



I N F I N I T Y

Travel Concepts

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NEWS FROM TRAVEL CONCEPTS

WINTER 2012

Where in the world do you want to go and how long do you have to get there? Clients are seriously considering their "Bucket Lists" and putting us in charge!

Let's face it — longer international journeys take their toll and many are best made while you can still trek to the villages, swim with the dolphins or hoist a sail.

Tomorrow isn't always assured and planning in advance will help you prioritize your future travels. There are lots of factors to consider. If, for instance, you usually take one big trip a year in the fall, you may find that fall isn't the best time to visit a certain destination. At Travel Concepts, we make it our business to know when and how best to explore the various regions of the world.

We're dedicated to helping you put together your "Bucket List" and bringing it to fruition. If we know what's on it, we can be watching for specials and new offerings that might appeal. For a private experience tailored uniquely to your tastes, Travel Concepts can introduce you to our partners around the world who will help us design a perfect trip.

If you prefer the security and companionship of small group travel, please join us on Feb. 21 to meet our newest touring partner, **Tauk Tours**. **Tauk** has distinguished itself by connecting people and places and by providing a truly all-inclusive, inspirational travel experience.

You only go around once — be sure that you go around the world and do it right!

IDEAS FOR 2013

New tours on Travel Concepts' horizon for 2013

We no sooner get our private tours organized for 2012 than it is time to think about next year!

Plans are already underway for a **Design Tour to London & Milan** in July lead by Judith Thompson and Dixie Hudson.

Cindy is hoping to explore Botswana and South Africa in 2013. This will be an active adventure for a small group that enjoys hiking and canoeing as part of the program.

Please contact Cindy about either of the above trips, or to design a private trip for your own group of friends.

FOR OUR BLOG

Please share your travel hints and stories with us

Have you visited our web site lately? There are links to our exclusive hotel and villa rental programs as well as handy tools like baggage allowance details and SeatGuru for checking out aircraft seating plans.

You'll also find **Park'NFly** discount coupons, information on all our Specialty Tours, as well as our blog. If you are willing, we'd love to share your favourite travel stories, photos and helpful hints on the Travel Concepts blog. Please contact Devon Hird at: Devon@trvlconcepts.com.

www.trvlconcepts.com



Milena & Jim Robertson, Elaine & Bill Hornell on a "Bucket List" trip. Seen here boarding *Regent Seven Seas Voyager* in Aqaba, Jordan last November

YOU'RE INVITED!

SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR



Wednesday, February 15 @ 7:00 PM

MOROCCO (Oct. 2012): Visit the Mystical Cities for 11 days with an optional desert extension



Thursday, February 16 @ 7:00 PM

ITALY (Sept 2012): Vineyards & Hiking on the Amalfi Coast - a delightful 10 day exploration

Tuesday, February 21 @ 6:00 PM

Meet **Tauk Tours** - our choice for a touring partner to help you live your Bucket List!

Thursday, February 23 @ 7:00 PM

A FLAVOUR OF SPAIN Meet the Artists: Rick McDiarmid & Alfonso Tejada- a preview on Andalucia.

Tuesday, February 28 @ 7:00 PM

Cruising with **Oceania** and **Regent Seven Seas** in 2012. Find out what's new and why they are the best!

Wednesday, March 7 @ 7:00 PM

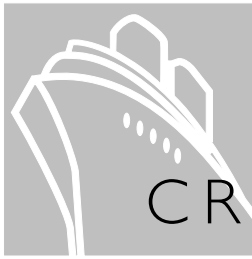
Epicurean Delights of South America (Nov. 2012): Experience the vineyards and cuisine of Chile and Argentina on this amazing new 2-week small-group trip.

Sunday, March 28 @ 5:00 PM

SOUP SISTERS @ The Dirty Apron: Be part of this cross-Canada volunteer movement. Cost: \$50 per person. Space is limited. See Insert for details.

RSVP to Shannon

604-926-8511



Travel Concepts Update

CRUISES FOR EVERYONE

WE RECOMMEND . . .

Multi-generational families are loving Disney Cruise Line. Here's a great 9-nt. Coastal Cruise package for fall

This summer, most Alaska cruises on *Disney Wonder* will sail round trip from Seattle. At the end of the season however, is a unique 6-night Coastal Cruise sailing from Vancouver to Los Angeles. The ship will spend 2 full days docked in San Francisco en route and when you disembark, you'll head to Disneyland for a 3 night stay. The package, including cruise, hotel and air back to Vancouver starts at \$939 Cdn. + \$270 tax per person. Dates are Sept. 10 - 19/12.

