

RAINBOW  
TOURS

SUMMER  
AUTUMN  
2015

# OTHER SHORES

## Colombia

Cartagena's  
colonial treasures

## TRIPS FOR YOUR TRIBE

FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN  
COSTA RICA & KENYA

## Mad *about* Madagascar

A naturalist's guide  
to the land of lemurs

## Responsible traveller

Brazil's endangered  
black lion tamarins

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR • NORTHERN LIGHTS • CUBA • FOOD & WINE HOLIDAYS



RAFFLES

PRASLIN  
SEYCHELLES



# “TRUE LUXURY IS NOT JUST ABOUT WHAT YOU DO, IT’S ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL”

Paradise unfolds at Raffles Praslin, the exquisite Seychelles resort in the heart of the Indian Ocean. Each private villa features its own serene plunge pool and peaceful balcony to drink in breathtaking views of the opal-hued ocean. Moments away, one of the world’s top beaches awaits – swim, snorkel or simply soak up the sun from the pristine white sands of Anse Lazio.

Each Raffles hotel is an oasis of calm. Each is a carefully chosen destination. Each is uniquely, indefinably, sublimely Raffles.



EDITOR

**Gill Leaning**

editor@other-shores.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

**Lauren Hughes**

**Philippa George**

**Anya Meyerowitz**

**Ava Mehta**

DESIGN

**Fredrik Dittlau**

ADVERTISING

**David Pointer**

dpointer@westernoriental.com

WESTERN & ORIENTAL

enquiries@westernoriental.com

**RAINBOW  
TOURS**

info@rainbowtours.co.uk

REGENT HOLIDAYS

*holidays with stories to tell*

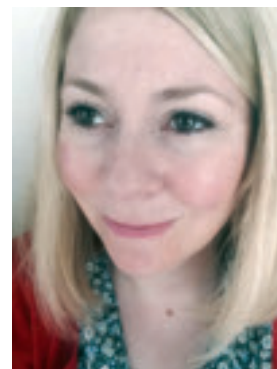
regent@regentholidays.co.uk

**villaselect**

holidays@villaselect.com

*Other Shores is an exclusive magazine for the clients of Western & Oriental, Rainbow Tours, Regent Holidays and Villa Select.*

# From the Editor



This is an issue of firsts. The first with myself as Editor; the first time we've featured stunning imagery from Travel Photographer of the Year; the first time we've included Malawi – a new destination for Rainbow Tours.

Travel, for many of us, is all about firsts. New experiences. The opportunity to explore new places, discover new cultures, try new cuisines or learn a new language.

In this issue, Western & Oriental's Ricky Coates proves that, even if you're not a first time visitor, there's always something new to

discover in Thailand (p30). If you're thinking about taking your children away for the first time, our round-up of family holidays (p56) is an essential read. We talk to TV chef Jeremy Pang about his first cookery book (p9) and Mark Stratton sees Russia through new eyes (p46) on a pioneering tour with Regent Holidays.

Here's to more first-time travel experiences.

**Gill Leaning**, Editor

## CONTRIBUTORS



**MARK STRATTON**

Mark has spent the last seventeen years travelling the world, writing, photographing and reporting. He follows his passion for offbeat destinations, about which he writes regularly for *Wanderlust*, *National Geographic Traveller* and *The Daily Telegraph*.



**STAN CULLIMORE**

Stan started his professional life as a musician in popular '80s band The Housemartins. Since then, he has written various children's books and travels the world writing about his adventures in *The Sunday Times*, *The Mail on Sunday* and *The Observer*, amongst others.



**DANIEL AUSTIN**

Daniel is a travel writer and nature photographer specialising exclusively in the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar. He is the author of the Bradt guidebooks to Madagascar and often leads small group tours there to share his passion for the island's wildlife.



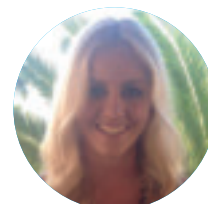
**SHANE HOSIENE**

Shane is a specialist in Arctic travel at Regent Holidays. His first epic trip on the Trans Mongolian Railway was the beginning of a travel fixation that would lead him to over 50 countries. Shane regularly blogs for Regent about his adventures in Iceland and Greenland.



**RICKY COATES**

Ricky is a Far East Destination Expert at Western & Oriental. Having worked in travel for nearly two decades, his most memorable experience was in Borneo where he was lucky enough to see wild orangutans and a herd of pygmy elephants crossing the river.



**LYNSEY KIRK**

Lynsey joined Rainbow Tours' marketing team after her post-university adventures around the world sparked a passion for travel. Her recent trips include Bolivia, Colombia, Iceland and a new firm favourite - Thailand. Cuba and Mexico are next on her hit list.

Look out for NEW brochures from October onwards, including Western & Oriental's brand NEW USA Fly-Drives & Ranch America

## DESTINATION

### 16 Madagascar

Daniel Austin's guide to the land of lemurs

### 22 Greenland

Shane Hosiene takes a summer voyage at the top of the world

### 26 Colombia

Lynsey Kirk steps back 500 years in colonial Cartagena

### 30 Thailand

Ricky Coates goes temple-hopping in Thailand

### 38 Cuba ➡

Stan Cullimore dusts off his dancing feet in Havana

### 42 Northern Lights

Our guide to seeing the aurora borealis this winter

### 46 Russia

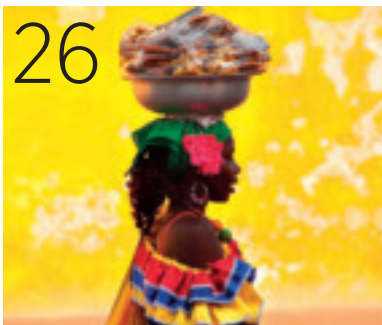
Mark Stratton takes a train tour of Russia's Autonomous Republics







22



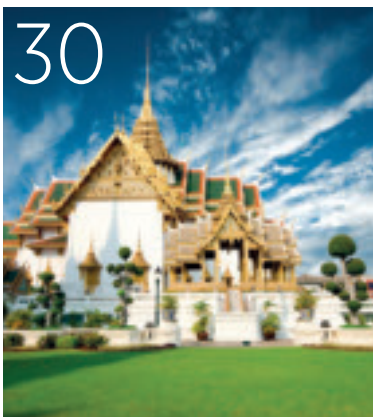
26



16

## ESCAPE

- 6 Travel News**  
Latest arrivals in the world of travel
- 8 World Wines**  
Best bottles from around the globe
- 9 The Interview**  
TV chef Jeremy Pang
- 12 Ask the Experts**  
Your travel questions answered
- 14 Travel Tales**  
Our holidays, your say



30

## JOURNAL

- 36 Six of the Best**  
Food & wine holidays
- 50 Our Shores**  
A taste of Peru at LIMA Floral
- 54 Responsible Traveller**  
The plight of Brazil's black lion tamarins
- 56 Family Traveller**  
Top holidays for your tribe
- 60 Pioneering Traveller**  
North Korea, Finland, Malawi & Antarctica
- 64 Competition**  
Win a 5-star Bratislava city break



42



9



46



ESCAPE

# PICTURE THIS





**Travel**  
Photographer of the Year

This vibrant photograph of India's Holi Festival in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, won Sahil Lodha a Special Mention in the Vanishing & Emerging Cultures category at the 2013 Travel Photographer of the Year awards (tpoty.com). It is one of the images that will be on display from June 6th to July 12th in an outdoor retrospective exhibition at Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, the National Trust property which was home to photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot.

Download a copy of the latest  
Western & Oriental India travel  
brochure at [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com)



## TRAVEL NEWS



## Rainbow Tours at Rutland Bird Fair

Rainbow Tours will join Chris Packham, Simon King and Mike Dilger at Birdfair 2015. Taking place between 21st and 23rd August, the event – jointly organised by the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust and the RSPB – will feature hundreds of stalls selling everything from binoculars to birding holidays. Rainbow Tours' Africa and Latin

America wildlife specialists will be offering advice on exotic birding hotspots from stand 93, where they will be joined by a Western & Oriental India expert. Birdfair 2014 raised £280,000 to help advance the designation of new marine protected areas and to enrich worldwide marine wildlife. [birdfair.org.uk](http://birdfair.org.uk)



## NEW LAPLAND HOTEL INVITES NORTHERN LIGHTS IN

*New for 2015, the Arctic Light Hotel is the latest designer bolt-hole to open in Rovaniemi, the official hometown of Santa Claus. This former City Hall has been converted into a contemporary boutique hotel featuring 57 rooms and suites. Northern lights hunters should request one of the hotel's spacious Aurora Lofts which boast sky-view windows, ideal for catching a late night performance of the ethereal light show. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk)*



**LUXURY  
CAMP**  
*opens in*  
**ZIMBABWE**

Located in a game-rich private concession in Hwange National Park, Linkwasha is the latest addition to Zimbabwe's growing number of high-end camps. Nine deluxe en-suite tents look out over the incredible Makalolo Pan, and the communal area includes multi-level viewing decks, a pool and a winter lounge complete with fireplace and library. Year-round wildlife sightings include large herds of elephant and

buffalo, prides of lion and an abundance of plains game and birdlife. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)

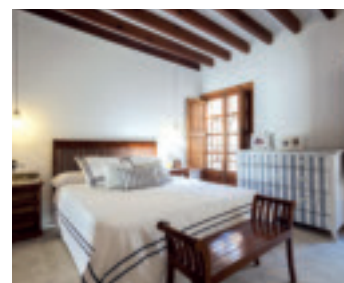




# Travel Photographer of the Year opens at RGS

SERGIO CABARJO/TPOTY.COM

*The latest winning images from the international Travel Photographer of the Year awards (TPOTY) will make their public debut at a major exhibition at London's Royal Geographical Society this summer. The free-to-view exhibition runs from 24th July to 5th September and features award-winning shots from photographers in over 100 different countries. Entries for the 2015 TPOTY awards close on 1st October. [tpoty.com](http://tpoty.com)*



## VILLA SELECT TAKE ON NEW TOWNHOUSE IN POLLENZA

Following the success of its first townhouse in 2014, Villa Select has launched a brand new Majorca townhouse for summer 2015. Casa Placa Mayor, in the heart of Pollensa's historic Old Town, is a luxury designer home sleeping up to seven people in four bedrooms. Available for hire between April and October, the townhouse is metres away from popular Plaza Mayor's bistros and tapas bars. [villaselect.com](http://villaselect.com)



## ATLANTIC AIRWAYS LAUNCH NEW SERVICE FROM EDINBURGH

Atlantic Airways, airline of the Faroe Islands, has this summer launched a twice-weekly scheduled service from Edinburgh. Departing on Friday mornings and Monday evenings, the direct flight to Vágar Airport will be operated on a 144-seat Airbus A319. Return fares start from £206 including taxes, charges and fees. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk)

## SUMMER CELEBRITY CHEF EVENINGS IN ITALY

The 5-star Forte Village, one of Sardinia's top resorts, is this summer playing host to a series of gourmet guest evenings hosted by top Michelin-starred chefs from France, Spain, Germany and Italy. The stars of haute cuisine will demonstrate their skills beneath the summer sky at the Cantina del Forte and the Forte Gourmet restaurants. Every refined menu features a constellation of signature dishes paired with wines from the most prestigious cellars. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com)



## DAILY service to BALI

Emirates has launched a new daily service to Bali via Dubai, starting this summer.

Bali will be Emirates' 148th global destination, adding to the airline's route network in the Asia Pacific region, which currently spans 23 destinations in 13 countries. The non-stop service between Dubai and Bali will be operated on a Boeing 777-300ER. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com)

# WORLD WINES

Laura and Kiki from A Grape Night In pick five summer wines that champion small producers and lesser-known regions from around the world



## SOUTH AFRICA

Craig Hawkins 'Z': Zinfandel: 2014: Swartland £11.00

South Africa still provides some of the best value wine, which includes this rare Zinfandel from the wine region of the moment; Swartland. This is not your average Zinfandel – it's light, with ripe berry fruit and just a hint of spice – but we wouldn't expect any less from winemaker, Craig Hawkins.



## GEORGIA

Iago's Wine: Chinuri: 2013: Mtskhetra £18.00

Georgian winemaking is still traditional. They use native varieties, minimal intervention and age in amphorae. Everything goes in, including the skins and pips, making their whites cloudy and orange rather than shiny and clear. Iago uses the indigenous grape Chinuri to make wine like they used to.



## ARGENTINA

El Porvenir de Cafayate Amauta 'Absoluto': Torrontes: 2012: Cafayate £10.00

Forget Malbec – Torrontes is the Argentinian wine for this summer. Although Spanish in origin, Torrontes was born to climb the mountains of northwest Argentina. El Porvenir grows at 2,000 metres above sea level which helps keep the grape's perfume in check.



## ITALY

Camilio Donati: Lambrusco Maestri: 2012: Emilia Romagna £15.00

Lambrusco used to be seen as the grape juice of the wine world but now it's at the height of a comeback. The REAL Lambrusco makes you sit up and pay attention – be it its red colour, ripe berry fruit or meaty finish. Camilio Donati will always be the real deal.



## SPAIN

Juan Gil '4 Meses': Monastrell: 2014: Jumilla £8.75

Spain is far more than Rioja. Head south to Jumilla and the old bush vines of Monastrell, aka France's Mourvedre. Juan Gil thinks Jumilla is made for the grape, and makes not one, but five differing styles. Ours is aged for just four months, but still packs a punch with forest fruit and sweet spice.

