

THE SERIOUS TRAVELER™

TOUR LISTING FROM TRAVEL CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL, INC. • SPRING 2016

Greetings from the Serious Traveler to the Serious Traveler!

We have fantastic new tours to the FAR NORTH. So you have been to India? Follow the Mughal trail from the Taj Mahal to the Gardens of Shalimar in Srinagar, Kashmir and continue to the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab. To top it off, in the Himalayas attend the Buddhist Guru Tse-Chu Festival in the former Kingdom of Ladakh. We have a new tour to the mysterious Easter Island and Atacama Desert in the north of Chile. Head towards the Arctic to Iceland; this new sensational Far North adventure takes you to Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

We can't overlook one of our favorite destinations, *Venice of the North*; three trips in 2017 will feature St. Petersburg. We started our business 31 years ago with tours to then, Leningrad. Our winter museum and theater tour features a full day at the Hermitage and performances at the Bolshoi and Mariinsky. We are retuning to the Baltics - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - with an extension to St. Petersburg. Kirsti will again lead a group to Lapland for an exciting adventure; you can stay in an ice palace and drive a dog sled! Have a look at our favorites that focus on Bulgaria, Iran and Ethiopia. Yes, we do go SOUTH too. Read about our Puglia (South) Italy tour with Lucia, and stay in *our* hemisphere for South America trips to Colombia and Ecuador. There is something for everyone in the Serious Traveler line-up for 2017.

Gwen

-Gwen Erwood

President, Travel Concepts International



SERIOUS TRAVELER....

ASIA 2016

Iran Through the Ages

Join Bahman Zenhari and Gwen for a brand new tour honoring Persian poets, literature, early religions, philosophers, architects and rulers. Fly directly to Ferdowsi's Mashad and see Omar Khayyam's Neishapur, then wind our way from Anzali on the Caspian Sea, to Masuleh and Ardabil to Tabriz. Search for American Howard Baskerville, and

(Asia continued on page 2)

EUROPE 2016

Behind the Iron Curtain - Unveiled

Rare opportunity for students of history to delve into daily life as it was during this controversial period in Bulgaria. See artifacts and structures that will soon disappear in the sands of time. This is Bulgaria's past, dedicated to the future.

\$3760 FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ AUGUST 4 - 15, 2016

☐ AUGUST 3 - 14, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html

(Europe continued on page 2)

AFRICA 2017

Ethiopia's Historic Route

Experience the colorful religious festivals, led by richly clad Christians surrounding their rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. Make a two-day excursion to soak up the amazing and pristine nature of the Simien Mountains National Park. Ancient Axum, which purportedly holds the Ark of the Covenant. Sip Ethiopia coffee; you are 7 years younger here!

\$5710 FROM WASH, DC VIA ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

☐ JANUARY 17 - 29, 2017 JANUARY FESTIVALS

☐ SEPTEMBER 17 - 29, 2017 FOR MESKEL FEST.

SeriousTraveler.com/Ethiopia.html

Omo Valley African Safari

Enjoy comfortable and unique lakeside lodges, surrounded by wildlife. Make daily excursions to meet the fascinating Konso, Desanech, Hamar, Mursi and Dorze tribal people and learn about their culture. May be a separate tour or an extension to Ethiopia's Historic Route.

\$3990 AS AN EXTENSION TO HISTORIC ROUTE

☐ JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 8, 2017

☐ SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 9, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Ethiopia.html

THE AMERICAS 2016

Crafts and Culture of Ecuador

Join expert Mauricio for visits to artisan's workshops in Otavalo, Puyo and Guayaquil. From the Amazon rainforests to the western lowlands, see ancient Inca ruins, the majestic Andes and the Avenue of the Volcanoes. Take the train on Devils' Nose.

\$3990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 10, 2016

☐ SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 9, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Ecuador.html

THE AMERICAS 2017

Cuba People-to-People

STOP PRESS! We have the hotel space so critical to experience Cuba at a unique time before it changes forever. On our fully licensed program, you'll meet outstanding artisans and celebrities in music and art, partake in celebrated Cuban cuisine and enjoy private concerts. Havana and Viñales Valley.