Sail the Panama Canal on the *National Geographic Sea Lion* and experience the delights of expedition cruising

The Lindblad family are renowned explorers and now **Lindblad Expeditions** operates extraordinary trips around the world. One that has captured our imagination is their in-depth program in the Panama Canal and Costa Rica area. They have partnered with **National Geographic** who operate a 62 passenger ship, *Sea Lion*. This winter a variety of programs are offered featuring these coastal regions. Choose from 7, 10 or 14 night expeditions with prices starting at \$4,980 US per person/twin for cruise and land.

Why not try a calm water cruise in Canada next summer on the 64-guest steamboat, m/v *Canadian Empress*?

Many of you head back east in the summer to visit relatives. Why not add on something different this year? From May to October, this delightful small ship plies the waters of the historic St. Lawrence River; the 1000 Islands, and the Ottawa River. Trips are from 3 to 6 nights, the longest being between Kingston, ON and Quebec City. 3-night cruises are priced from \$1,077 per person, while 6 nights start at \$2,155 each sharing a double. Special single prices are offered on select departures, so book early!



Princess Cruises offers 4-day Alaska sampler cruise in May 2012

This mini-cruise sails from Vancouver on May 22 to Ketchikan and returns to Seattle. You have 2 full days at sea to enjoy the ship and the sights along the Inside Passage. Our package includes the cruise and coach back to Vancouver from Seattle. Prices start at \$399 + \$190 tax for an inside. Mini-Suites start at \$799 + tax per person sharing a double.

PLAN TO TREAT YOURSELF IN 2012

Rail Cruising: trips of a lifetime by Private Train

The Trans-Siberian Express, the Maharaja's Express, the Silk Road, these are mecca to avid travellers. Now, you can visit these magical destinations on fully escorted rail tours aboard some of the world's most luxurious private trains.

Travel aboard the astounding *Golden Eagle* between Moscow and Ulaan Baatar in Mongolia. Ride the *Arctic Express* for 16 days round trip from Moscow to the Arctic Circle. Spend 11 days between Beijing and Lhasa, Tibet on the *Shangri-La Express*.

These are priceless journeys aimed at discerning travellers seeking exotic experiences.

Tauk's Small Ship Cruising promises a unique voyage

We're very excited about some of the destinations offered on **Tauk's Small Ship Cruising** program. In July, you can cruise Iceland, *Land of Fire and Ice* aboard the 260-guest *Le Boreal* for 7 nights round trip from Reykjavik. Prices start at \$5,990 for this truly amazing cultural trip.

Another favourite is **Tauk's** 10-day *Venice & the Dalmatian Coast* which spends 2 nights in Venice before exploring the coastline of Italy and Croatia aboard **Tauk's** newest "yacht" - *L'Austral*. This program is priced from \$6,390 US per person.

These packages include everything - even shore trips!

OFF-THE-BEATEN-TRACK CRUISING

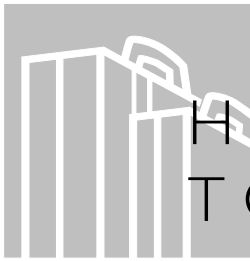
The Great Lakes . . . The Arctic and Antarctica . . . The Yangtze . . .

We are brimming over with ideas to help you explore in comfort an area of the world that you might not otherwise see. You can sail to the ends of the earth and beyond these days and your friends at Travel Concepts are here to help!

With **GAdventures**, (formerly GAP), you can cruise the polar extremes, going ashore by Zodiak or kayak. See Spitsbergen or follow the spirit of Shackleton. The 126-passenger *M/S Expedition* offers 7-night journeys to the *Realm of the Polar Bear* in July with prices starting from \$3,779 Cdn. plus airfare.

Summer is the perfect time to cruise the Great Lakes and interesting itineraries are offered between Detroit and Chicago or Duluth and Detroit on the 138-guest *Yorktown*. Prices start at \$3,995 US per person sharing a double.

Our partner, **Uniworld**, offers a variety of programs in China that feature cruises along the Yangtze River. You can choose an 11-day trip from Beijing to Shanghai with 3 nights cruising or a 17-day trip with 8 nights cruising and 8 nights in hotels. This latter, *Wonders of China & the Grand Yangtze*, is priced from \$3,599 per person for the cruise/tour. Airfare is additional. Please ask us for a brochure on **Uniworld's** Asia River Cruises and Tours.



