tomb found so far which had not previously been plundered before. Over 2000 artifacts, many made from pure gold, were found there and are on display.

From Cairo we flew to Luxor, where Mohamed, our guide from now on, took us to the comfortable *m.s. Sherry Boat* which was to be our floating hotel for several days. The food on board was excellent and the service superb. From this ship we visited the nearby temple complex of Karnak, a conglomerate of temple ruins which were built over a period of some 2,000 years, and which are still a place of pilgrimage. The best-preserved parts are the Hall of Columns, a dense forest of massive columns some 23 metres tall, and two obelisks. The "Sound and Light" show here was very impressive.

Luxor, at times also called Thebes, was Egypt's capital for 200 years during the Middle Kingdom after the Old Kingdom fell apart in 2,166 B.C. It is a pleasant city, with a shady main street paralleling the Nile. It is from here that most of the Nile cruise ships depart – approximately 350 of them – and hundreds of buses transfer tourists to and from the ships creating constant traffic congestion. The Luxor Temple in the south-central section of the city was built by Amenhotep III who ruled from 1390 to 1352 B.C. and was completed by Ramesses II. In ancient times it was connect-

ed to Karnak by a three mile long Avenue of Sphinxes. Close to Luxor on the west bank of the Nile is the Valley of the Kings, where the bodies of many of the later pharaohs (after 1700 B.C.) were interred. The tombs are located at the end of subterranean tunnels, some more than 100 metres long, and carefully concealed with the excavated rubble. So far, more than 60 tombs have been identified, but not all are accessible. The walls and ceilings of the access tunnels and burial chambers are beautifully decorated with pictorial representations of the deeds of the king and of the everyday life at that time. Access is now limited to certain periods to minimize the deterioration of the vivid colours from light and human presence.

The impressive, well-reconstructed and preserved temple of Queen Hatshepsut is located in a parallel valley. Queen Hatshepsut is a controversial figure in the Egyptian history. She was the wife of Tutmose I, who ruled from 1504 to 1492 B.C. After the king died, she assumed the reign for his nine-year old son Tutmose II, who was the child of a lesser wife. When he reached puberty, she pushed him aside and declared herself supreme ruler. She took on a male countenance, wore a false beard and male clothing, and her statues and pictures do not show her breasts. She nevertheless had a lover, the architect Sinmut, who built her temple. The structure is cut into the living rock of the hillside and from the courtyard provides a marvelous view of the desert with the green and fertile Nile valley in the background. She had Sinmut killed when she caught him with another woman. After her death in 1458 B.C, her grandson Tutmose III tried to eradicate her memory by obliterating her face and her name wherever they had been carved or painted.

Farther upriver we pass the town of Esna and cross the Nile locks on our way to Edfu where we take horse-drawn calashes to visit the nearby temple of Horus, the falcon-headed son of Osiris. The Ptolemaic kings had restored this temple around 350 B.C. and it is thus one of the best-preserved ancient sites. Many high-relief carvings on the walls tell the story of creation and show the daily life of the people. When the temple was abandoned during the first few centuries A.D. it served as a refuge for early Coptic Christians for many years. They cut Christian symbols into the walls and defaced many of the old carvings which they considered works of the devil. Later, Napoleon used the building to stable his horses, and the soot from the cooking fires of his soldiers obliterated most of the paintings on the ceilings. However, in one small side chamber a well-preserved relief shows the recipes for numerous perfumes and incenses, complete in all details.

Between Edfu and Aswan the wide, flat and green Nile valley becomes narrower and dry hills crowd the river on both sides. Here we visit the Kom Ombo temple, which is of relatively recent construction; it was built between 300 B.C and 100 A.D. and was dedicated to the crocodile-headed god Sobec. Here, in ancient times, huge sacred crocodiles basked in the sun on the riverbanks. The temple honours the ancient Egyptian sciences of mathematics and medicine with high

relief carvings of instruments and recipes for medication, as well as a complete calendar of 12 months, each of 30 days, plus an annual five day period dedicated to the gods. The year was divided further into three seasons of 120 days each referred to as 'flood', 'planting' and 'harvest'.