\$3775 FROM HAVANA, CUBA

☐ MARCH 26 - APRIL 1, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Cuba.html

Colombia

Land of Coffee and Culture

See Bogotá's galleries and their artists, learn of Villa de Leyva's colonial history, explore the Coffee Region and relax in the Caribbean town of Cartagena.

\$3990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ OCTOBER 9 - 19, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Colombia.html

Easter Island and the Great West of South America

From Buenos Aires, Argentina to the End of the Continent. Cruise from Ushuaia aboard the *Stella Australis* among the ice fields of Patagonia to Punta Arenas. On to Santiago and stargaze into the Earth's clearest skies from Moon Valley in the Atacama Desert.

\$5850 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

☐ NOVEMBER 5-18, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/SouthAmerica.html

Give someone in your family and yourself one of the greatest gifts—exposure to other worlds, other peoples, and other ideas. “Horizons broaden so much more the higher we are flying.” —Jonathan Livingston Seagull

ASIA 2016

(Asia continued from page 1)

ascend to the remote Takht-e-Soleiman! On to Hamadan, Kermanshah, Ahwaz, Susa, Bishapour, and Firuzabad. Fly home from Shiraz.

\$7430 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

□ SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 9, 2016

□ SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/AgesofIran.html

Persian Classics

Take as a short and sweet 9-day trip, seeing just the highlights. Fly direct into Shiraz. We'll marvel at Persepolis, Naghsh-é-Rostam, Pasargadae. Stroll through the pink-tiled Nasir-ol-molk, Narenjestan house and gardens and pay our respects at the Tomb of Hafez. Enjoy nature and the Bedouin grasslands en route to the *Roof of Iran* - Shahrekord. Finally see the *Pearl of Iran*, Isfahan with its Royal Square, its romantic bridges and its beautifully-tiled mosques. Return flight from Isfahan. Or, take as a six-day extension to the Through the Ages tour.

\$3990 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

□ OCTOBER 7 - 15, 2016

\$4470 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

□ MAY 5 - 13, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html

Iran - Passage Through Persian History & Culture

Don't let the naysayers diminish your enthusiasm. Experience Persian hospitality for yourself! Persepolis, a short drive from Shiraz, is one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world. Isfahan is a unique city with exquisite mosaic-clad domes, bridges and Persian gardens. Travel in security with our experienced Iranian tour manager. This perfect introductory tour also includes Kerman, the citadel of Rayen; Shiraz, the city of “Roses and Nightingales”; Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great; Yazd, the city in the desert and safe haven for Zoroastrians.

\$6840 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

□ NOVEMBER 1 - 16, 2016

□ NOV 16 - 20, 2016 CASPIAN EXTENSION • \$2240

□ NOVEMBER 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html

ASIA 2017

Sri Lanka

Our *Pearl of the Indian Ocean* tour visits six UNESCO Sites: Anuradhapura, Dambulla, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Kandy and Galle. Yala's National Park plus the enchanting Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage. Dine elegantly and stay in a historic beach resort in Bentota designed by iconic architect Geoffrey Bawa.

\$4470 FROM COLOMBO AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 2, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/SriLanka.html

Treasures of Iran

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

\$6880 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES

□ APRIL 7 - 20, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/TreasuresIran.html

India's Far North

Ladakh, Punjab and Srinagar

Join us in exploring the remote Buddhist area of India. It's the best time of year to visit the majestic Himalayas. Take the new train so we don't miss the beautiful Taj Mahal. Float along the pristine waters of Dal Lake. Attend the Guru Tse-Chu Festival and see the hidden land of the Nubra Valley.



\$5490 FROM DELHI AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ JUNE 23 - JULY 7, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/LadakhIndia.html

EUROPE 2016

(Europe continued from page 1)

Wild Europe to the East

Walk on the wild side of Eastern Europe in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania. Five countries in two weeks with a delightful treat every day!