To order, or to sign up for a monthly box of four wines from off-the-beaten-track regions visit [agrapenightin.co.uk](http://agrapenightin.co.uk) 0203 286 4631

## A GRAPE NIGHT IN

Laura and Kiki set up A Grape Night In in 2012, offering pop-up wine tasting events with an aim to bring fun and excitement to what was previously a bland setting. The girls have just embarked on their next project – finding a place to call home. In the early part of July they

will be opening a wine bar, shop & kitchen in Tooting Market in South London. Visit their website for updates and keep an eye on their Kickstarter campaign to follow their journey from empty shell to wine bar.



## THE INTERVIEW



## Jeremy Pang

In his new book, *Chinese Unchopped*, TV chef and School of Wok founder Jeremy Pang demystifies the secret traditions of Chinese cookery. *Other Shores* talks to the rising young star about crustaceans, cleavers and spicy Sichuan cuisine

### Where's your favourite place for a foodie holiday?

It has to be either Kota Kinabalu in Malaysia or Hong Kong. KK is an all-time family favourite. Satay sauce as soup, grilled fish on street barbecues, huge seafood restaurants where you can pick whatever seafood you want and have it cooked four ways. They have these amazing crustaceans the locals call mantis shrimp. Aggressive little things, but they're so tasty when they're deep fried with salt and pepper and covered in crispy shallots. And Hong Kong – well that speaks for itself! It's the land of sweet and sour pork, char siu, roast duck and dim sum.

### The legend that is Ken Hom wrote the forward to your new book - what advice did he give you?

Concentrate on getting the book done. Don't do too many things at the same time. Everything else will follow. But most importantly, always be yourself.



*Chinese Unchopped* is published by Quadrille and costs £19.99

### What top five ingredients should every budding Chinese chef have in their store cupboard?

Lee Kum Kee's oyster sauce and a never ending supply of light soy, dark soy, sesame oil and rice wine. Oh and always jasmine rice for luck.

### Where did you learn to use the enormous Chinese cleaver we've seen you wielding on Channel 4's Sunday Brunch?

Actually I used to cleaver when I was a kid because my dad told me it was cool. When I started the school in Covent Garden I took out the cleaver again and gained a newfound love for its balance. The size is just right so that you don't have to bend your wrist when you're slicing, the blade is really thin and the knife itself doesn't feel heavy at all. If you have a good one – we have Chan Chi Kee knives in the school.

### *Chinese Unchopped* covers everything from authentic egg-fried rice to five-spice lotus leaf chicken and grandma's lionhead meatballs. What's your favourite recipe from the book?

I love the braised belly pork with fermented tofu. It's a real family dish. Reminds me of my dad's cooking.

### Regent Holidays' Discover Sichuan itinerary includes a lesson at a local cookery school – what can we expect from this regional cuisine?

Spicy spicy! 'Ma La' translates as spicy tingle on the tongue. Pickles and plenty of greens. Literally makes my mouth water!

● Regent Holidays' 9-day Discover Sichuan tailor-made tour costs from £2,135 per person including flights, accommodation, transfers and guide. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131



# TRAVEL WITH SWAROVSKI OPTIK AND SEE THE WORLD THROUGH NEW EYES



**CAN YOU**  
*see what*  
**I SEE?**



## AS FAR AS *the eye* CAN SEE



### ANTARCTICA

## A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY WITH SWAROVSKI OPTIK

On the voyage of a lifetime, a whole new world opens up through a Swarovski Optik binocular. The lightweight EL 8 x 32 Swarovision will enable you to see every crevice in the extraordinary iceberg formations in glorious close-up. As you sail along the ice-filled fjords, soaring sea birds, playful penguins and majestic whales will appear so close that you can almost touch them. Swarovski's crystal clear optical quality allows you to experience travel in a whole new dimension.

### CALL OF THE WILD

## ON SAFARI WITH SWAROVSKI OPTIK

You've meticulously planned for your long journey and now you are at the heart of Africa, looking across the boundless savannah. You catch a glimpse of a rare sight. The Big Five are within reach – but not quite. You want to get closer. With a Swarovski CL 8 x 30 Companion binocular you can almost count the spots on the leopard and feel the hide of the rhino. Make your safari a truly unforgettable one with Swarovski Optik.



### THE WONDERS OF PERU

## CULTURAL JOURNEYS WITH SWAROVSKI OPTIK

Peru - home to the Amazon Rainforest and Machu Picchu, the incredible ancient Incan city set high in the Andean Mountains. With a Swarovski CL Pocket 8x25 Binocular, Peru's dramatic vistas and iconic landmarks are brought to life. Get a close-up view of magnificent condors soaring high above Colca Canyon, or search for ancient Incan treasures in the beautiful Sacred Valley. Small enough to slip into your pocket, the CL Pocket 8x25 is an invaluable travel companion.



## AN INVESTMENT FOR LIFE

There are some things that you have for life. Things that are superbly made and of a quality that is second to none. Things that are still as good as new even after many years of intensive use. Just like binoculars from Swarovski Optik.



### CL POCKET:

#### **SMALL outside – BIG inside**

- Best optics in a compact design
- Watertight and rugged
- Travel with the world in your pocket

Models: CL Pocket 8x25B, 10x25B  
Colours: green, sand brown, black

### CL COMPANION:

#### **See Well – Look Good**

- Excellent optics, crystal clear image
- Compact and lightweight design



Models: CL Companion 8x30B, 10x30B  
Colours: green, sand brown, black

### EL 8x32 Swarovision:

#### **Lightweight – Crystal clear**

- Perfect image quality thanks to Swarovision
- Large field of view, perfect for spectacle wearers
- Crystal clear optics



Models: EL8x32WB, EL10x32WB  
Colours: green, sand brown

**Don't miss a thing. Enjoy the  
World with Swarovski Optik.**

[swarovskioptik.com](http://swarovskioptik.com)



# ASK THE EXPERTS

**Q** We are planning a trip to Uzbekistan in September. Is it possible to visit the Aral Sea?

*Mr & Mrs Williams, Bath*

**a** “The simple answer is yes – and I highly recommend it for a real insight into man’s impact on the natural environment. At one time the Aral Sea was one of the four largest lakes in the world, but in just fifty years it has been reduced to ten per cent of its former size – the result of a Soviet decision to divert the Amu Darya and Dyr Darya rivers. You’ll undoubtedly want to visit Khiva during your Uzbekistan tour – Regent can organise either a private or bus transfer from Khiva to Nukus (worth a stop itself for the Igor Savitsky Museum) and on to Moynaq – the once bustling fishing port, reduced to a ghost town. Here you can visit the Aral Sea Memorial and the ships’ graveyard where boats have been left stranded on the seabed.”

**Michael Voss, Regent Holidays Central Asia Travel Specialist**



**Q** My friends and I are seasoned hikers and are looking for somewhere new and unique for a hiking holiday – where would you recommend?

*Laura McLean, London*

**a** “The Indian Ocean island of Réunion is a fantastic destination for hiking. The scenery



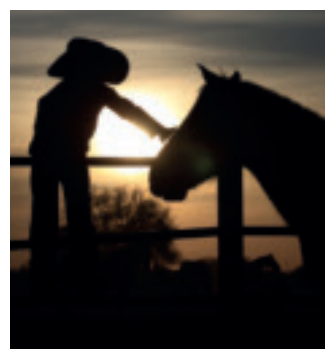
is out of this world – volcanic peaks, deep ravines, remote waterfalls and emerald forests. You do have to be reasonably fit to hike here – volcanic islands have no shortage of hills! If you’re really keen, you can opt for a trans-island hike which takes around seven days, overnighting in gîtes, which are generally comfortable dorm rooms, in the more remote areas. It’s definitely worth adding a few extra days to relax at the end on the white sand beaches of St-Giles-les-Bains. If you prefer to mix your hiking with a bit of local culture, there are plenty of options for shorter day hikes which you can intersperse with time in the very French-feeling St-Denis or the colourful town of St-Pierre which has a decidedly more Creole flavour.”

**Fiona Herring, Rainbow Tours Africa Specialist**

**Q** We’d really like to take our children on a ranch holiday. They’ve never ridden before but we’re experienced riders. Is there anything else for them to do?

*Carole O’Dea, Glasgow*

**a** “Many ranches offer excellent kid’s programmes. Drowsy Water Ranch in Colorado has a great Rangerider club for six to thirteen year olds which allows them to practice their riding skills before heading out to the backcountry on morning and afternoon trails. And there’s loads more to keep them entertained too including obstacle courses, hiking, swimming, archery and rafting. In the evenings there are also camp fire sing-alongs and Western nights to look forward to! If you’d prefer to ride with your children throughout your holiday, I would recommend the



White Stallion Ranch in Arizona, set in 3,000 acres at the foot of the beautiful Tucson Mountains. This ranch encourages families to ride together, and those with less confidence can take part in shorter group rides of three or so hours. The Saturday rodeo here is a family favourite.”

**Carly Crowe, Western & Oriental USA Destination Expert**



We love to hear from you. Email your travel questions to [editor@other-shores.com](mailto:editor@other-shores.com), and your questions could be answered in the next issue



Alila

HOTELS AND RESORTS

# BALI: ISLAND OF THE GODS

With its beautiful beaches, lush rice terraces, volcanic vistas and spiritual people, Bali is quite simply an island paradise. In search of the ultimate Balinese hideaway, Western & Oriental's Erica Moore considers four luxury Alila Hotels and Resorts, where sustainable tourism is at the heart of every experience

## ALILA UBUD

### SECLUDED HILLSIDE RETREAT

Ubud is the spiritual heart of Bali, a centre for traditional arts and culture surrounded by rice paddies and rainforest. Just five kilometres from the town, the Alila Ubud is a luxury retreat perched on the edge of the Ayung river valley. The retreat's private gardens and floating infinity pool provide the perfect spot to enjoy the serenity of the foothills. Contemporary rooms are arranged in the style of a traditional Balinese village, all with incredible panoramic views. For the ultimate indulgence, upgrade to one of twelve luxury villas and unwind in the lap of nature above the rich jungle canopy.



## ALILA MANGGIS

### BOUTIQUE SEASIDE BLISS

East Bali is famed for its stunning natural beauty and superb dive sites, where rays, turtles and seahorses glide over colourful coral. Overlooking the tranquil waters, beautiful Alila Manggis is a haven of serenity set amidst a coconut grove, and nestled between the sea and Bali's most sacred mountain. All rooms are designed to maximise the extraordinary views, and traditional spa experiences are enjoyed outside, facing the gentle waves of the ocean. For food lovers, the opportunity to visit the hotel's organic garden hidden below the foothills of Mount Agung should not be missed.



## ALILA VILLAS ULUWATU

### CONTEMPORARY OCEAN PARADISE

Pura Luhur Uluwatu is Bali's most spectacular temple, located high on a cliff-top, 250 feet above the waves of the Indian Ocean. Just a few minutes away from this place of pilgrimage is Alila Villas Uluwatu, a serene hideaway where the ocean stretches out as far as the eye can see. Alila's exquisite cliff-top villas each have their own private pool and feature contemporary interiors enhanced with traditional Balinese accents. Relax with a drink at the designer Sunset Cabana Bar, which dramatically hangs over the cliff edge, or choose to while away the days beside the glorious 50-metre infinity pool.



## ALILA VILLAS SOORI

### HEAVENLY DESIGNER HIDEAWAY

Volcanic mountains loom above verdant rice terraces, and beautiful beaches shelf gently into the azure Indian Ocean in west Bali's Tabanan Regency. Located on the beachfront, Alila Villas Soori is a private luxury retreat offering the ultimate in personalised service. Elegant one-bedroom villas feature private pools and are designed to connect living spaces with the tranquil sights and sounds of the surroundings. Unwind at the luxurious Alila Spa, where contemporary treatments are influenced by ancient healing techniques, or make use of the chauffeur service to explore the Tabanan area, learning about its royal heritage.





## TRAVEL TALES

LEMURS  
& LUXURY

In Madagascar we saw all we had hoped to see, including a huge variety of lemurs in the rainforest – which our local guide pointed out to us every time we went out with him! We also saw so much more – chameleons, a tree boa, geckos, spiders, beautiful birds, plants, butterflies – all spotted and named for us.

The two trips to Lemur Island were just unforgettable. It was a bit like being mobbed by furry teddy bears as lemurs leapt around you. Wonderful!

Our last stop was Mauritius where a real highlight was our stay at Paradise Cove Boutique Hotel. This was a never-to-be-forgotten experience of total luxury. The setting was beautiful and there were all sorts of activities to engage in – if you could only summon up the energy!

● *Mr & Mrs Anderson travelled to Madagascar & Mauritius with Rainbow Tours*

Variety is  
the spice of  
Sri Lanka

Well, we asked for diversity in our holiday and that's what we got! We started off by visiting the Sigirya Rock Fortress and the temples at Polonnaruwa followed by Rangiri Dambulla for an insight into the history and culture of Sri Lanka. Kandy is home to the temple that holds the tooth relic of Buddha and is not to be missed.

Then off to the mountains to visit the tea plantations for freshly picked tea, fabulous views and a delicious lunch overlooking a stunning waterfall. We stayed at the Heritage Tea Factory Hotel which is very quirky. Next we travelled to Udawalawe National Park which was fantastic. We saw so many elephants as well as water buffalo, jackal and birds.