We disembarked from our lovely boat in Aswan and admired the enormous High Dam, built by Russian engineers between 1960 and 1970. It controls the annual floods of the Nile, created the 500 km long Lake Nasser, which reaches back into the Sudan, and generates 25% of Egypt's electricity. About 6 km below the High Dam is the Old Dam, which was built in 1902 at the site of the first Nile Cataracts. This dam would have inundated the Temple of Philae, so the temple was relocated to higher ground on the island of Agilka. This temple is dedicated to Isis, the goddess of fertility and nature. Due to the recent reconstruction the building is in excellent shape and is located in a beautiful and romantic setting.

(While we were in Aswan, two of our group took an opportunity to fly to Abu Simbal to see this famous site.)

Surrounded by the modern city of Aswan is the ancient granite quarry from where many of the stones for statues and obelisks were cut. Ramesses II had wanted the largest obelisk ever to be erected in his honour in Luxor, and stonemasons had started to cut it when a major flaw in the granite was discovered. The work was abandoned, but people still wonder how the obelisk, which would have weighed about 1,000 tons, would have been transported. The unfinished work can still be seen.

From Aswan we took the comfortable night train back to Cairo and from there we flew to Nairobi for the second stage of our African journey.

Although Nairobi is located near the equator, its elevation of 1,500 metres elevation meant it was pleasantly cool when Dominic, our driver, leader and guide for Kenya picked us up from the airport at 5 a.m. and drove us directly to the Serena Mountain Lodge in the Mount Kenya National Park. The luxurious lodge is built in a crescent shape around a watering hole, with Mount Kenya in the background. All rooms have a balcony overlooking the water hole.

Once settled we received our first safari lesson: never leave your balcony door or window open. If you do you risk a raid by the ever-present black-faced vervet monkeys. Also, cameras, binoculars and other shiny objects must be hidden at all times when not in use; the curious monkeys

can grab them in a second.

On this, our first day, we watched fascinated as bush-buck, waterbuck, Marabou storks, water buffalo and colobus monkeys presented themselves to our camera. The rains had come early this year and the animals were not as dependent on the water hole as during dry times, but we still saw many of them. As it got dark, the floodlights were turned on and the nocturnal animals appeared: warthog, bush pig, mon-goose, hyenas and a shy little cat, a genet. The staff promised to wake us if elephants or leopards came close, but we slept without interruption.

The next day we drove to the Sarova Lion Hill Lodge in Lake Nakuru National Park, On the way we crossed the equator, where a local entrepreneur had set up a display showing that water indeed swirls in the opposite direction as soon as one crosses from one hemisphere into the other.

In the shallow lake hundreds of flamingoes were busy extracting small crustaceans from the salty water, and in the surrounding park we saw rhinos, lions, herds of various antelopes and large numbers of water buffaloes. There are no

elephants here, apparently they would be too destructive for this relatively small park of 118 square kilometres.

Early next morning Dominic checked the conditions of a short cut on the long road from Lake Nakuru to the Maasai Mara, and since it had not rained during the night, he and a number of other drivers felt it was safe to use this road. However, just after we started out, the rain came pouring down and soon we were stuck on a hillside in knee-deep soft

mud. Vans and trucks in both directions were spinning their wheels and getting nowhere. After a long palaver with nearby villagers, the drivers appeared to have agreed on a price; a tractor appeared and one by one we were pulled over the 2,700-meter high pass. Going downhill on the other side was a bit easier, but there were deep ruts and several times we felt the van was close to toppling into the deep ditch.

Leaving the lush Rift Valley, the countryside changes to scrubby savanna reminiscent of Arizona. However, some rain had fallen here too, and a fine, green hue of new growth covered the ground and shrubs. It was mid afternoon when we finally reached the even more luxurious Mara Sopa Lodge where we stayed for two nights.

The Maasai Mara is the Kenyan part of the Serengeti; it comprises 1620 square kilometres, an area roughly 40 by 40 km. There are quite a few tourist vehicles here; 7-seater vans with pop-up roofs whose driver/guides are in radio con-



Rhino and baby in Nakuru

tact with each other and when a herd of animals is spotted all vans in the vicinity converge there. In this way we saw a maximum number and variety of animals.