\$4330 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ OCTOBER 2 - 15, 2016

□ OCTOBER 15 - 28, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Balkans.html

EUROPE 2017

Lapland - Magic of the North

Reindeer safari, dog sled ride, Finnish sauna.

\$1299 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ JANUARY 7 - 14, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Lapland.html

Russia in Iconic Winter Museums & Theaters

Visit Russia's most famous museums by day and experience her fabulous theaters by night.

\$3990 FROM NEW YORK VIA FINNAIR

□ FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 5, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/RussiasBest.html

Colorful Easter in Bulgaria

We'll be in Sofia for the Palm Sunday Festival. In Kazanluk you'll meet the Thracians. Visit small towns like Koprivshtitsa, Tryavna, Gabrovo, Bozhentsi, which you've probably never heard of, but will stay in your memory forever. Celebrate Orthodox Easter Sunday in Plovdiv which will be the 2019 *Cultural Capital of Europe*. Rila Monastery and the Rhodopes, too in the wonderful company of our guide, who will show you places you might never find on your own, and bring them alive with their vast knowledge and love of Balkan culture.

\$4660 FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ APRIL 8 - 23, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html

Phi Mu Foundation Presents Champagne Barge Cruise

Cruise down the Marne Canal from Epernay to Paris aboard our deluxe barge, the *MS Raymonde*. Excursions to the charming towns of Reims and Meaux, and of course a taste of the region's famous bubbly wine - champagne!

\$2650 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ MAY 16 - 22, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/PhiMuFoundation.html

Seven Wonders of Bulgaria

This is our most comprehensive tour of Bulgaria. From Sofia to the Black Sea with Kazanluk, Arbanassi, Varna, Plovdiv and Rila Monastery. Learn about the Thracians, the fabled

(Europe continued on page 3)

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We update our website almost every day! Get the latest information online. See the itineraries, look at photos and read comments from past travelers. When you're ready, we have a wonderful brochure for you. It will answer your questions about flights, meals, and much more. The reservation form is part of the brochure. We can "pencil you in" to hold space with just a phone call. Would you like a brochure right now? We can send it as a PDF the minute we hear from you. Our brochures are not posted on our website, as we like to talk with you directly. We'd like to get acquainted and know how we may be of help to you. Send us an email, order from the website, call or cut out and mail this form to us. Your address should be on the reverse side. Please check and make any necessary corrections. If there are different departure dates or other destinations you'd like to see, let us know.

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Orpheus while in the Rhodope Mountains, Byzantines and medieval Bulgarian cultures from Bulgaria's top guide.

\$3990 FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

MAY 24 - JUNE 3, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html

Traditions and Legends of Romania

This out-of-the-ordinary tour visits southeastern Saxon Transylvania, the peaceful rural communities of Maramures and the exquisite "Painted Monasteries" of Bucovina.

\$2990 FROM BUCHAREST AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

JUNE 3 - 14, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Romania.html

Precious Stones of Apulia

Free of crowds, the *heel* of Italy retains the cultural charm of the simple life combined with a rich historical heritage. See the Trulli of Alberobello, sojourn in Baroque Lecce, visit Castellano, Martina Franca, Cisternino, Taranto and Matera in nearby Basilicata. Guided by the precious Lucia.

\$4490 FROM BARI AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

JUNE 23 - JULY 1, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/ApuliaItaly.html

Czech Republic and Poland History & Traditions

This summer tour is educational and enlightening. Visit Prague - *the heart of Europe*. Taste pilsner in Plzen before

seeing Karlstejn Castle and Roznov pod Radhostem in the Czech Republic. Krakow, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Warsaw in Poland.

\$3920 FROM PRAGUE TO WARSAW

JULY 30 - AUGUST 10, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/CentralEurope.html

Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

Begin in Reykjavik to see Snæfellsnes Peninsula. Fly to the Faroe Islands with its idyllic villages and Viking farmsteads. Fly to Greenland to marvel at active glaciers and have a Midnight Sailing around the ice fjords. See UNESCO's Sermermiut Inuit settlement before we return by flight to Iceland.