Our last stop was the exotic city of Galle which was wonderful – lots of intriguing little lanes to explore and history to soak up. All of the hotels that we stayed in were fabulous, but our favourite was the Fort Printers in Galle.

● *J. Gerken travelled to Sri Lanka with Western & Oriental*



## Borneo for beginners

From start to finish we enjoyed every minute in Borneo and we saw so much more than our trip up the Amazon two years ago. A baby pigmy elephant came to the river for a drink on one of our river cruises and, although I am not an avid ornithologist, for those who are the variety of birds and the knowledge of the guides was amazing. All sorts of monkeys (amazing), snakes (not my favourite) and baby crocs – you name it we saw it!

We really went for the orangutans of

course, and there were plenty of those too. In Sepilok we also went to the sunny bear sanctuary. Watching a turtle lay eggs and having the opportunity to help send hatchlings back to the sea was another amazing experience.

The luxury in between of the Shangri-La hotels really enabled us to recharge batteries for the next adventure.

● *Sue DeBiere travelled to Borneo with Regent Holidays*



We love to hear about your amazing travel experiences. Email [editor@other-shores.com](mailto:editor@other-shores.com) and tell us in 200 words what made your holiday so special, and your story could appear in the next issue



# AZURA

SELOUS GAME RESERVE, TANZANIA

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

## WILD TANZANIA

Covering an area bigger than Switzerland and boasting some of Africa's best game viewing, *Other Shores* gets intimate in southern Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve

### THE SELOUS GAME RESERVE

Wild and rugged, the largest game reserve in Africa is also, surprisingly, one of the least visited. Covering an incredible 47,000 square kilometres, just a handful of lodges dot the vast landscape given life by the meandering Rufiji and Great Ruaha rivers. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982 due to the diversity of its wildlife and undisturbed nature, the Selous is home to large numbers of elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, wild dog, giraffe and hippopotamus – plus some of Tanzania's last remaining black rhinos. Coming face-to-face with the residents of this vast wilderness on a game drive or boat safari is a very special and humbling experience indeed.



### STAY AT AZURA SELOUS

The boutique Azura Selous in the heart of the reserve is a luxurious haven, far from the madding crowds. Twelve eco-chic tented villas feature comfortable custom-made beds, opulent stone bathrooms with indoor and outdoor showers, and serene private plunge pools with incredible views over the Great Ruaha River and its resident pod of hippos. It's the little touches that bring each animal-themed room to life: handmade decorations from community-based projects are a reminder of Azura's 'designed-to-give' principles. Meal times are a relaxed and private affair, where à la carte dining experiences are never had in the same place twice – from bush breakfasts to candle-lit dinners under the vast African sky.



### GAME DRIVES

Game drives from Azura Selous feel like you are on a private concession. With almost all of the other Selous lodges over four hours drive away, on an Azura safari you won't see another vehicle from start to finish. Travelling in custom-made vehicles with open sides and raised seating, Azura's 4x4s are designed for just four to six people, making each wildlife encounter a private and intimate experience with all the time in the world to sit back and watch the stories of the savannah unfold. Specialist local guides follow fresh footsteps, tracking lions and elephants beyond the limits of the roads, and memorable sundowner picnics can be arranged as the blazing African sun drops below the horizon.



### SPECIAL EXPERIENCES

Azura Selous' exclusive location overlooking the Great Ruaha River brings with it a wealth of special experiences. Boat safaris here are a holiday highlight, with wildlife viewing ranging from playful elephants on the riverbank to covert crocodiles lurking in the murky shadows. Keep binoculars at hand for a closer look at Selous' prolific birdlife: some of the reserve's 440 species include swooping Fish Eagles and persistent tickbirds which can usually be seen grooming sleeping hippos. Walking safaris offer guests the rare chance to get up close and personal with the 'Little Five', and relaxing spa treatments on the deck of your private tented villa are enhanced by the sound of the river rapids and enchanting calls of the wild.



**RAINBOW TOURS**

is an Azura Selous specialist. Ask about four-nights-for-the-price-of-three special offers for travel before December 2016, or speak to an expert about combining a Selous safari with Zanzibar or Mozambique. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304



DESTINATION  
**MADAGASCAR**

---





# **A NATURALIST'S GUIDE TO** **MADAGASCAR**

Bradt Guide author and Rainbow Tours' guide Daniel Austin  
takes an evolutionary journey through Madagascar where almost  
90 per cent of the flora and fauna is endemic





“The result is  
that today lemurs  
constitute a quarter  
of all primate  
species worldwide,  
and every last  
one is endemic to  
Madagascar”

## DESTINATION MADAGASCAR

- 1 Diademed sifaka
- 2 Anjahely mouse lemur
- 3 Panther chameleon

# m

Madagascar tops the bucket list of many a wildlife fanatic's dreams yet its appeal is more subtle than that of the great beasts parading across the African plains just the other side of the Mozambique Channel. In a word, what has made Madagascar so special is its isolation. It's not that it's especially inaccessible to travellers, or even very remote from other habitation, but it is the world's oldest island so it has been separated from other landmasses for longer than anywhere else on earth. This is the key to Madagascar's unique natural charm.

The theatre of evolution is not known for its fast pace; it plays out gradually in long, slow acts. And so it follows that when the stage is an island as old as Madagascar, this drama is afforded the opportunity to build up to a particularly spectacular finale and develop a cast of characters like no other. If evolution is the 'Greatest Show on Earth' as Richard Dawkins suggests in his eponymous book, then Madagascar is surely the Paris Opera House.

Left undisturbed for the best part of a hundred million years while evolution skipped off along a path at a different tangent from its course on neighbouring continental landmasses, Madagascar's flora and fauna diverged to the point that today it boasts a level of endemism approaching a staggering 90 per cent. The conditions shaping the direction of evolutionary development were different there: many globally widespread animal groups are completely absent – there



are no members of the dog, cat or bear families, for example – so those creatures that were present would in many cases have had to contend with fewer predators and competitors than in other places.

Madagascar's famous lemurs are a case in point. Their ancestors were soon wiped out elsewhere in the face of competition from monkeys, the smarter and more capable new kids on the primate block; monkeys appeared about 30 million years ago – but crucially not before one pioneering lemur managed to beat all the odds in escaping to the refuge of Madagascar (perhaps a couple or a pregnant female swept out to sea in a storm on a raft of floating vegetation) and successfully started a new community. Not only did this chance event save lemurkind from certain doom but, thanks mainly to Madagascar's

great diversity of climates and habitats, that founding population soon spread and diversified into well over a hundred different species. The result is that today lemurs constitute a quarter of all primate species worldwide, and every last one is endemic to Madagascar.

### EVOLUTIONARY TALES

Similar stories lay behind the other Malagasy wildlife. Around half of all chameleon species are native to the island, including the world's smallest and largest. And genetic tests on the country's endemic carnivores recently poured cold water on the hitherto presumed theory that they were members of the mongoose and civet families; it turns out they are their own separate branch of the evolutionary family tree, with their closest cousins amongst the mongooses and hyenas.

### AN EVENING WITH HILARY BRADT

Rainbow Tours is hosting an exclusive Madagascar evening at the Royal Geographical Society on 25th November. The fundraising event, in association with Wanderlust magazine, includes a talk from guest speaker Hilary Bradt, founder of Bradt Travel Guides, and the opportunity to win a pair of binoculars from the event sponsors, Swarovski Optik. Tickets cost £10 and all money raised will go to the Money for Madagascar charity. Early booking is advised. For tickets call 020 7666 1304.



## DESTINATION MADAGASCAR

So it is no surprise that this incredible Indian Ocean island is a holy grail for serious naturalists. As one of the world's poorest nations, its basic infrastructure can be challenging to visitors, but it remains one of the safest countries in Africa and its large network of several dozen parks and reserves is popular with eco-tourists. Nowadays there is even a good selection of high-end hotels to cater for discerning travellers.

No visit would be complete without spending some time in at least one of the lush rainforest reserves in the east and north. Masoala, Montagne d'Ambre, Ranomafana and Andasibe-Mantadia national parks are all excellent examples, the last being the most easily accessed. Countless birds, reptiles and frogs are to be found here, sharing the forest with no fewer than a dozen lemur species. The highlight is the endangered indri, the largest of all living lemurs, whose eerie but melodic howls carry across the forest canopy like distant whale song.

In addition to various subcategories of rainforest, there are dry forest and spiny forest habitats that are equally unmissable. Each is inhabited by its own range of unique plant and animal species, and the latter is an ecosystem wholly unique to Madagascar. These spiny forests of the south are arid regions of incredibly low rainfall, where the vegetation has evolved all manner of measures for holding on to precious moisture including, in many cases, vicious prickles to deter any passing creatures looking for something to munch on.

### ECO-TOURISM

You will also find mangroves, exceptional diving and snorkelling spots, islands with glorious sandy beaches, and otherworldly landscapes of towering limestone pinnacles known as 'tsingy'; these vast karst formations, resulting from millennia of rain erosion, are riddled with subterranean rivers, cave systems and dramatic sinkholes, and in some areas are so impenetrable that they have never been explored.

Awe-inspiring and magical though Madagascar is as a destination, it would be inaccurate of me to paint for you an entirely idyllic picture of the island. The nation struggles with poverty, poor healthcare and education, lack of clean water, corruption, wildfires caused



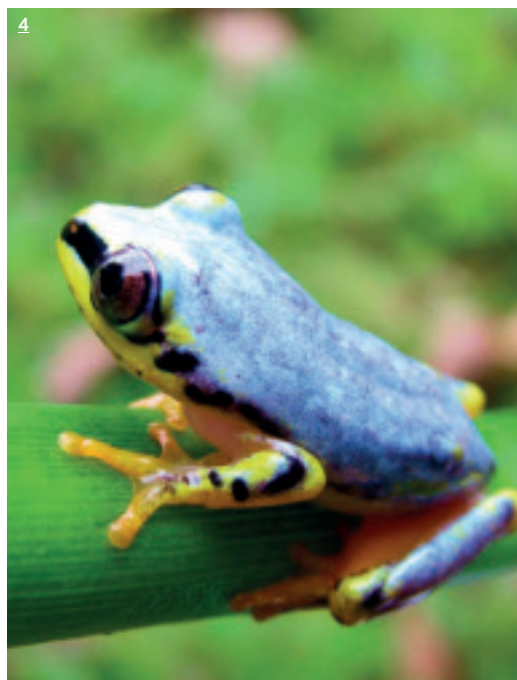
1



2



3



4

by slash-and-burn farming, illegal logging and deforestation, soil erosion, overexploitation of species through bushmeat hunting and fishing, and a host of other serious humanitarian and environmental challenges.

It is for these reasons that eco-tourism has an incredibly important role to play in achieving progress. Not only does it provide local employment and bring in much-needed foreign revenue, but even more significantly it reinforces the message locally that Madagascar's natural heritage is a valuable asset worth protecting. By giving a greater value to the forest in its intact form – rather than, say, cut down for firewood or timber – a genuine incentive to protect the environment is created.

Simply by visiting Madagascar you are helping the Malagasy and their country to overcome the difficulties they face. But many tour operators are keen to take responsible travel a step further than this. As part of a trip itinerary, you can 'give something back' by getting down and dirty with planting a tree as part of a reforestation programme, perhaps, or visiting one of the island's many great NGOs for a first-hand view of the fabulous work they do.

● *Rainbow Tours' Daniel Austin Madagascar Wildlife Discovery Tour is sold out for 2015. Dates for a new 18-day tour in 2016 have just been announced departing on 27 October. Places are limited to twelve. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304*

- 1 Granddier's baobabs near Kirindy
- 2 Giant day gecko
- 3 Black and white ruffed lemur
- 4 Madagascar reed frog
- 5 Malagasy zebu ox-cart
- 6 Verreaux's sifaka
- 7 Satanic leaf-tailed gecko
- 8 Chameleon in Andasibe





5  
7



6  
8







DESTINATION  
JUST RETURNED

---

# GREENLAND ON TOP OF THE WORLD

SHANE HOSIENE, REGENT HOLIDAYS' GREENLAND SPECIALIST,  
TAKES A SUMMER VOYAGE UP NORTH





## DESTINATION JUST RETURNED

---

The Siberian people of 10,000 years ago must have really believed that the ice was whiter on the other side. Seemingly not content with eking out a meagre existence on the barren tundra, they crossed the Bering Strait into Alaska, and, over time, progressed across the North American continent to reach Greenland. One wonders whether, had they had access to Google Earth back then, they would have embarked on the same journey.

Sitting aloof at the top of the world, Greenland appears as a vast expanse of brilliant white in a world full of green, blue and brown. Beautiful it may be, but it seems like the most unlikely of places for anyone to consider putting down roots. Yet the Inuit are still there today, inhabiting the necklace

of settlements strung out around the island's rugged coastline, and still using the inventions of their forefathers: the kayak, the harpoon and the dog sled. It is perhaps one of the most visible examples of man's ability to adapt to his surroundings, anywhere on the planet.

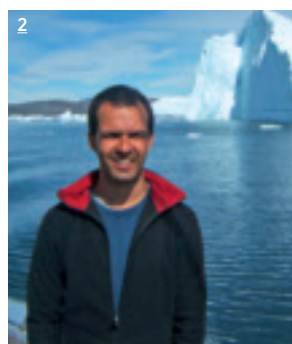
My first glimpse of Greenland, as the plane approached Narsarsuaq, was far from one of a harsh or foreboding landscape. Descending between the sheer sides of a lush fjord, towards a small settlement of brightly coloured houses, it seemed that those early Inuit migrants had been on to a good thing. With a few hours to spare before my onward boat transfer to Qaqortoq, I excitedly scrambled up Signal Hill to enjoy the superb panorama over the town and fjord, pinching myself as I went to remind myself that I was really in Greenland. It was a balmy June afternoon, with temperatures in the early 20s and the sun beating down. It was far from the stereotypical image of Greenland, and even the ubiquitous mosquitoes couldn't dampen my enthusiasm.