One of the nearby villages is home to about 20 Maasai families, altogether some 180 people, living as far as possible in the manner of their ancestors with only minimal influence or involvement by the government. They do not plant or harvest any plants and do not eat fruit or leafy vegetables; their wealth is their herds of cattle and goats, which provide their diet of meat, milk and fresh blood, which is carefully extracted from their cattle in a manner not to harm the animals. In spite of this diet they appear lean and healthy, and tell us that some members of their community are over 80 years old. A man can have as many wives as he wishes and can support; he has to pay 10 heads of cattle for each bride. Our guide through the village was the son of the chief; he was the eldest of 17 siblings with one father and four mothers. Central to several villages was a community school, entirely built and run by the Maasai, where the children receive six to eight years of schooling and learn English and Swahili in addition to their own Maasai language.

The Maasai are a handsome people, many over 6 feet tall. They often stand for hours on one leg, leaning on their walking sticks while watching their herds, and they routinely are able to walk over 30 km per day. Their distinctive red blanket, which they wear over their shoulders, allows them to be seen from far away. However, they are disliked by other tribes because they stick to their ancient customs. Their 'houses' are built by the women from brush plastered with clay and cow dung, they are very small and the smoke of their small cooking fire is kept inside to control the mosquitoes. At night they bring their herds into an enclosure made from thorn bush where the ground consists of several years' accumulation of dung. After a rain it can be smelled from far away and we easily understand why they move their entire village to new grounds every nine years!

From the Maasai Mara we drove back up north to Lake Naivasha where we checked into the brand new Great Rift Valley Lodge, where we had a fantastic view over the mountains bordering the Rift Valley from our room. In the morning we watched flocks of water birds and saw herds of hippopotamus wallowing and snorting in the shallow water. They remain submerged during the day, leaving the water only after dark to graze.

Our next stop was the Amboseli National Park, which

is flat with only a few trees and one can see the many elephants there from quite a distance. Here we stopped at the den of a pack of hyenas whose little cubs were so cute we wished we could get out of the van to pet them. On the way to our final destination, the Tsavo West National Park, we can see Africa's highest mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro. Here at the Ol Tukai Lodge, our accommodation is in tents: quite large ones with our own washroom, shower and toilet. In front of us is a large pond with many hippos and enormous crocodiles. In the afternoon we walked around the pond with local naturalists, who points out the crocodiles sunning themselves, which are almost invisible in the tall grass. All around the pond grow tall, yellow bark acacia trees, which

are also called yellow fever acacias. We learn that early settlers and missionaries used to camp under these trees, which are shallow rooted and like to grow near water. Of course there were also mosquitoes there and when the people became sick, they thought the trees had caused the yellow fever or malaria.

Our final three days were spent at the Voyager Beach Resort in Mombasa, where we explored the city with its old Portuguese colonial roots before resting for the long trip home.

The Kenya Game parks are definitely worth seeing, but unfortunately the rest of the country is in rather poor shape; roads are terrible and some visitors now fly into the game parks, most of which have their own airstrips.

A few details: Vancouver-based Bestway Tours and Safari can be contacted at 1 800 663 0844,

www.bestway.com. The price of this trip this year is C\$5,720 pp. dbl., which includes air fare from Toronto. In Egypt, **South Sinai Travel** provided our local guides and drivers, **www.southsinai.com**, while in Kenya it was **Naked Wilderness Africa Ltd**, **www.nakedwilderness.com**. Both companies were excellent and looked after our comfort and well-being. Except for some travel days, and early morning game drives in Kenya, we could sleep until about 7:30 a.m. and we usually were back in our hotel in time for some rest before dinner. We have been on many adventure trips in the past ten or so years, and we can unequivocally say that the enjoyment of a trip depends to a large extent on the quality of the leader and/or guide, and we thoroughly enjoyed this one. 📷

Heinz and Inge Jaeger are Travel Society members who live in Burlington, Ontario.

They wrote about their journey to Easter Island in our September 2005 issue.