HOLIDAY IDEAS TO GET YOU THINKING!

EUROPE, THE AMERICAS OR AFRICA

Family Experiences by Trafalgar — the perfect family vacation for young and old alike. Well-paced and pre-planned

Freewheeling through Europe with young children, teens or multiple generations, whether by car or rail, is simply not practical. Too much time is wasted looking for suitable accommodation, and reasonable places to eat when there's so much else to see and do! That's why we think that **Trafalgar's Family Experiences** program is the perfect answer. You'll travel first class while **Trafalgar** looks after the details. Trips are planned to excite the kids and relax the adults.

Whether your destination is Europe, South Africa, South America or something closer to home, **Trafalgar** has some super choices. Take the kids to Switzerland to see the *Magical Matterhorn* for 10 days, or to Italy to see *Gladiators, Gondolas and Gold* for 11 days. These programs offer hotels suitable for families of three or four wanting to share accommodation.

Switzerland is a very expensive country, but **Trafalgar's** 10-day land tour is priced from just \$2,255 per adult and \$1,995 per child aged 5 - 17 years. Please ask for a brochure.



ESCORTED SMALL GROUP TOURING

Collette Vacations' Explorations programs are unique

This line-up of cultural tours takes just 12 to 28 passengers depending on the destination.

Colours of Provence is a 10-day epicurean journey from Arles to Nice. You'll spend 3 nights in a "Provencal Mas," cook with a chef in Avignon, taste wine at Chateaufort-du-Pape and mix your very own perfume during a workshop in Grasse. Land including 13 meals from \$2,749 per person/twin.

If Australia and New Zealand are calling you, **Collette's** 20-day trip includes 25 meals and you'll enjoy 2 free nights in Fiji if you travel May - August 2012. Land only: from \$4,699 per person.

Explore another side of Cuba with GAdventures

On this 9-day *Cuba Explorer* trip, you'll travel by private van, vintage automobile and by foot as you explore Havana, Trinidad, Santa Clara, Sancti Spiritus and Vinales. Saturate yourself in the music, food and ambiance of the country, while staying in comfortable hotels. Land price: from \$1,599 per person.

For those with a sense of adventure, **GAdventures** also offers a 15-day tour of *Colonial Cuba*, round trip from Havana. You'll enjoy 10 nights in home-stays plus 4 in hotels for as little as \$1,549 per person.

On these trips very few meals are included in the price.

OFF-SEASON VALUES

Spain & Morocco are great destinations in winter

One of our favourite coach touring companies is **Insight**. Their tours are well-paced, they don't cram their coaches to capacity and they use centrally located hotels where possible.

Treasures of Spain, Portugal & Morocco is an 18-day program that offers 2-night stays in 5 of the cities visited. The land price, round trip from Madrid, including most sightseeing and many meals starts at \$3,365 per person for departures before the end of March.

If you want to concentrate on Morocco only; *Best of Morocco* is a 10-day program with land priced from \$1,699 each.

Explore London & Paris with Globus this winter

A week in London staying at the **Ramada Hyde Park Hotel** with breakfast daily and a half day sightseeing tour can be had for as little as \$807 per person + air in March and April through **Globus**.

If you long to see Paris in April, a week will cost \$1,043 each at the **Novotel Paris Tour Eiffel Hotel**.

With **Globus**, it is also possible to combine London and Paris for a week using the **Eurostar** train between the two. Priced from \$1,159 per person/twin plus airfare, you may also choose to upgrade your hotel. Please ask us for details.

NEED SOME SUNSHINE?

Looking for an adults only resort on the Mayan?

We've had very good reports on **Secrets Maroma Beach Riviera Cancun Resort**. Clients are giving it excellent reviews.

Located 30 km south of Cancun Airport, this all-inclusive beach resort caters to adults over the age of 18 years. There are 6 à la carte restaurants and the food is amazing at all of them we're told.

A package including air from Vancouver, transfers, 7 nights at the resort, all meals, drinks and non-motorized water sports plus a complimentary round of golf is priced from \$2,675 + \$240 tax per person sharing a double departing February 27.

Jamaica's Beachcomber Club is a winner for families

This modest hotel located in the middle of 7-mile Negril Beach and 90 minutes from Montego Bay, is a great destination for families on a budget.

Studios, 1 and 2-bedroom suites are available and the latter accommodates 7 adults or 4 adults plus 4 kids. Meals are buffet-style and domestic drinks are included.