“The views, however, were continuously incredible. Never in my life has it been so easy to pass so much time doing so little”

#### ALL ABOARD

I was travelling more for the journey than the final destination. Sailing north from Qaqortoq, my feelings were a mixture of excitement at the journey ahead, and anxiety at the thought of spending three whole days aboard a ferry. It seemed like an eternity, and I wondered how I'd pass the time. The main attraction, of course, is the scenery. Reading about the scale of Greenland's ice cap – the second largest on earth after Antarctica – it seemed almost impossible to comprehend. Apparently it covers 1.5 million square kilometres, is 3,000 metres deep and comprises four million cubic kilometres of ice – equivalent to an astonishing one billion litres of water for every person on earth. Yet, after sailing for an hour, there was a problem: there was no ice to be



seen. Was this an alarming reminder of the effects of climate change?

The views, however, were continuously incredible. Never in my life has it been so easy to pass so much time doing so little. Often, I'd see scenery which ranked amongst the best I'd ever seen, only for it to be surpassed just an hour later. As we progressed

northwards, the scenery became more rugged and less agricultural, and finally we passed the mouth of a fjord beyond which lay the briefest and most tantalising first glimpse of the mighty ice cap rising above the concave basin which shelters Greenland's interior. It was a window on a frozen planet, and it was absolutely breathtaking.

Time passed quickly, with the journey interspersed with regular stops at small towns and villages, usually allowing enough time to disembark and have a wander round. On board the ferry, the café and TV lounge offered the only distractions, but really the views from up on deck offered by far the greatest enjoyment of the trip. On the third day, we arrived into Ilulissat surrounded by fishing boats and icebergs the size of skyscrapers. I had reached the top of the world – which pretty much sums up how I felt having experienced the journey of a lifetime.

● *Shane travelled on Regent Holidays' 6-day Greenland Coastal Voyage which costs from £3,670 including flights from Reykjavik, 2 nights' hotel accommodation, 3 nights aboard the M/V Sarfaq Ittuk and guided walking tours of Ilulissat, Sisimiut, Nuuk and Qaqortoq.*  
[regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131

Opposite Page:  
 Towering icebergs  
 surround Ilulissat

This Page:  
 1 Summer in  
 Qaqortoq  
 2 Shane aboard the  
 M/V Sarfaq Ittuk  
 3 Humpback whale  
 near Nuuk  
 4 Nuuk's colourful  
 houses





One of the three most important ports of the West Indies, Cartagena is a Caribbean gem where the most complete set of fortifications in South America safeguard 500 years of history. Rainbow Tours' Lynsey Kirk discovers the old city at the centre of the New World

# COLONIAL







# COLOMBIA



## DESTINATION JUST RETURNED



- 1 Colourful street in the Old City
- 2 Statue of Admiral Blas de Lezo outside Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas
- 3 Cartagena's Iglesia de San Pedro Claver

By the time I reach Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas, I'm not sure I want to go back down. It's not the effort that it's taken me to reach the top of San Lazaro hill in searing 30-degree heat – it's the view from Colombia's imposing Spanish fortress that has me rooted here. The historic castle dominates the Cartagena cityscape, overlooking its pretty pastel buildings, its busy harbour and beyond to the Caribbean sea. From here, it's easy to be transported back to a time when this strategic fort was used

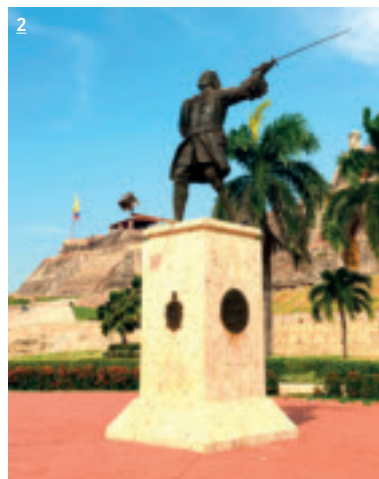
to defend the city from invasion. My imagination wanders to stories of pirates, sailors and slaves.

The greatest colonial fortress ever built by the Spaniards, the castle stands as it has done since the 18th century. A complex system of tunnels burrow underneath the ramparts and battlements – one of the many reasons the fort was never taken, despite numerous attempts. As I squeeze through one of the dark, dank passageways, claustrophobia kicks in and I rush towards the light at the end.

Thankfully there is a lot more to explore on the surface. Our guide entertains us with captivating stories of historic battles between Cartagena's defenders and French pirates, an independence uprising and a British-led invasion.

Eventually it's time to make the descent. I make my way back to the Old City through Puerta del Reloj, the clock tower gate which marks the entrance to the Centro Histórico. The buzz from the outer city fades away as I wander through the thick protective walls. Once inside this proud defensive structure, the new city's towering skyscrapers disappear and colonial buildings step in as substitutes. The sound of the traffic is joined by the clip-clop of horses pulling carts. Balconies are filled with flowers, their blossoms tumbling down the walls in a cascade of flourishing colour.

The Old City feels like a portal to the past. The walls that once served to protect the inner city from attack now seem to protect it from the influence of the modern outer city and the world beyond. Safely tucked away in its capsule, this former hub of the Spanish Empire is a little pocket of history. My guide tells me that the Old City has retained its unique 16th century charm due to a lack of money restricting redevelopment. UNESCO declared







- 1 Fruit bursting with Cartagena flavour
- 2 Lynsey taking in the views from San Felipe de Barajas
- 3 Balconies leading to the Cathedral of Cartagena
- 4 Blues and yellows of the historic Old City
- 5 Enjoy a strongly brewed Colombian coffee



the city a World Heritage Site in 1984 because the marks of its turbulent past are still evident today.

Cartagena's interwoven streets are watched over by the 16th century La Popa Monastery, teetering on the hill above the crumbling buildings, overseeing the goings-on of the people below. I wind my way through the cobblestone roads, between the pastel yellows and blues of the colonial buildings, through pretty plazas and passed giant Spanish churches. A Colombian woman strides over, hands on hips, with a huge bowl of rainbow-coloured fruit perched effortlessly on her head. I buy some watermelon; it's bursting with Cartagena flavour.

The beautiful Sofitel Santa Clara in the heart of the Old City is my home for the next few nights, and I stroll back to watch the sun go down from the pool of the converted 17th century convent. I can't wait to find out what I will stumble upon next, and who I have yet to meet in this incredible city.

● Lynsey travelled to Colombia with Rainbow Tours. A 13-day tailor-made holiday combining culture, history and beach costs from £2,795 including flights, accommodation, transfers and sightseeing. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)  
020 7666 1304









DESTINATION  
JUST RETURNED

# *Incredible* THAILAND

WESTERN & ORIENTAL'S RICKY COATES REVISITS  
THAILAND ON A LUXURY ADVENTURE

**D**espite having travelled to Thailand many times before, this was still a journey of many firsts. It was the first time I visited the stunning Wat Arun, or Temple of Dawn, whose seventy-metre spire towers over Bangkok's Chao Phraya River. The first time I planted my own rice. The first time I felt like I was walking through Narnia.

It's surprising how many visitors to Thailand are not first timers. A firm favourite on the backpacker route, it's not unusual to meet travellers who hit the beaches a few years back and have returned for a second or third time with a more cultural agenda in mind, washed down with that added bit of luxury.

That was certainly my plan when I set off for a ten-day tailor-made journey through Thailand which included stays at some of Thailand's best hotels, from Bangkok's Banyan Tree to the Four Seasons' very special Golden Triangle camp.

It's a comfortable eleven-hour flight from London Heathrow to Bangkok, but I was still relieved to arrive at the Banyan Tree, one of the capital's most iconic hotels, famed for its roof-top Vertigo restaurant which offers al fresco dining overlooking the glittering cityscape. After a quick change there was time to visit the first of many temples – Wat Po – one of the biggest temple complexes in the city and a must for first-time –





## DESTINATION JUST RETURNED



and second-time – visitors. Celebrated for its enormous reclining Buddha which measures 46 metres in length, it's actually the collective mass of temples, chedis, statues, rock gardens and Buddha images covering a staggering twenty acres that make Wat Po the perfect introduction to Thai history and culture. Warding off jet lag, I headed back to the Banyan Tree for a sunset drink at the incredible Moon Bar on the 61st floor, as day turned to night over the capital.

### TEMPLE HOPPING

The following day there was more time to explore the sights and sounds of Bangkok. Like many capitals, Bangkok's central river is the lifeblood of the city, and the Chao Phraya is a great place to take a boat trip, admiring the impressive temples of varying shapes and sizes that line the riverbank. The Temple of Dawn is easily accessible from the river, and early morning is the best time to visit, before the crowds arrive. The temple's central *prang* is beautifully decorated with tiny pieces of coloured glass and Chinese porcelain, and it's possible to climb to the top for stunning views over the city and river.

Directly opposite on the other side of the river is the Grand Palace – a masterpiece of architecture and glitz. Built in 1782, for 150 years this intricate palace complex was the home of the Thai King, the Royal Court and the administrative seat of government. Now tourists flock to admire its golden-topped buildings, every inch of which glitter in the Bangkok sun. I was particularly taken by the hanuman monkey gods which hold up the gilded stupas, and the frightening pairs of giant yakshas which guard the temple entrance.

The following day I boarded a short one-hour flight to Chiang







- 1 Stunning views from Vertigo, Banyan Tree Bangkok
- 2 Ornate architecture of the Grand Palace
- 3 The river is the lifeblood of Bangkok
- 4 Thai monks receiving alms
- 5 Ricky at Wat Po
- 6 Entering the White Temple is like entering Narnia
- 7 Northern Thai specialties
- 8 Golden Buddha at Wat Po
- 9 Luxury living at Four Seasons Golden Triangle

Mai, gateway to the north. There's a dramatic change of pace in this laid-back city nestled in the foothills. The Four Seasons, where I was staying, has views over the paddy fields, and the temples located within the ancient walled city are quiet places of spiritual enlightenment – a great contrast to the busy temples of Bangkok. The hotel offers complimentary experiences every day, so I opted to try my hand at planting rice. Decked out as a local rice planter, I learnt about the rice growing process and was proud to hear that all the rice planted would be donated to local schools.

There were plenty more experiences to be had in Chiang Mai. It's a great city for market shopping – whether it be unusual fruit and veg or handmade souvenirs. Local handicrafts like woodcarvings, silk scarves and pottery can be found in markets and craft galleries all over the city. Personally I preferred to find a nearby bar and watch the hustle and bustle with a cool Singha beer in hand, before retreating to the infinity pool at the Four Seasons.

#### GOLDEN TRIANGLE

The final leg of my holiday was a journey to the Golden Triangle, the famous region where Thailand meets Burma and Laos. En route I had the opportunity to visit the White Temple, the most dramatic and ornate temple I have ever seen. Wandering through the magical world of Wat Rong Khun was like wandering through Narnia. This is no traditional temple. Designed by National Artist Chalermchai Kositpipat in 1997, the temple is a surreal vision of Buddhism, where superheroes and film stars appear in Buddhist murals and fantastical sculptures decorate the temple grounds.

The Four Seasons tented camp is just a short boat transfer from the Golden Triangle check-point. This was an opportunity to relax in über-luxury, with an all-inclusive stay in one of fifteen deluxe 'tents'. All blessed with incredible panoramic views, these chic canvas hideaways boast open-plan luxurious sleeping areas, two-person hand-hammered copper bathtubs, an outdoor rain-shower and a spacious deck with its own custom-made wooden hot tub. Meals, house wines and spirits are included, and cocktails are a must at the Burma bar.

After some serious relaxing, the following day I took an excursion on the Mekong River for the chance to discover more about local life. Gliding past the jumble of stilted villages, we stopped at an incredible floating market where we were the only privileged tourists. My travel companion was brave enough to try a 'jumping shrimp' – a still-very-much-alive prawn which is eaten raw, like so many other delicacies in this region.

It was time to depart the north, with a final stop in Chiang Rai where I wanted to visit the famous bat cave looked after by monks. The only way to access the Buddha Cave Temple is by longtail boat, and the experience of entering the cave by boat was very James Bond. After a short flight there was a final spot of royal pampering at the Anantara Hua Hin Resort & Spa before travelling home the next day. This wasn't my first Thailand holiday and I know it won't be my last.

● *Ricky's 10-day Thailand holiday was tailor-made by Western & Oriental and costs from £3,329 per person including flights, accommodation (all inclusive at the Four Seasons tented camp) and transfers. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303*



# Beautiful Malaysia

From the grand colonial buildings of the capital to the wildlife-rich rainforests of Borneo, Malaysia captivates with its melting pot of cultures and cuisines, pristine jungle-clad islands and world-class dive sites. With the launch of British Airways' new service from London to Kuala Lumpur, YTL Hotels recommend four prestigious properties where the natural beauty of Malaysia is at the heart of every experience

## NEW BRITISH AIRWAYS SERVICE FROM LONDON TO KUALA LUMPUR

Departing from London Heathrow's state-of-the-art Terminal 5, British Airways' Boeing 777-200 will depart daily at 20.15, arriving in the Malaysian capital the following day at 16.00. The aircraft will offer twelve First Class seats, 48 flatbed seats in Club World business class, 32 seats in World Traveller Plus premium economy cabin and 127 seats in World Traveller economy cabin.