We enjoy meeting some Maasi in their village

BRITAIN

- Travellers thinking about creating an itinerary for exploring **Scotland** may like to know about Loganair, a British Airways partner that serves 13 destinations. Connecting through the main cities of **Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen** and **Inverness**, travellers can choose to visit places such as **Stornoway** on the **Isle of Lewis, Orkney** and **Shetland** as well as the smaller islands of **Barra, Tiree** and **Islay**. One of the more unusual experiences on offer is landing on the beach at **Barra**. Traigh Mhor is a 2-mile cockle shell strand that serves as the island's runway. Flights work to a 'flexible timetable' as the runway disappears twice a day under the incoming tide. The island offers a wild seascape, clean beaches, a brisk climate and some great walks. And if you like to have fascinating facts to tell your friends, jump aboard the world's shortest scheduled flight: two minutes, between **Westray** and **Papa Westray** on Loganair's Orkney Inter Island service. Full details at www.loganair.co.uk.
- If you're of Scottish descent and have considered returning to the Old Country to commence a genealogy search, here's a programme to get you started. It's a first-ever **Genealogy Concierge** service being offered by the **Sheraton Grand Hotel** in **Edinburgh**, where genealogy expert Sheila Duffy is ready to help. Prior to check-in you will be provided with a questionnaire which will facilitate the initial research. Ms Duffy will then sit down with guests for a one-to-one, hour-long consultation for a fee of £70 (about C\$149), during which the guest will be given practical advice on how to develop their search for their Scottish forebears. Scottish records go back to 1553 and are some of the most accessible in the world, though few people know how to fully harness this ancestral information. For further information on this service please contact James Walter at james@tartansilk.co.uk and for the Sheraton visit www.sheraton.com/grandedinburgh. For general information on travelling in Scotland log on to www.visitscotland.org.

CANADA

Canada's cities make great summer getaways; there always seems to be some outdoor festival going on, and if some rain should come along there's plenty to do indoors too. **Montréal** has so much going on it would take all our pages to tell you, but we can say the city makes a great summer getaway. **The Quays of the Old Port in Montréal** have an impressive array of activities this summer: music, circus, literature, visual arts, short river cruises, dancing or just relaxing on the riverside terraces of the area's five restaurants. In the dancing category, **Salsafolie** will offer hot rhythms every Sunday and an **Argentinian tango orchestra** will perform on four evenings in August. A highlight for flower and garden lovers will be **International Flora** (which we mentioned in our May issue too), returning to the Quays for the second year with

most of the superb garden exhibits from 2006 and many new ones. Last year's event drew 175,000 visitors. This year's exhibition will run from 29 June to 3 September. For a handy brochure on all the offerings on the quays call 1 800 971 PORT or visit www.quaysoftheoldport.com and for more on International Flora visit www.floramontreal.ca. Also in Montréal is that renowned quartet known as the natural science museums: **the Biodome, the Insectarium, the Botanical Gardens** and **the Planetarium**. Take the children! Here are some fascinating programmes planned for this summer and full details can be found at www.museumsnature.ca. And before you set out for any of Montréal's 30 participating museums make sure you have a **Museum Pass**: three days access to all the museums and the public transit system for \$45 or, if you prefer to walk, bike or drive, \$35. The pass is available year round from the museums themselves, at tourist information centers or at some hotels. For information visit www.museesmontreal.org or call 1 877 266 5687. The city is also offering visitors a variety of special accommodation packages at the city's finest hotels: called the 'Sweet Deal', prices for two nights start at C\$137 per night with the 3rd night offered at half price, plus gifts, discount coupons for shopping, restaurants, attractions and more. Seems like a good year for a Montréal getaway. Full details at www.tourism-montreal.org.