Kids 5 and under stay and eat free, so a family of 5 with 2 older kids and one under 5 can do this holiday leaving March 12 for one week for as little as \$7,220 including all taxes. Space was available at time of writing!



ADVENTURE & EXOTIC TRAVEL

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Only 700 mountain gorillas remain in the world. Shouldn't you see them up close and personal?

Travel Concepts' partner, Cindy Horton has visited Uganda twice to see the great mountain gorillas. In both cases, she combined a short stay in Uganda with a safari in Kenya, but the gorillas were really the highlight — a truly life-altering experience.

Africa in Style is a collection of hand-crafted adventures that cover Africa in depth. *Gorillas & Chimps* is a 7-day package from Entebbe that will have you tracking the gorillas with a professional guide. Please ask us for details and a brochure.



Kiboko Safari will show you the best that East Africa has to offer

This 14-night program promises superb game viewing, breathtaking lodges, exciting camps and some of the most spectacular landscapes in the world. In Kenya, you'll visit Samburu, Ol Pajeta Ranch, Lake Nakuru and the Masai Mara. Crossing into Tanzania, you'll see Serengeti National Park and the Ngorngoro Crater.

Group size can be as few as 2 but never more than 12. You'll travel by minivan and 4x4 vehicles. Meals, park fees, game drives, activities and a professional guide are all included in the price which starts at \$4,519 per person sharing a twin. It is also possible to upgrade to the Kiboko Tented Safari so please ask for details.

EXOTIC DESTINATIONS

Travel Thailand in luxury at bargain prices this year

Imagine staying at some of the best hotels in Thailand for 9 nights, including daily breakfast return economy air from Vancouver and transfers, for as little as \$2,140 + tax Cdn per person sharing a double!

The trip includes 3 nights hotel each in Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Koh Samui as well as sightseeing and a Thai cooking class. If you prefer to substitute Phuket for Ko Samui the additional cost is \$230 per person.

Madagascar is an island waiting to be explored

Colourful tribes, tropical beaches, bustling markets, intriguing lemurs and ever-changing scenery are just a few of the delights that await visitors to Madagascar.

Two couples can do a private tour for 11 days on a program called *1000 Views of Madagascar*, for as little as \$1,670 US per person/double in standard lodge rooms. If you prefer upgraded accommodation, the supplement is \$360 per person.

WONDEROUS ADVENTURES

Family trips should be active, cultural and inspiring for everyone as well as hassle-free and fun!

A *Kumuka Holiday* is the ideal way to explore the world with your family. Groups are never more than 16 people, and are often a mix of nationalities and ages. The trips are informal and filled with family-friendly activities from kite-flying to noodle-making in China to tiger-spotting in India. Where possible, *Kumuka* uses locally owned hotels, guesthouses and lodges where you can sample local cuisine.

Trips are offered throughout the world, but some of our favourites for kids are in Australia & New Zealand. *Volcanoes, Mud Pools & Glow Worms* is a trip that is bound to capture your kids' imagination as you travel for 10 days round trip from Auckland, New Zealand. The trip includes a tour of the Volcanic Island of Rangitoto, Hell's Gate Geothermal Reserve in Rotorua, a boat trip in the Glow-Worm Grotto and a farm stay. Kids 5 - 11 pay \$1,655 while sharing with two adults paying \$2,560 each.

Dolphins, Koalas & Islands is a 7 day trip out of Brisbane which includes 2 nights at the beach and 2 nights on a farm. The kids will have a chance to hand-feed bottlenose dolphins! The price this summer is \$1,675 per adult and \$1,070 per child between 5 and 11 years sharing with the parents.



HOLIDAYS FOR ACTIVE TRAVELLERS

At last - a challenging high-altitude trek without camping! Mountain Travel Sobek offers inn to inn walking in Peru

For those who are fit and enjoy active travel, this is a fantastic trip. Wind your way through the luxuriant forests and snow capped peaks of the mountain range cradling the sanctuary of Machu Picchu. Follow a lightly travelled trail and explore the diverse ecosystems of the Incan hinterland.

The hiking on this trip is considered moderate to strenuous, but you'll be rewarded with comfortable lodge accommodation at the end of each day. *Mountain Travel Sobek* offers either 6 or 9 night options. The *Machu Picchu Inn to Inn Express* trip is 6 nights and is priced from \$2,850 US per person, while the longer 9-night program starts at \$4,395 US each.

MTS offers a number of exciting programs in South America, including *Walking the Wine Country of Chile*, *Hiking the Vineyards of Mendoza* in Argentina and sailing in the Galapagos.