\$8890 FROM REYKJAVIK, ICELAND

JUNE 26 - JULY 8, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/Iceland.html

Baltic Capitals

Visit the revitalized capitals of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Start with Vilnius and Trakai Castle. As we journey northward, we'll make stops in Klaipeda - the *Gateway to the Sea* and Palanga where we learn about its amber history. Visit the resort town of Jurmala before seeing Riga, Rundale Palace and finally Tallinn - a perfect medieval city. Optional 3-day St. Petersburg Extension.

\$4290 FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR

SEPTEMBER 16 - 28, 2017

SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 1, 2017 EXT \$1180

SeriousTraveler.com/Baltics.html

Treasures of Russia

Red Square at night in Moscow, three days in the countryside of the Golden Ring with Vladimir, Suzdal and Fedoskino. St. Petersburg by Sapsan fast train. Travel with retired American diplomat, Charles Magee, who will present personal insight into U.S.-Russian relations and invite you as VIP guests to the Consulate in St. Petersburg.

\$4680 INCLUDING AIR FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 10, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/RussiasBest.html

Phi Mu Foundation Presents Burgundy Barge Cruise

Cruise through the breathtaking Doubs River Valley aboard our deluxe barge, the MS Jeanine. Begin in Besançon with a tour of its citadel named a UNESCO site. Explore the characteristic Franche-Comté architecture of Baumes-les-Dames and its 5th century Abbey. Walk through Montbéliard - thriving as early as 983 AD as a part of the Roman Empire.

\$2350 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

OCTOBER 13 - 19, 2017

SeriousTraveler.com/PhiMuFoundation.html



*ALL DATES AND RATES ARE AS OF MAY 2016 AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. SOME TOUR PRICES ARE BASED ON 2016 RATES AS 2017 ARE NOT AVAILABLE AS YET.

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2016/2017 TOURS

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Why Travel With TCI?

We are not your typical tour company. We are different in the places we visit, the way in which we travel, and the people who join us! And we're proud of our differences!

Expert Guides

Our tours are led by hand-picked, local guides who are fun, friendly and knowledgeable. They meet you upon arrival and stay with you throughout. Our guides are also our close friends. As friends do, they share perspective from their part of the world.

Life Experiences

Get ready for some great fun. We're always observant, flexible and watchful for serendipitous opportunities that touch and change our lives (and the lives of those we meet) in a positive way. You'll never be the same. Who would have expected travelers to be a part of the reunion of adopted Romanian children and their birth mother? It happened!

Detailed Brochures

The descriptions are here to entice you to call us. If the dates and destinations meet your needs, learn more. Rather than produce huge catalogues, we provide a detailed brochure for each specific tour. These are available by PDF or post. Just call or email to order. As a preview, look for the itinerary on our website. If you need help in navigation, please call.

Personalized Attention

You are unique and not just a number to us. We are available to assist—before, during and after your tour. The greatest compliment we receive is that so many travel with us again and again. We happily provide references.

We Go All Over

Yes, we go to Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Right now we have a special focus on Bulgaria and Iran—burgeoning destinations.

Cultural Visits

We include musical programs, cultural exchanges, performances, counterpart meetings, embassy visits, home visits, trips to schools and crafts centers, and private lectures by local experts.

Choose Your Air Arrangements

What's best for you is best for us. Use your mileage, secure your own tickets or let us help you find good discounted rates.

Small Groups

Most of our groups are 10 to 15 citizen diplomats, both men and women, singles and couples of all ages. We offer room shares for single travelers. Our travelers are simply the best. You'll fit right in!

Pre-trip Study Material

Since we believe that enjoyment of the journey begins long before departure when you begin learning about your destination, we prepare you with informative pre-trip study material.

Cultural Tours to Better Understand the World and its People

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