- **Toronto** is also abuzz with summer cultural happenings, the most controversial of which has been the opening of the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal addition to the **Royal Ontario Museum** last month. Galleries at the Museum that will be opening in the coming months and in 2008 include Mammals, the Age of Dinosaurs, South Asia, the Middle East, Textiles and Costume and the Gallery of Africa, the Americas and the Asia Pacific. Keep an eye on www.rom.on.ca for the news. Other Toronto news is the October closing of the **Art Gallery of Ontario** as final touches are made to its architectural renovation and additions before it re-opens next year. However, throughout the summer, until 7 October, visitors can enjoy five small but fascinating exhibitions grouped together under the slogan "Tour the Art World, Skip and Jetlag". These exhibitions include **Bernini in Focus**, three wonderful 17th century sculptures by the Italian master; 45 portraits by Chuck Close called **A Couple of Ways of Doing Something**; an exhibition that brings together five contemporary Indian artists under the heading **Hungry God**; 39 First Nations objects from the 18th and 19th centuries – **Treasures of the Tsimshian** and – probably the highlight for most – **Medieval and Renaissance Treasures from the Victoria and Albert Museum**: 35 exquisite treasures ranging in date from 300 to 1600 AD including remarkable ivory carvings, a reliquary casket of St. Thomas Becket and a Leonardo da Vinci codex, circa 1505, which reveals Leonardo's text written backwards in mirror-script. London's V&A can be quite overwhelming, so it was a great pleasure seeing this

small collection so beautifully displayed here in Toronto before it moves on to four US galleries, including the Metropolitan in New York. Details at www.ago.net.

- If you need some fresh air after all those exhibitions, don't forget **Toronto's Mariposa Cruise Lines** who employ great welcoming people and offer sightseeing cruises around Toronto's waterfront as well as dinner and Sunday brunch cruises. Details at www.mariposacruises.com.
- There's fresh air in the rooftop herb garden of **Toronto's Fairmont Royal York Hotel** too, and visitors are invited to enjoy traditional afternoon tea in the hotel's EPIC Restaurant and a complimentary tour (weather permitting) of the garden every Monday to Friday at 2:30 p.m. until 30 September. This is the first time the nine-year old garden has been opened to the public. For reservations contact EPIC at 416 860 6949. And don't forget Montréal is easily accessible by VIA Rail if you don't wish to fly or drive.
- To **Calgary's Glenbow Museum** now, which has unveiled a multi-million dollar gallery "to share Alberta's story with the world" through the lives of 48 mavericks. The stories of these colourful characters who helped shape Alberta are told in 12 distinctive galleries with names such as *Exploration and Fur*, *Uninvited Guests*, *Mounties and Mustangs*, *Building the Railway*, *Ranching*, *Newcomers* and so on. Details at www.glenbow.org.

U.S.A.

When week-ends roll around, **Washington DC** hotels tend not to be busy, while the opposite is true in nearby **Virginia Beach** which is popular as a week-end getaway for folks in the region. Putting these two facts together has led to some *surf and the city* packages designed for Canadians who are invited to enjoy Washington's sights and famous museums over the week-end and then relax or participate in some sports or outdoor adventures during the week. The two destinations are a three-and-a-half-hour drive apart. In addition to its well-known attractions, new in Washington is the **International Spy Museum**, the **National Museum of the American Indian** and the newly removed **National Portrait Gallery** and **Smithsonian American Art Museum**. News hounds may like to wait for a fall visit, when the **Newseum** – the world's first interactive museum dedicated to the news – opens its doors. Attractions in Virginia Beach include the **Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center** and **First Landing State Park** which offers 19 miles of hiking trails through beach, upland forest, tidal marsh and cypress swamp. Nearby is **Busch Gardens** and historic **Williamsburg**, which can be included in your itinerary. Packages are available through travel agents or the Canadian Automobile Association, or to request a Vacation Planner log on to www.washington.org or www.vbfun.com.

In this magazine we often mention the fact that certain places are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Our Rideau Canal system, for example, is in the process of being considered for inclusion and this was mentioned in our recent article on the Rideau area. Editors (I presume around the world) have now received the following announcement from UNESCO, which we now present in its entirety ...

UNESCO confirms that it is not involved in the "New 7 Wonders of the World" campaign

Paris 20 June - In order to avoid any damaging confusion, UNESCO wishes to reaffirm that there is no link whatsoever between UNESCO's World Heritage programme, which aims to protect world heritage, and the current campaign concerning "The New 7 Wonders of the World". This campaign was launched in 2000 as a private initiative by Bernard Weber, the idea being to encourage citizens around the world to select seven new wonders of the world by popular vote. Although UNESCO was invited to support this project on several occasions, the Organization decided not to collaborate with Mr. Weber.