## PANGKOR LAUT RESORT

Located on a privately owned island in the Straits of Malacca, the elegant villas of Pangkor Laut Resort are dotted amidst an ancient rainforest, surrounded by sweeping sandy bays and emerald waters. The only resort on the island, guests have sole access to the idyllic beach and resort facilities, including the award-winning Spa Village, a four-acre haven offering treatments inspired by the healing therapies of Asia. Dining experiences at Pangkor Laut Resort range from gourmet sea-view banquets to informal barbecues at Emerald Bay, one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Budding chefs can discover the art of Southeast Asian cuisine on a Chef's Kitchen Experience, while romantics will enjoy a glorious sunset cruise.

### JOURNEY PLANNER

Pangkor Laut Resort is three hours 45 minutes by road and fifteen minutes by speedboat from Kuala Lumpur International Airport



## GAYA ISLAND RESORT

Surrounded by coral reefs within a natural marine conservation area, Gaya Island Resort is nestled between beautiful beach and tropical rainforest. 120 villas reflect the Sabahan influences of this idyllic island off the coast of Borneo, harmoniously connecting the natural environment with contemporary interiors.

Jungle trails around the resort provide encounters with cheeky Proboscis monkeys, while schools of snappers, rabbit-fish, damselfish and clown fish are the underwater highlights in Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park.

As well as guided and unguided snorkelling, the island's Dive Centre also provides PADI certification courses.

Make time to relax at Gaya Island Resort's Spa Village, set amidst lush mangroves, and dine on regional cuisine from one of the resort's excellent sea-view restaurants.

### JOURNEY PLANNER

Gaya Island Resort is two hours 45 minutes by air, 15 minutes by road and 15 minutes by speedboat from Kuala Lumpur International Airport



## TANJONG JARA RESORT

On the pristine east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, Tanjong Jara Resort can be found alongside a golden sandy beach, lapped by glistening turquoise waters. The resort's 98 elegant rooms are a collection of beautifully crafted wooden buildings inspired by 17th century Malay palaces. Dinner at Di Atas Sungei is a culinary journey guided by Menu Masters, experts in local cuisine who ensure a distinctive dining experience using only the freshest produce.

Don't miss the opportunity to snorkel or dive in the underwater world around Tenggol Island, an unspoiled reef where sea turtles, giant double-headed parrotfish, yellowtail fusiliers, eagle rays and black-tipped reef sharks can be found swimming above endless colourful coral carpets.

### JOURNEY PLANNER

Tanjong Jara Resort is 55 minutes by air and one hour 30 minutes by road from Kuala Lumpur International Airport

## THE MAJESTIC HOTEL KUALA LUMPUR

Located along the capital city's historical mile, the grand 1930s building housing The Majestic Hotel has been declared a national heritage site. Beautifully balancing old and new, the hotel is a city icon and the only property in Kuala Lumpur to be included in the Leading Hotels of the World luxury hotel collection. Guests will delight in the elegance of the Majestic Wing, with its meticulously restored neo-classical details, while the Tower Wing complements the historic building with its modern art deco style. Unwind at the atmospheric Smoke House, which embodies the delicious decadence of the 1930s with its lounge, bar and card room, or head to The Majestic Spa, distinctively designed in the art nouveau style of Mackintosh's Willow Tearooms.

### JOURNEY PLANNER

The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur is 45 minutes by road from Kuala Lumpur International Airport





# Food & wine holidays

Food and drink are at the heart of every travel experience. Whether you're relaxing with a pinot on a sun-drenched terrace or breaking bread with villagers on a cultural journey, the best travel memories often come from a shared love of gastronomy



## 2 SICILY

With endless vines covering this gorgeous Mediterranean island, Sicily's viticulture is thought to date from as far back as 1500 BC. Indigenous reds like Nero D'Avola are a glorious accompaniment to the local cuisine – a wonderful fusion of Italian, Spanish, Greek and Arabic flavours.

Western & Oriental has a two-week Sicily Fly-Drive which includes a stay at La Foresteria, a luxury winery resort where Sicilian flavours are positively overflowing. With 500 years of wine-making history, the Planeta Estate also boasts incredible views across the vineyards to the crystal clear waters of Porto Palo. The resort's hands-on cookery classes are great for discovering the secrets of Sicilian cooking, and an excellent range of premium wines is available for daily tastings.

● *Western & Oriental's 14-night Sicily Fly-Drive costs from £1,655 per person including flights, accommodation and car hire. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303*

## 1 ARGENTINA

Argentina's spicy, rich Malbecs have become a firm favourite with UK wine drinkers indulging in the classic marriage of robust tannins and hearty steak. With over 65,000 acres of Malbec vineyards, Mendoza is the centre of Argentina's Malbec production, and the region is becoming an increasingly popular place to get side-tracked between the vibrant capital, Buenos Aires, and mighty Iguazu Falls.

Rainbow Tours' Argentina Cultural Tour does just that, including three nights at the boutique Lares de Chacras, a gorgeous Andean-stone retreat in the small village of Chacras de Coria. Here, jaw-dropping snow-capped mountains watch over lush green vineyards, and life moves at an altogether slower pace – or maybe that's just after a few glasses of red. The small local wineries are within walking or cycling distance of the hotel – which of course also boasts its own top-notch cellar.

● *Rainbow Tours' 13-day Argentina Cultural Tour costs from £3,660 per person including flights, accommodation and transfers. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304*



## 3 SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's beautiful Garden Route is famed for its dramatic coastal scenery, wildlife-rich game reserves and the countless wineries of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek where the country's best bottles are produced.

Rainbow Tours has a two week self-drive holiday from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth which includes two nights at the heart of the scenic winelands, staying at one of South Africa's oldest Cape Dutch farms. Owned by the former editor of *Elle Decoration* magazine, Babylonstoren is a beautifully restored working farm with eight acres of vineyards and farmland surrounded by the dramatic mountains of the Drakenstein Valley. Al fresco meals are a farm-to-table affair with a choice of home-grown wines – try the 2012 Nebukadnesar, ruby red in colour with a fragrance of violets and thyme.

● *Rainbow Tours' 15-day Winelands, Whales and Wildlife Self-Drive holiday costs from £2,450 per person including flights, accommodation, car hire and game drives. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304*



**4 MOLDOVA** Although most of us would be hard pressed to locate it on a map, Moldova was once known as the vineyard of the Soviet Union and has a thriving wine industry which is celebrated every October at the Chisinau Wine Festival.

Regent Holidays has a five-day Moldova Wineries package which includes tours and tastings at two of the country's most established cellars. At the legendary Purcari Estate, just 30 miles from the Black Sea, the unique micro-climate provides ideal conditions for the creation of high quality wines – the 1990 Negru de Purcari is said to be a favourite of our queen. The Cricova cellars, just ten miles from Chisinau, are an experience in their own right. This enormous underground city, with its maze of subterranean streets, stretches for tens of miles and produces some of the best sparkling wine around.

● *Regent Holidays' 5-day Moldova Wineries Tour costs from £720 per person including flights, accommodation and winery tours. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131*

## 5 GEORGIA

According to local legend, when God was distributing land among the people of the world, the Georgians were so busy eating and drinking that they lost their place in the queue. But when they invited God to join the party, he enjoyed himself so much that he gave them the prime land he had been saving for himself. Such is the importance of food and wine in this beautiful Caucasus republic.

Regent Holidays has a nine-day cheese and wine tour, which travels from Tbilisi to balmy Batumi on the Black Sea coast. With over 500 grape varieties in Georgia, there is no shortage of wine tastings on this gastronomic journey. The real highlight, however, is visiting rural homes and farms to savour delicious local cheeses such as Meskh and Imereti and experience true Georgian hospitality.

● *Regent Holidays' 9-day Cheese & Wine Tour of Georgia costs from £2,295 per person including flights, accommodation and sightseeing. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131*



## 6 PORTUGAL

The Algarve coastline in Southern Portugal is where you'll find some of Europe's best beaches. Dotted with picturesque rock formations, long stretches of golden sand shimmer beneath the summer sun and surfers take ownership of the Atlantic waves.

Western & Oriental offers a top-notch Algarve beach holiday for food and wine lovers. Vila Vita Parc is a luxury 5-star resort spread over 54 acres of tropical gardens overlooking a beautiful Atlantic cove. Fine

dining is on the menu at the resort's Ocean restaurant, where Executive Chef Hans Neuner and his team have retained two Michelin Stars since 2011. Don't miss a chance to visit Vila Vita's incredible Gothic-style cellar where over 11,000 bottles of wine are carefully looked after by a team of dedicated sommeliers.

● *7 nights at the Vila Vita Parc Resort and Spa costs from £819 per person including flights, deluxe accommodation and transfers. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303*



DESTINATION  
**CUBA**

# OUR STAN

MUSICIAN & TRAVEL WRITER **STAN CULLIMORE** DISCOVERS





# IN HAVANA

HE'S STILL GOT IT IN HAVANA'S INTOXICATING MUSIC CLUBS



## DESTINATION CUBA



When my grown up sons suggested we have some quality time together in Cuba, I wasn't sure what to think. Not going to lie. The boys are all grown up, in the prime of life, with a healthy appetite for good times, late nights and hangovers. And I'm not.

Things started well when we arrived and discovered our rooms at the Hotel Parque Central were comfy, high up and with great views of the park below. Nice. We headed for the rooftop and soon found ourselves sipping on

mojititos, basking in the evening heat, taking in the city from above. Even nicer.

Next day we jumped aboard a pretty pink Buick. One of those gorgeous classic American cars left over from the past. These handsome beasts pre-date the 1959 revolution and are rock'n'rolling works of art. Most of them are in great nick and look good enough to eat, or at least, drool over. Sweet.

After that, we met up with our guide for the day, Guillermo. The quickest way I know to settle into a new town, work out the geography and feel at home, is to go on a walking tour. Sure enough, within minutes, Guillermo had showed us round, given us the info we wanted and even taken us to see a cutesy scale model of the Old Town, which really helped whenever we wandered off the beaten track over the next few days. He also took time to point out the best cafés and bars.

At which point, it was time for music. You can't avoid it in Havana and even if you could, you wouldn't want to. It's like the dawn chorus, moved to the afternoon onwards. It's glorious, it's everywhere and positively makes your heart skip. Seriously. I'm thinking this must be the worst place in the world to be a talented musician. Mainly, because – so is absolutely everyone else!

Honestly. It's mind-blowingly, hip-wigglingly tunetastic. What the locals

can do with a couple of guitars, a handful of percussion and some soft sweet harmonies is unbelievable. All you have to do is follow your ears. Before long you are guaranteed to find a band filling the air with great tunes, great vibes and sheer happiness. Entertaining themselves, café dwellers and locals alike.

Then there's the dancing. Gave it a go myself but had to stop when I realised I just don't have enough hips to do whatever it is that the locals do. Truth is, I'm not sure there is a verb to describe the way people move when they let the music take control. It's a rolling, swirling, delicious salsa style feast for the senses. And that's just watching it. Phew.

By now, the boys and I had moved onto smoking cigars, drinking neat local rum and surrendering to the magic of Cuba.

Next day at breakfast it turned out Guillermo was right. No matter how much rum you drink in Cuba, you just don't get a hangover. I'll drink to that.

● Stan travelled to Cuba with Western & Oriental. A 7-night holiday costs from £1,455 per person including direct flights from London Gatwick with Virgin Atlantic, Cuba Tourist Card, accommodation in 4 and 5-star hotels, walking tour of Havana and tour of local music clubs by classic American car. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303

- 1 Stan catches a ride in one of Havana's classic cars
- 2 Revolutionary street art







1



2



3

- 1 Rooftop mojitos in the evening heat
- 2 Havana's street music makes your heart sing
- 3 Colourful streets point towards El Capitolio
- 4 Revered revolutionary Che Guevara

4





# *Experience the* northern lights

Every winter the northern skies come alive with the flickering neon lights of the aurora borealis – the elusive northern lights which captivate both travellers and scientists alike. Caused by the collision of energetic charged particles with atoms in the high altitude atmosphere, the result is a magical light show and once-in-a-lifetime travel experience

**BEST FOR** OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

## ICELAND

With the whole country located within the all-important northern lights oval, Iceland affords superb opportunities to witness the aurora. A land of volcanic and geothermal treasures, Iceland's waterfalls, geysers and glaciers will keep travellers entertained during daylight hours. After dark, head away from the bright lights of the city and watch for the aurora from the warm waters of the Secret Lagoon, or head out on a Superjeep Northern Lights Hunt from Reykjavik and get off-the-beaten-track in a 4x4 designed for adventure.

**STAFF  
PICK**

**JOANNE WHEELER**  
REGENT HOLIDAYS' ICELAND  
SPECIALIST

"My favourite spot for a winter getaway is Hotel Ranga. It takes less than two hours to drive from the airport, and you're surrounded by mountains. The hotel itself is a gorgeous cosy retreat – the perfect place to warm up after a chilly day of sightseeing. But best of all, the Ranga has its own outdoor hot tubs where you can relax and watch for the northern lights."