UNESCO's objective and mandate is to assist countries in identifying, protecting and preserving World Heritage. Acknowledging the sentimental or emblematic value of sites and inscribing them on a new list is not enough. Scientific criteria must be defined, the quality of candidates evaluated, and legislative and management frameworks set up. The relevant authorities must also

demonstrate commitment to these frameworks as well as to permanently monitoring the state of conservation of sites. The task is one of technical conservation and political persuasion. There is also a clear educational role with respect to the sites' inherent value, the threats they face and what must be done to prevent their loss.

There is no comparison between Mr Weber's media campaign and the scientific and educational work resulting from the inscription of sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List*. The list of the "New 7 Wonders of the World" will be the result of a private undertaking, reflecting only the opinions of those with access to the internet and not the entire world. This initiative cannot, in any significant and sustainable manner, contribute to the preservation of sites elected by this public.

*New sites will be added to UNESCO's World Heritage List during the 31st session of the World Heritage Committee in Christchurch, New Zealand, from 23 June to 2 July. More information at: <http://whc.unesco.org>

- The environment is on nearly everyone's mind these days. No doubt aware of the adverse publicity surrounding air travel, **Air Canada** is now offering its customers the opportunity to reduce the environmental impact of their travel in co-operation with Zerofootprint, a not-for-profit organization that operates carbon offset programmes. Customers booking travel on Air Canada, Air Canada Jazz or their regional partners through www.aircanada.com will have an option to purchase a carbon offset for their trip. They will find information about carbon offsets, a calculator to determine the amount of carbon dioxide their trip will generate and the cost to offset it, and an easy way to pay, either with their ticket purchase or at another time. For example, based on the specifications of Air Canada's current aircraft, it will cost \$19.20 for a customer to offset their share of carbon emissions on a return flight from Toronto to the U.K. and \$12.80 for a return flight from Vancouver to Montreal. "Offsetting makes a real difference to the environment in three important ways," says Deborah Kaplan, executive director of Zerofootprint. "It balances out climate-changing carbon dioxide that is put into the atmosphere by our activities, it highlights the environmental cost of goods and services we buy and, when you offset with trees, it restores ecosystems, habitats, watersheds, greens communities and creates jobs."

- I – Editor Ann – was confused. I flew to England last month with **British Airways** to attend a wedding. My ticket informed me that, while I was allowed two pieces of on-board luggage on the Toronto-Heathrow leg (i.e. a carry-on case and a piece of hand luggage), I was only allowed to carry one item on the return journey. This meant that on the return there could be a slight problem with a rather flimsy hat box containing two fetching pieces of millinery that my daughter and I had worn to the wedding. Surely, I thought, a light hat box would be allowed in addition to my small piece of hand luggage containing the things I needed for my comfort on the flight? Apparently not. A shouting man was making the rule clear to all in the security line: "Only one item allowed." There was only one solution ... soon the flimsy box was in the garbage and the elegant hats were on our heads which, apparently, did not break any rules although we sure felt rather silly. Once through security, however, we saw lots of people with wheely carry-on cases *and* pieces of hand baggage such as handbags or laptop bags over their shoulders. I asked an official and learned that the rule is not an *airline* rule, but a British *airport* rule solely designed to speed up the security process. So you can pack your smaller bag into an approved-size, wheely carry-on case and once through security you can remove your smaller bag and proceed onto the aircraft with the two pieces.

- **Icelandair** has returned to Halifax, with three flights per week to Reykjavik (a 4-hour trip), where passengers not destined for Iceland itself are promised easy connections to the airline's destinations in the UK, continental Europe and Scandinavia, including Bergen, Norway – the departure port

for many Norwegian fjord cruise passengers. For more information: 1 800 223 5500 or www.iclandair.com. (And if you do wish to stay in expensive Reykjavik, check out the new 'boutique-but-budget' property there called the 4th Floor Hotel – www.4thfloorhotel.is – with prices from ISK9,900 – about C\$170.)

- An affordable way to reach Hong Kong is now being offered by just-arrived-in-Canada **Oasis Hong Kong Airlines**. Launched on 28 June, the airline offers six flights a week from Vancouver (every day except Wednesday) with one-way economy flights from \$299, business from \$1,399. Of course taxes and charges are extra. For information call 1 888 983 0808 or visit www.oasishongkong.com.