● A 5-day winter break at Hotel Ranga costs from £799 including flights, car hire and accommodation. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk)





**BEST FOR** ARCTIC ADVENTURERS

## NORWAY

For the best chance of seeing the northern lights in Norway, travel inside the Arctic Circle to the far north of the country – or further still to the Svalbard archipelago located halfway between the mainland and the North Pole. During the dark Polar Nights, between late November and late January, when the sun remains below the horizon, the northern lights can be seen both day and night.

**STAFF PICK**

**EMMA BROWN**  
REGENT HOLIDAYS'  
SCANDINAVIA SPECIALIST

"There's nowhere quite like

Spitsbergen during the Polar Night, when the sun never rises. It's eerie and magical at the same time. Exploring the moon-lit landscape by snowmobile or husky sled while the northern lights dance overhead is a very special experience."

● A 4-day Polar Night break at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel, Spitsbergen, costs from £1,145 including accommodation and daily excursions by dog sledge, snowmobile and snowcat.  
[regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk)



**BEST FOR** WILDERNESS EXPLORERS

## GREENLAND

Legend passed down by the Inuit people of Greenland says that the northern lights are the spirits of the ancestors playing football with a walrus head. Witness this spectacle of legends in Greenland's only inland town, Kangerlussuaq, which boasts 300 nights of clear sky a year, or travel to UNESCO-listed Ilulissat, where the northern lights swirl over icebergs as tall as skyscrapers.

**BEST FOR**  
ADVENTURE-SEEKING FAMILIES

## FINLAND

In Finnish Lapland the northern lights are visible on around 200 nights of the year – almost every clear night between September and April. Ideal for families, Finland's resort towns offer boundless opportunities to explore the Lappish landscape by husky sled or reindeer sleigh. For the ultimate Lapland experience, visit Santa's official home in Rovaniemi before heading out on a northern lights snowmobile safari across the winter landscape.

**STAFF PICK**

**JANE SLADE**  
REGENT HOLIDAYS' FINLAND SPECIALIST

"On my last trip I stayed in a glass igloo at Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort – what an experience! Each cosy little pod has uninterrupted skyward views, and the beds are remote controlled so that you can sit up and watch the northern lights flickering and swirling overhead. Incredible. There's loads to keep kids occupied too – you can't beat a ride on a reindeer sleigh!

● A 4-day winter break at Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort costs from £1,099 including flights, accommodation and transfers.  
[regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk)



### WHEN TO TRAVEL

For the best chance of seeing the northern lights travel late September to early April, between the autumn and spring equinoxes, when long nights prevail in the northern skies.

**STAFF PICK**

**SHANE HOSIENE**  
REGENT HOLIDAYS'  
GREENLAND SPECIALIST

"Ilulissat's northerly location

200 miles north of the Arctic Circle means that chances of seeing the northern lights are extremely high. Of course when you're somewhere this remote there aren't too many hotels to choose from, but I love Hotel Arctic. It's right on the edge of the amazing ice fjord and you can watch the gigantic icebergs drift past from the restaurant."

● A 4-day winter break at Hotel Arctic costs from £1,640 including flights from Reykjavik, accommodation and transfers.  
[regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk)

**DON'T MISS**



Regent Holidays' 2015-2016 Iceland & the Arctic Winter brochure is out now. To order your copy call 0117 280 0131





# *Let the good times roll in* LOUISIANA

They do things differently down South. You can taste it in the food. You can hear it in the music. You can feel it in the waters; this is the Mississippi River we're talking about after all. Western & Oriental's Ben Murtagh dives into a melting pot of Creole and Cajun cultures in Louisiana

## NEW ORLEANS

The home of jazz, and known worldwide as the Big Easy, in New Orleans you have no choice but to 'laissez les bon temps rouler' – let the good times roll! The music never stops in this fun-loving city on the banks of the Mississippi – it hangs in the air of the streets, bars, restaurants and clubs – where every hour is cocktail hour.

But historic New Orleans is much more than its nightlife. Guided walking tours are the best way to explore the Garden District's Greek Revival architecture or learn about the 18th century French Quarter's saints and sinners. Not for the faint hearted, the brilliant Cemetery and Voodoo walking tour offers a mysterious insight into the life and death of Marie Laveau, infamous Voodoo Queen of New Orleans.

For the complete New Orleans experience, take to the waters of the mighty Mississippi on an evening jazz cruise aboard the historic Steamboat Natchez, where the Dukes of Dixieland band will take you back to a time when cotton was king.



### EAT

New Orleans may be famous for its Creole and Cajun flavours, but its humble po'boy remains the city's most iconic dish. These popular French baguettes, renowned for their crusty outer and light fluffy middle, are filled to the brim with fried seafood or roast beef soaked in gravy, and you'll find them pretty much everywhere from street corners to fancy restaurants. Ask for yours 'dressed' if you want the works – lettuce, tomato, pickles and mayonnaise.







## PLANTATION COUNTRY

With its grand houses and estates offering a glimpse back in time to the early days of Louisiana's thriving sugar industry, Plantation Country is a world away from the bright lights of Bourbon Street. In the mid-1800s, the highest concentration of millionaires in America could be found along this Mississippi River corridor from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. Known as 'The Grand Dame of the Great River Road', 28 giant oaks create a beautiful walkway to the Greek Revival-style mansion at Oak Alley Plantation. Don't miss the compelling slavery exhibit, which offers an insight into the contrasting lives of the plantation workers.

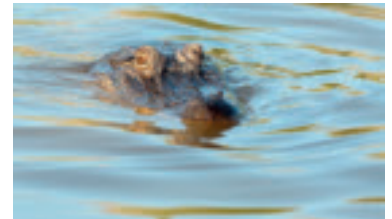
## NATCHITOCHES

The oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase territory, quaint Natchitoches is the real-life film set of the 1989 classic, *Steel Magnolias*. Three hundred years of history has made its mark on this charming town, settled by French colonists in 1714. At the heart of Natchitoches is the 33-block National Historic Landmark District, a treasure-trove of 18th century buildings, now housing delightful boutiques and antique shops. Beautiful Cane River Lake meanders through the downtown area providing myriad opportunities for outdoor adventure.



## CAJUN COUNTRY

A picturesque region of swamps, bayous and rolling plains along the Gulf of Mexico, Cajun Country owes its label to 18th century Acadian settlers. The cultural capital of this region is laid-back Lafayette, a place where the only option is to roll up your sleeves and do as the locals do – make your way to the dance floor for a night of foot-shuffling, heart-thumping dancing to one of the many live Cajun and zydeco bands.



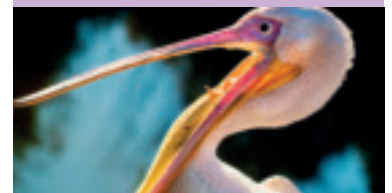
### DO

Louisiana's swamps and bayous are a haven for wildlife, including America's famous alligators that patrol the marshy waters. Thrilling airboat tours offer an up-close view of the wildlife and nature of Louisiana's bayou country, from gators and snakes to endangered birds and lush cypress forests – an iconic Louisiana experience.



### STAY

Experience the lavish lifestyle of a wealthy sugar baron with a stay at beautiful Houmas House in Plantation Country. Once the largest producer of sugar cane in the USA, today the restored mansion transports guests back in time, with its interior reflecting that of the house's 1840s heyday. Enjoy a tour of the estate with guides in period costume, relax at the bar with a refreshing mint julep or enjoy the breeze from the Mississippi as you stroll through the 38-acre grounds.



### TRAVEL

A fly-drive holiday is the best way to explore all that Louisiana has to offer. But in the Pelican State, driving isn't just about getting from A to B – it's part of the experience. Western & Oriental recommends spending at least half a day driving Louisiana's Creole Nature Trail All-American Road, a 180-mile stretch through wetlands, marshes, prairies and beaches. Large numbers of alligators and pelicans are just two of the natural highlights on this wonderful drive.

Western & Oriental's 8-day Treasures of Louisiana fly-drive costs from £1,505 per person including flights, accommodation, car hire, New Orleans jazz cruise and airboat swamp tour. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303



# RUSSIA'S AUTONOMOUS REPUBLICS

Muslim Tatars, red-headed Udmurts and Pagan-Christian Maris  
– Mark Stratton discovers an ethnically-diverse Russia behind the headlines

Forest-dwelling animists, descendants of the Golden Horde, and inheritors of the world's reddest hair! The moment I arrived 750 kilometres east of Moscow in the Middle Volga region I experienced a vastly more multicultural society than Russia's currently perceived inward-looking nationalism would suggest.

Russia has over 100 different ethnicities scattered across 22 autonomous republics. During a ten-day whistlestop small-group-tour by train I travelled to six of these republics clustered around the River Volga: Chuvashia, Mari El, Tatarstan, Mordovia, Udmurtia, and Bashkortostan.

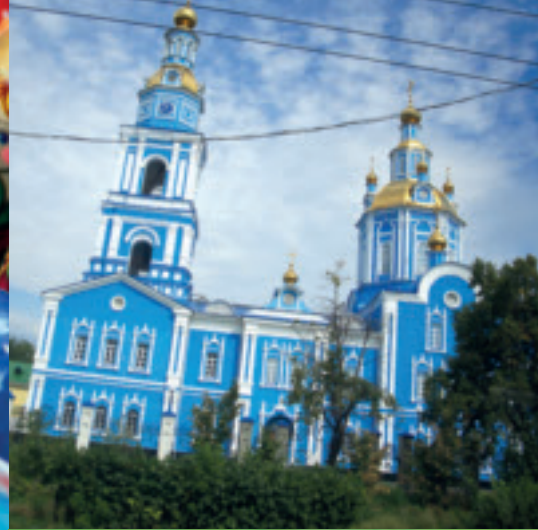
These small ethnic minorities have long had roots in the Volga region. But in the 1550s they were caught between the warring Russian Empire and the Tatars so expediently joined the former

for protection. Nowadays they are thoroughly assimilated into Russian life and since the USSR's demise have experienced a political and cultural renaissance.

"We are descendants of the Bulgars who came from the Caucasus in the 7th century," explained Tamara Vorobieyava, greeting us at Cheboksary Rail Station in an embroidered scarlet kaftan. "Joining Russia was pragmatic to preserve our culture and heritage".

Cheboksary lies besides the Volga – now several kilometres wide. The Chuvash cultural identity is mainly expressed these days through a distinctive Finno-Ugric language. Otherwise, we visited an immense statue by the river, The Mother of All, depicting a Chuvash woman with arms opened to embrace, and toured streets named after Marx with monuments dedicated to communist









- 1 Qolsharif Mosque, Kazan Kremlin
- 2 Flag of the Udmurt Republic

luminaries like cosmonaut number 3. One Chuvashian tradition to be enjoyed is their fondness for homebrewed beer. “It’s our national drink,” said Vorobeyeva. “We offer it to you like you would offer us a cup of tea”.

She wasn’t joking. After a beery lunch we traced the Volga for 94 kilometres through low-lying marshland and pasture mixed with deep forests to reach the Mari El Republic.

The Mari people migrated to their current location from the Urals around the 6th century bringing with them paganism. In an interesting ethnological museum in Yoshkar Ola, the museum guide, Nastia Aiguzina, regaled us with stories about forest nymphs and shamans.

I wondered if this wasn’t just a bit of folkloric colour? “No,” insisted Aiguzina. “Most Mari are Christians now but

we still hold forest feasts blessed by shamans who communicate with tree spirits in the birch groves”.

If the residents of Mari El are occasionally away with the forest fairies, Yoshkar Ola permanently circles Planet Madhouse.

Try to picture the schmaltzy razzamatazz of Disneyland coupled with Dubai’s no-expense-spared bling. Yoshkar Ola has been rebuilt from scratch to include an architectural mishmash of Venetian and Bavarian fairytale facades, replicas of iconic Russian buildings, and a European gothic waterfront. There’s a statue of Princess Grace of Monaco for good measure. Why? Only Mari El’s president knows. But money seems no object for this close ally of a certain Mr Putin.

Kazan in Tatarstan, next day, is far more conservative. A fabulous city

rich from oil and gas yet without the braggadocio of Yoshkar Ola. It has a clear Muslim identity emanating from the Tatar legacy of Central Asia. Now Russia’s third biggest republic, the former Kazan Khanate was subsumed into the Empire after defeat in 1552.

Besides trendy street cafés and buskers on lively Bauman Street, plus some handsome 19th century architecture around the University where Lenin studied, Kazan’s gem is a World Heritage-listed 16th century Kremlin.

#### RELIGIOUS HARMONY

Inside formidable ramparts are two of Russia’s most opulent buildings: the Qolsharif Mosque and Cathedral of Annunciation. Side-by-side they suggest a reassuring religious harmony. The eight needle-shaped minarets and blue-tiled cupola of the mosque offer sublime symmetry while the lavishly decorated cathedral dazzles inside with gilded gold and frescoes.

“Animosity between different faiths, Jews, Muslims, and Christians, is extinct here,” insists local guide, Rezida Mukhametzyanova, a Muslim Tatar.

But if assimilation has led to this harmony I wondered what it had meant for Tartar ethnic identity?

“We have no particular look these days,” she says. “Over centuries our

**“Now Russia’s third biggest republic, the former Kazan Khanate was subsumed into the Empire after defeat in 1552”**





features have mixed with Asian and European blood".

Our rail journeys around these republics were also hugely enjoyable on well-kept trains. The days of stern provodnitsa carriage ladies growling at you and noisy plumbing have moved on. During our six-hour journey from Kazan to Izhevsk in Udmurtia a funky American-themed diner carriage entertained us with burgers and copious amounts of vodka.

Yet I stepped off the train and seemingly back into the Soviet past or arriving in Izhevsk. This former secretive munitions production city hasn't long been open to outsiders. Near to our hotel is the Axion Factory, a huge concrete monolith sporting colossal medals on its façade including the Order of the Red Star. Trolleybuses rattle along Izhevsk's broad avenues.

With roughly 30 per cent of Udmurtia being ethnically Udmurt (the majority being Russian) I struggled to identify a single citizen sporting what is said to be their trademark red hair.

And my quest to find a genuine redhead didn't seem to be any closer visiting the Lyudorval Outdoors Ethnographic Museum. Granted, it has an interesting collection of traditional log cabins once used by Udmurts but even the guide showing us around was

a Russian lady in fake Udmurt costume.

Yet our trip happily coincided with a wonderful little festival, Medovy Spas, celebrating Udmurt honey. Soon the museum's meadows began to fill with true-blood Udmurts arriving from all over the republic. There was dancing, accordion music, vivid costumes, honey to sample, and most definitely flourishes of vivid red locks. Their pride in celebrating a dwindling Udmurt culture was palpable.

Thereafter, our final few journeys breezed through Ulyanovsk, a pleasant riverside city where Lenin was born and the Mordovian city of Saransk, where the sauna-loving Mordvins speak a language related to Finnish and Hungarian although to the untrained eye aren't easy to distinguish ethnically. Then we ended in Ufa, capital of Bashkortostan.

The largely Muslim Bashkirs were

assimilated into Genghis Khan's Golden Horde in 1236. Local guide, Vladimir Korchev, takes us to visit Tukran Mosque, built in 1822, and the impressive Mazhir Gafuri National Tatar Theatre. We even try a little fermented mare's milk, kumiss - a legacy of Mongolian invaders.

Vladimir explained he is 25 per cent Byelorussian, 25 per cent Ukrainian, and 50 per cent Russian yet speaks Tatar and Bashkir. He's typical of the Middle Volga's bubbling cultural melting pot laced with exotic far-flung DNA. I may have left without being able to tell a Mordvin from a Chuvashian but contemporary Russia had never felt so appealing.

● Mark Stratton travelled to Russia with Regent Holidays. Order *Russia & Europe: The Alternative Collection* (p62) to find out more about alternative holidays in Russia. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131

- 1 American diner on the train to Izhevsk
- 2 Gothic waterfront, Yoshkar Ola
- 3 Salavat Yulaev in Ufa
- 4 Saint Michael's Cathedral Izhevsk
- 5 Udmurtia Medovy Spas Festival
- 6 Saransk souvenirs





# LIMA FLORAL

His restaurant in Peru's capital, Central, was this year voted the Best Restaurant in South America. In 2013 his London restaurant, LIMA Floral, became the first Peruvian restaurant in Europe to be awarded a Michelin star. And now Virgilio Martinez has something new to shout about. Editor Gill Leaning gets a taste of the Andes at London's latest Peruvian restaurant

LIMA Floral's entrance, on the corner of Garrick Street, will not be hard to find for most travel enthusiasts. A former monastery, the building's tall arched windows are the next door neighbours of Stanfords Covent Garden – the world's biggest travel bookshop. This brand new restaurant is the latest in a growing number of Peruvian eateries in the capital – a trend owed partly to Virgilio Martinez himself, co-owner of LIMA Floral, whose first London restaurant was awarded a Michelin Star just a year after opening.

I'm intrigued. The menu at LIMA Floral, overseen by Martinez and head chef Robert Ortiz, is said to feature some of LIMA's most popular dishes alongside 'challenging Peruvian cuisine'. Their words not mine. Even more interestingly, Martinez is a founding member of Peru's Mater Iniciativa, a

multi-disciplinary group of Peruvian chefs, scientists and ecologists who travel around Peru's diverse landscape discovering unique edible plants and ingredients. Through this, the new menu will include some rare Peruvian ingredients from remote places in the Amazon basin and the Andes altitudes.

Myself (a travel geek) and my husband (a trained chef) can think of nothing better than to have our taste buds challenged with new Peruvian flavours, so we book in just a week or so after opening. On this Tuesday evening, upstairs in the main restaurant, the crowd is decidedly more after-work than pre-theatre and I'm instantly put at ease by the unpretentious set-up. Staff wear matching t-shirts and the décor is contemporary and casual: big blue feature walls compliment white-painted brickwork decorated with striking Andean wall hangings.



Our evening obviously starts with a pisco, Peru's well-loved grape brandy. There are ten pisco-based drinks to choose from on LIMA Floral's cocktail list, including the exotic-sounding *Noche De Verano*, a concoction made with vanilla-infused Luna pisco, herbal liqueur, lemon and lime juice as well as strawberries. Being traditionalists we opt for the *Pisco Sour Clásico*, a fusion of Luna pisco, lime, sugar and egg white, whisked up into a frothy-headed drink decorated with colourful drops of Angostura bitters. The pleasure of drinking the sweet and sour cocktail through its foamy top is akin to the pleasure of sipping a cold pint of Guinness through its smooth creamy head – and just as grown up in taste.

#### CRAZY PEAS & TIGER'S MILK

Despite our food and travel credentials, we have no idea what to expect. And we are none the wiser after an initial glimpse at the menu. The patient waitress goes out of her way to answer our questions: "What is a crazy pea? Is yucca puree as tasty as it sounds? What's special about an *Olluquito* potato? And tiger's milk? Really? Is it...?" Of course it isn't. *Leche de tigre* is the colloquial term for the spicy, citrus-based marinade normally used to cure the seafood in a ceviche, we learn.

Our starters arrive quickly. Mine, a vegetarian Green Causa made with avocado and *muña corn*, looks beautiful with its colourful drizzle of yellow tiger's milk clashing brilliantly with the vivid green of the avocado. My husband's Tuna Nikkei is even more eye-popping; the orange sauce of the seared tuna mingling with the bright green tiger's milk and wafer-thin slices of pink radish. Both are delicious. Both have that lovely warm tingle of heat that doesn't overpower the flavour of the dish.

My heart sinks when I realise that quinoa is the vegetarian option for the main. Bland, tasteless, dull. But the *chaufa*-style Roasted Black Quinoa is nothing of the sort. It is unlike any quinoa I'd ever had, with its deep, rich soy flavour (a nod to the Chinese influence



Pisco cocktails: £9  
Starters: £9-£12  
Mains: £19-£28  
Desserts: £7

of this style), melt-in-the mouth morsels of fried egg and delicately flavoured organic roasted root vegetables. My husband's Andean Suckling Pig – not the cheapest dish on the menu at £26 – is another success. He tells me that the skin is crispy, the meat tender and the potatoes solid and earthy. The accompanying Andean corn puree gives sweetness to the dish, but more importantly adds another level of texture. An amazing variety of textures, we decide, is one of the triumphs of this unique Peruvian menu.

We can't leave without sharing one of the desserts. I accidentally order the Amazonian Tree Tomato, hoodwinked by the fact that the menu mentions 75

- 1 Andean Suckling Pig
- 2 Tuna Nikkei
- 3 Roasted Black Quinoa
- 4 Virgilio Martinez

per cent chocolate. I've no idea what an Amazonian tree tomato is. As it turns out, in this instance the unfamiliar fruit of the Cocona plant is used to give a delicate flavour to a creamy pud which is topped with a hard layer of chocolate. It's rather like eating a Peruvian crème brûlée, and it's quite brilliant.

We leave LIMA Floral, taste buds and perceptions totally challenged, with a newfound love of Peruvian cuisine. The only question now is – what next for Virgilio Martinez?

limafloreal.com  
020 7240 5778  
14 Garrick Street  
Covent Garden  
London WC2E 9BJ



# Romance at The Residence

Imagine endless white-sand beaches and warm azure seas. Stepping out of your heavenly room to see colourful coral reefs beneath your feet. Enjoying gourmet beachfront dining as the sun goes down. What better way to celebrate the perfect partnership? Western & Oriental's Erica Moore falls in love with three Indian Ocean hot-spots for honeymooners and old romantics

## LASTMINUTE LOVERS

Save 50% on a romantic Residence getaway before 31st October 2015, when staying four nights or longer. Ask a Western & Oriental Residence specialist for full offer details.



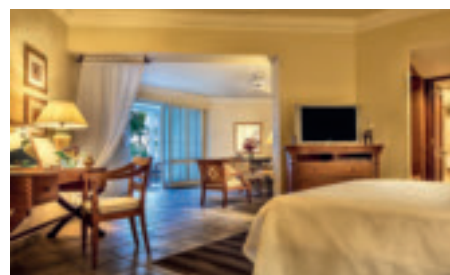
## THE RESIDENCE MAURITIUS

An island paradise off the coast of Madagascar, Mauritius is a tropical haven of jaw-dropping beauty. Situated on the east coast, along a mile-long stretch of immaculate white sand lapped by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, the Residence Mauritius is an idyllic retreat, inspired by the island's grand turn-of-the-century plantation houses.

A jewel of elegant refinement, this luxury Mauritian resort blends modern elegance with

classic, colonial style. Rooms and suites are intimate spaces of relaxation, with stunning views over the tropical gardens or azure ocean. All rooms feature sumptuous king size beds, spacious living areas and large marble bathrooms for a touch of decadence. For that special occasion, opt for the ultimate indulgence - a personal butler for whom nothing is too much trouble.

By day, soak up the sun from the beautiful white sands of Belle Mare or immerse yourself in local life in the nearby village of Poste de Flacq, where devotees



flock to the floating Hindu temple. Spend a day on the tiny island of Ile aux Cerfs, renowned for its first class snorkelling, or discover new secrets to soulful relaxation at the resort's serene Sanctuary spa.

By night, enjoy ocean-front dining at The Plantation where Creole cuisine is accompanied by the mesmerising rhythms of traditional Sega, or sit down to a superb set menu at The Dining Room, where heady Mauritian spices are combined with international dishes to produce a fusion of enticing flavours.



## THE RESIDENCE

by Centara



### THE RESIDENCE ZANZIBAR

Cocooned among 32 hectares of tropical gardens, retreat to a world of divine relaxation and enchanting elegance at The Residence Zanzibar. Inspired by the Spice Island's eclectic mix of cultures, this chic beachfront resort blends modern comforts with the charm of Zanzibar's African, Omani and European heritage.

The 66 luxurious villas offer the perfect combination of spaciousness and privacy. Prestige Ocean Front Pool Villas enjoy breathtaking panoramic views of the

Indian Ocean from their freestanding bathtubs, while lush gardens and towering coconut trees provide a restful setting for the beautifully-appointed Luxury Garden Pool Villas.

Simply relax on the mile-long white-sand beach, unwind at the stunning beachfront infinity pool or rejuvenate at The Spa, with its treatment pavilions nestled among the resort's tropical gardens. Explorers have plenty of opportunities to become acquainted with this incredible African island, from discovering Stone Town's maze of twisting streets and bustling



bazaars to swimming with dolphins on a traditional dhow boat cruise to Menai Bay.

Fragrance and flavour combine to create an exciting gastronomic journey at the resort's two restaurants. The Dining Room offers international dishes peppered with a hint of Zanzibar spice, while Indian, Arabic and Mediterranean influences are at play in The Pavilion Restaurant. Intimate private dining experiences add an extra touch of romance, whether it be a gourmet feast enjoyed in the privacy of your villa or a private sunset barbecue on the jetty.



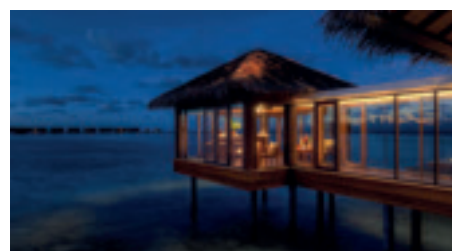
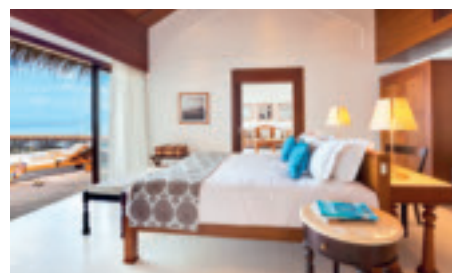
### THE RESIDENCE MALDIVES

Designed in harmony with the natural environment, The Residence Maldives seamlessly blends traditional architecture with contemporary elegance and modern comforts. Luxuriate in the privacy of the resort's beachfront and over-water villas, which offer an oasis of calm just steps from the sand.

The 94 villas draw their design inspiration from the island's abundant beauty, expressed in thatched roofs, natural materials and lush fabrics. Classic yet

modern in style, each balances a sense of intimacy with stunning 360-degree views. Gentle waves lap at the doorstep of Water Villas, where schools of fish flit between vivid coral reefs in the glistening waters beneath your feet, while Beach Villas open out onto the beautiful white sands.

The crystal clear waters of the Indian Ocean provide a natural playground. Watersports including windsurfing, kayaking, tubing and jet skiing are all on offer, and the resort also boasts its very own PADI 5-Star Dive Centre. Surrounded by unspoiled coral reefs,



snorkellers and divers will find themselves immersed in a spectacular underwater world, teeming with marine life including white tip sharks, barracudas, reef fish and turtles.

From casual to fine dining, The Residence Maldives serves up a tantalising array of international flavours to excite your palate. Get into the island spirit with tapas and signature drinks as the sun goes down over The Beach Bar, or enjoy a memorable dining experience at The Falhumaa, spectacularly located at the end of a long jetty above the reef.