- Seems lots of people with Europe in their travel plans are talking about the great deals they can get with the new **low-cost carriers** flying from country to country. Yes, there are some amazing prices being offered, but before buying a ticket, there are some questions you should ask:
 1. From (and to) which airports do they operate? Many of these low-cost airlines fly in and out of small airports that are a bit out of the way. Check to see how much more you might have to pay for taxis or other transportation to get you to and from these airports. This is especially important if you are making connections.

2. Are there any extra charges? What's the baggage allowance? The fares on many of these carriers are cheap but charges for baggage, food and drinks are not and these extras can drive the cost up significantly.

3. What are some other options? Depending on the number of days you'll be travelling and how many cities you are visiting, a rental car or rail pass may be cheaper and more convenient and there are a number of discount train passes available. For example, if you're travelling in the U.K. with a group of between three and nine people, BritRail offers a 50% discount on the third to ninth person in the group when the first two people pay regular price. And if you're over 60, there's a 15% discount on a first-class BritRail Pass or FlexiPass. And children under 15 travel free when they travel with adults using any Consecutive Pass or FlexiPass. For more information, visit www.BritRail.com or www.ScotlandRailways.com. And if France or Italy are in your plans, check out www.sncf.com or www.trenitalia.com for similar discounts.

- Now we're on the subject of trains, have you ever wanted to explore the lovely Niagara region without driving? Are you a cyclist? If so, a new initiative from VIARail will appeal. VIA has launched a new "green" tourism initiative dubbed the Bike Train that will have bike racks on select departures between Toronto and Niagara Falls this summer. VIA will initially run the programme on some departures starting 21 July and during August, with cyclists able to take advantage of daytrips or overnight getaways. Bike Train tickets are \$59 round-trip including taxes, passenger seat and bike rack reservation. For a complete schedule, visit www.biketrain.ca.

NEW

Spectacular South Africa ...

Now a **20-day** tour at the same incredible price

Departures: **12 October 2007, 7 March & 10 October 2008**

*No charge
London stopover*

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 scarpment of Eastern Transvaal – a place so beautiful writers run out of adjectives –

PRICES INCLUDING AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto, Montreal	\$7,680 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$7,940 pp/dbl
Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg	\$7,940 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$8,040 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$950.00 (sharing can be arranged)

Prices are subject to confirmation

**Pre-tour - Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe ~
3 days \$1,548 including Air**

**Pre-tour - Victoria Falls and Chobe National Park,
Botswana ~ 5 days \$2,946 including Air**

**Post-tour - Namibia & Etosha - Desert Wildlife
Experience ~ 4 days \$1,688 including Air**

where you will visit God's Window, the Blyde 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.

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
- Most 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 **30 August, 6 & 20 September, Oct, Nov & Dec 2007, Jan, Feb, Mar & April 2008**

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

Copper Canyon and Mexico City

Departing: **7 & 21 Sep, 5 & 19 Oct, 9 & 23 Nov, 7 & 21 Dec 2007, Spring & Fall 2008**

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	\$3,760 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$3,830 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$3,994 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$4,196 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$3,760 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$3,994 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$3,994 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$798 (Sharing can be arranged.) Prices are subject to confirmation

New itinerary!

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. **TICO** **ACTA**

22 days from \$6,275

A Traveller's Turkey

Limited to 20 Members

Depart: 11 September 2007, 22 April & 9 September 2008

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	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,475.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$6,495.00 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$6,495.00 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,495.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$750 (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



WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO NEXT?

The Travel Society is researching new tours exclusively for our members. If you'd like to take a moment to tell us some of the destinations on your wish list, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Some thoughts are ...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia/New Zealand | <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Europe (Eastern) | <input type="checkbox"/> Europe (Western) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korea | <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya & Tanzania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia | <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia/Vietnam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South America (Brazil, Peru, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom plus Eurostar to Europe | <input type="checkbox"/> Other suggestions _____ |

Your name: _____ Membership # _____

Please check the destinations that appeal to you, clip and pop this panel in the mail or fax it to us, (see page 2). Or, of course, feel free to send us an e-mail. And if you have any other destination ideas, we'd love to hear them and we'll do all we can to put the trips together for you.

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.  

China ... Yangtze Spectacular

FROM \$4,145 FOR 18 DAYS!

Departing: 3 October 2007, 17 April & 17 September 2008

It is vast, fascinating and mysterious and it has beckoned travellers from the west for centuries. Mention it to avid travellers and they are sure to say, "Yes, I hope to visit China one day." And what would they choose to experience? **A cruise on the mighty Yangtze River (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 hill-sides and magnificent mountain peaks; visits to the great cities of **Shanghai and Beijing;** a trip to view one of the world's greatest archaeological finds ... the 6,000 terra-cotta warriors at **Xi'an;** scenes of palaces, pagodas, pavilions and pandas; tastes of Peking duck and Chinese banquets and so much more. So how do you choose? When you decide on The Travel Society's tour there's no need to choose because all these highlights are included. Yes, in these remarkable 18 days you'll stay in Beijing; you'll take a 4-day first-class cruise on the Yangtze with many shore excursions; you'll fly to see those centuries-old terra-cotta warriors in Xi'an; you'll visit bustling Chongquin and see its pandas; stay in Hangzhou and travel into the hills covered with tea plantations; explore the exquisite gardens of Suzhou, and visit Nanjing and Wuzhen. And you'll have time to explore spectacular Shanghai. Throughout the

trip you'll see magnificent architecture, you'll be entertained at cultural events, you'll join your hosts at a variety of banquets, you'll have time to shop, and you'll marvel at some of the most wonderful scenery on earth, all in the company of English-speaking guides. You'll travel by plane, by luxury bus, cruise ship and river boat. Many of our members have told us it's an experience of a lifetime ... and all at an amazing price!



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.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing:

Vancouver	\$4,145 pp/dbl	Victoria	\$4,195 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$4,420 pp/dbl	Edmonton	\$4,420 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,590 pp/dbl	Winnipeg	\$4,590 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,490 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$4,490 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$4,490 pp/dbl	St. John's	\$4,850 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec	\$4,850 pp/dbl	London	\$4,850 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$1,195 (Sharing can be arranged.)
Taxes and visas extra. Prices are subject to confirmation

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

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

A new tour

CHINA SILK ROAD

Departing: 10 September 2007, 24 March & 15 September 2008

Perhaps you are one of the many people who have come with The Travel Society on our China Yangtze Spectacular tour of China? Or perhaps you have always been fascinated by tales of the Silk Road? Whichever the case, we hope you will be thrilled to hear about our new, 20-day Silk Road tour. Come with us from Canada to Beijing, Urumqi, Kashgar, Turpan, Jiayuguan, Dunhuang and Xi'an before ending your tour in Shanghai. Lakes at sunset and mountains at dawn; lush vineyards and spectacular deserts; exotic walled cities and ancient ruins; colourful ethnic minorities, nomads, imams, merchants and saints; Great Bazaars

selling camels and donkeys, carpets and spices; caravansaries, gardens and pagodas; train trips and cultural shows and, would you believe, the 492 Mogao grottoes known as the Cave of the One-Thousand-Buddhas. All this and more you'll experience on this trip. Call us now for the detailed itinerary and start dreaming of discovering part of the fabled Silk Road of China.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing:

Victoria	\$5,490 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$5,370 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$5,500 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$5,500 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$5,620 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,100 pp/dbl
Toronto, Montreal & Ottawa	\$5,670 pp/dbl		

Single supplement \$1,100 Prices are subject to confirmation

Your tour costs includes:

- Round trip transpacific air on Air Canada
- All domestic air and coach transportation
- All transfers and baggage handling
- 4-star accommodations
- 1 sleeper on overnight train
- 3 meals (except on free days in Beijing & Shanghai)
- Daily sightseeing
- Local English-speaking guides

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.  

Now 23 days

India's Golden Triangle

No charge London stopover

23 days departing: 24 September 2007, 17 March & 6 October 2008



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!

Your tour includes:

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

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES: 23 Days

Toronto	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,475.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,375.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,548.00 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$6,548.00 pp/dbl	Winnipeg	\$6,650.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$6,650.00 pp/dbl		

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

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