# *Durrell's* miniature monkey *mission*

Gerald Durrell is a name synonymous with endangered species. Today, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust stands as the direct continuation of the Trust he created in 1963 and its mission; saving species from extinction. Durrell's **Rick Jones** reports on the plight of South America's last remaining tamarins and how you could help them fight back from the brink of extinction



Jersey's iconic Durrell Wildlife Park, usually referred to simply as Durrell, is home to around 120 species of animal, most of which are endangered in the wild. The park was founded in 1959 by author Gerald Durrell, and became the headquarters of a charity dedicated to saving species from extinction in 1963.

From its very beginnings, the park had a greater purpose than to simply attract visitors. Gerald conceived it to be an ark for animals that were under threat and overlooked, as he well understood that the smaller animals – often those that went un-championed – were vital pieces of the bigger picture; the ecosystems that support all life on Earth.

The tiny, mostly unknown monkeys that make up Callitrichidae – the tamarins and marmosets – are some of the human race's smallest relatives. All of the 41 species come from the famously exploited South American rain forests, where hardwoods are harvested, beef grazing pastures are created and cities are in a constant state of expansion. As a result, these miniature monkeys are exactly what the ark was built for, and on a visit to Durrell, you're likely to find yourself surrounded by gorgeous golden lion tamarins – a species that you'd be lucky to see even in their native Brazil.

### DURRELL'S TAMARINS

'Surrounded' is no exaggeration. After visiting Durrell's famous Sumatran orangutan family – the stars of several prominent TV documentaries – a short walk will lead you to a beautiful green valley, where the branches of hundred year-old trees entangle over pathways rippling with Jersey sunlight. Here, a rustle from above has equal chances of being a visiting tree-creeper bird, a native red squirrel, or one of three species of South American tamarin monkey, roaming completely free and displaying entirely natural behaviours. Their squeaks and chirps are bird-like, ideal for communicating across dense foliage, and here, without cages or fences, they call to one another just as they would in the Colombian or Brazilian jungle.

Durrell's work with tamarin monkeys extends way beyond Jersey. Having kept various species at the Wildlife Park for the past 26 years, the staff have had the opportunity to learn all about these essential and adorable monkeys. Tamarin breeding in Jersey is arguably more successful than anywhere else on Earth – given the loss of their wild habitat. Likewise, when South American



rescue centres published information on tamarins over a decade ago, they gave four years as an average life expectancy. Through careful study and a healthy dose of care, many of Durrell's tamarins have lived beyond 21 years-old, providing many precious babies to the captive conservation population.

Unlike many species, captive-bred tamarins can and have left Durrell to return to the wild. Allowing them to live in the woods in family groups ensures all of the life-skills a wild tamarin family requires are in-place and well practiced. To date, some of the golden lion tamarin populations still found in Brazil owe their presence to Jersey-bred ancestors.

But despite Durrell's efforts, not all tamarin species are 'out of the woods'. One in particular, the black lion tamarin of Brazil's interior Atlantic rainforest, faces serious issues not only in the wild, but also in captivity.

Unable to travel at any distance across the clear-cut ground where



- 1 Durrell's hand reared black lion tamarin
- 2 Fun and games at Durrell Wildlife Park

the sprawling forest once stood, family groups of black lion tamarins are confined to tiny forest fragments, unable to reach other, and are slowly inbreeding themselves out of health, disease resistance and, ultimately, any chance of survival.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Durrell and Brazilian field partners Instituto de Pesquisas Ecologicas (IPE) have been working to remedy this for the last decade, employing local landless people to plant tree corridors linking tamarin habitats across the landscape. To date, over eight million trees have been planted, and tamarin research stations have been linked back to

the Morro do Diabo State Park that contains the largest remaining wild population of black lion tamarins. Still, the entire wild population remains at under 1,000 individuals.

However, the situation in captivity is desperate, and Durrell now possess the last unrelated breeding pair outside of South America. New blood for the breeding programme is desperately required, and that will involve costly importation from Brazil. As such, Durrell and the tamarins, need your backing.

If you would like to help the experts on this critical mission to save these miniature monkeys, please visit [durrell.org/tamarin](http://durrell.org/tamarin)



● Rainbow Tours are sponsoring a ring-tailed-lemur through Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust for every Madagascar booking made in July and August. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)

# Trips for *your* tribe

Whether you're a chilled-out family of poolside sun worshipers or pioneering parents looking to explore new territory with your tribe, *Other Shores* has this year's best family holidays covered



## GEYSERS IN ICELAND

From Vikings to volcanoes, Iceland is one big classroom. In the world's northernmost capital, the new Whales of Iceland museum is a must-do with kids, where life-size replicas of the giant mammals bring stories of the ocean to life. But of course it's Iceland's natural playground which puts this quirky little island on our family holidays short-list. Drives between thundering waterfalls, erupting geysers and active volcanoes are so short there's barely time to get the iPad out.

Regent Holidays has a week-long fly-drive around Iceland's dramatic west coast, designed with families in mind. There's no better place to start than the steaming waters of the Blue Lagoon, where everybody can enjoy

plastering themselves in the white silica mud for which the geothermal spa is famous. Then it's on to the Saga Valley where those who wish can explore on horseback. Budding geologists will love the short walk to the top of Grabrok volcano crater, whilst animal lovers will want to get up-close to the seal colony at Ytri-Tunga. And nobody will fail to be impressed by feisty Strokkur geyser which erupts twenty metres into the air every few minutes.

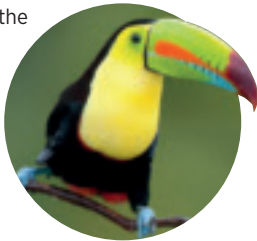
● *Regent Holidays' 8-day Iceland Family Encounter Fly-Drive costs from £4,700 for a family of four, including flights, accommodation and car hire.*  
[regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131





## RAINFOREST IN COSTA RICA

The eco-tourism capital of Central America, Costa Rica's lush tropical rainforests and staggeringly beautiful cloud forest contain more biodiversity than the USA and Europe combined – no other country on the planet has such a varied range of flora and fauna. The fact that this wildlife-rich little island is safe and easy to travel around makes it all the more appealing for adventure-seeking families.



Rainbow Tours has an eleven-day Costa Rica for Families package that combines rainforest and beach. An exciting trip on the Rainforest Aerial Tram just outside of San José transports kids through the treetops into the upper and intermediate levels of the rainforest, where exotic birds hang out. On a floating tour of the Sarapiquí River there's the chance to spot monkeys, sloths, iguanas and caimans, while at Selvatura Park there's a guided tour of the butterfly garden as well as the snake and frog farm, where kids can get up-close to the species that inhabit the forests. The holiday finishes with a relaxing break at Jacó Beach on the Pacific coast where the calm waters are perfect for family swimming.

● *Rainbow Tours' 11-day Costa Rica for Families costs from £5,290 for a family of three, including flights, accommodation and transfers.*  
[rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304

# Safari in Kenya

Driving across the endless savannah, singing Hakuna Matata, and searching for real life Lion Kings – it's no wonder an adventure in Simba's back yard made our family holiday shortlist.

Rainbow Tours' Authentic Africa Adventure for Families hits all the right notes. Visiting three malaria-free Kenyan conservancies, it's the local warrior guides and incredible lodges on this special family holiday which ensure a wild yet luxurious safari. Add to the mix picnics under acacia trees, swimming beneath waterfalls, sundowners on the

deck and dancing with the locals, and you've got a holiday fit for a king. Each game drive brings the possibility of more incredible wildlife encounters: in Samburu National Reserve, local guides will point out the Samburu Special Five – Somali ostrich, Beisa oryx, Grevy zebra, reticulated giraffe and gerenuk – while in Borana Conservancy, Africa's Big Five as well as the endangered Patas monkey are all local residents. The best is saved until last, with three nights in the incredible Masai Mara, with big cat safaris, bush dinners under the stars and some of the best wildlife viewing on the planet.

● *Rainbow Tours' 12-day Authentic Africa Adventure for Families costs from £20,320 for a family of four, including flights, accommodation, transfers and local guides.*  
[rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304





## SPORT IN ITALY

For families whose mini-travellers have more energy than they know what to do with, choosing a resort with a fantastic kids club or great sporting facilities is top of the agenda.

Western & Oriental has a week-long package at the Forte Village Le Palme in southern Sardinia, the beachside resort where there is never a shortage of activities to keep even the most active of kids entertained. There's the Tennis Academy where Grand Slam champions offer expert advice. The Chelsea Football School where you can take on Gianfranco Zola at the free kick challenge. The Rugby Academy – founded by England stars Austin Healey and Will Greenwood – where the likes of Martin Johnson provide exclusive training. And if they have any energy left there's basketball, beach volleyball, swimming, netball, cricket, cycling, windsurfing – the list goes on. When it's time to refuel, the Aquarium kids' restaurant is a supervised parent-free zone, allowing mum and dad the chance to relax and enjoy Michelin-starred dining in a more romantic setting.

● Western & Oriental offers a 7-night package at Forte Village Le Palme which costs from £5,888 for a family of four travelling in August, including flights, transfers & accommodation on a half board basis. (Additional cost for Sporting Academies).  
[westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303

## Cowboys in Wyoming



Yee haw! Donning a cowboy hat to canter across vast landscapes, learning how to line dance, experiencing the excitement of a rodeo, swapping stories around the campfire – family memories are made of these. Family-friendly ranches in the US range from those which encourage parents and children to ride together, to those which provide full-on kids clubs with heaps of additional activities thrown in.

Western & Oriental's extensive Ranch portfolio includes the secluded Goosewing Ranch in Wyoming, set deep in the heart of the Gros Ventre River Valley where elk, bears and eagles form part of the spectacular scenery. Kids as young as six can join parents on daily horseback trails across

this *Little House on the Prairie* film set, and trailside picnics are a huge hit with hungry cowboys and cowgirls. In July and August, additional kids activities are offered including arts and crafts, nature hikes, rodeos and archery, and there's a great swimming pool to cool off. In the evenings, families gather in the loft bar to play pool or swap tales from the trails, and themed dinners and weekly cook-offs all add to the fun.

● Western & Oriental offers a 6-night package at Goosewing Ranch which costs from £8,700 for a family of four, including flights, accommodation, transfers and meals. [westernoriental.com](http://westernoriental.com) 020 7666 1303

### TRAVEL SHOW

COME  
AND  
MEET  
US

Western  
& Oriental  
and Villa  
Select will be  
taking part  
in the Family  
Travel Show  
at London's  
Olympia  
from 31st  
October to  
1st November  
2015.



## BEACHES IN MAJORCA

Sometimes all you need is a pool, a beach and a good dose of vitamin D. The largest of the Balearic islands, Majorca gets around 300 days of sunshine a year – perfect for families who just want to relax under the Mediterranean sun. The small resort of

Cala d'Or on the southern half of the island's east coast is made up of five sandy coves strung along the coastline. The largest, Cala Gran, is a Blue Flag beach where the clear blue sea is watched over by lifeguards and kids can enjoy themselves on the sandy beach or at the seaside playground.

Villa Select has a gorgeous three-bedroom villa in Cala d'Or which sleeps up to six people. Villa Alicia is centrally located making it ideal for families who want the beach, as well as the bars and restaurants of the nearby marina, on their doorstep without needing to hire a car. The villa has a lovely lounge area and a spacious kitchen leading to the great pool and terrace, which is equipped with a brick-built barbecue and outdoor dining area for relaxed family evenings.

● Villa Select's Villa Alicia costs from £1,274 per week for sole use of the property. [villaselect.com](http://villaselect.com) 020 3130 6907





# Orangutans *in* Borneo

The island of Sabah in Malaysian Borneo provides a glorious mix of wildlife and beaches, as well as a unique opportunity for children to experience conservation in action. From Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre to the Borneo Sun Bear Conservation Centre, there are countless chances for kids to learn about some of nature's most magnificent creatures.

Regent Holidays' Borneo Family Holiday is a great choice for adventurous families, with wildlife river cruises, traditional village visits and jungle lodge experiences all included. A boat trip on the Kinabatangan River raises levels of excitement with wild proboscis monkeys, pygmy elephants, crocodiles and colourful hornbills all on the watch-list, and an after dinner cruise has children catching and releasing brightly lit fireflies. The holiday highlight is undoubtedly a visit to Sepilok at feeding time, where the reserve's rescued orangutans come out from their rainforest hideaways to enjoy a free dinner, watched on from jungle walkways by excited kids and grownups alike. Regent tops off this wildlife adventure with a final spot of beachside bliss at the Shangri-La Rasa Ria Resort.

● Regent Holidays' 13-day Borneo Family Holiday costs from £7,990 for a family of four, including flights, accommodation and transfers. [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131



# Pioneering traveller

*Other Shores* goes in search of the best unique travel adventures, for those who prefer their holidays with a dash of the unexpected



## FINLAND'S FROZEN HELL

William R. Trotter's book, aptly titled *A Frozen Hell*, unravels the stories of the Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940, telling of much forgotten battles where Finland's tiny army would, against all odds, rise up and defeat the mighty force of the Soviet Union. In a one-off escorted tour of the same name, Regent Holidays delves into the unique military history of the region, with a pioneering exploration of both Suomussalmi and Kuhmo.

The decisive Battle of Raate Road took place at the beginning of January 1940, with the Finns ambushing the Soviet 44th Rifle Division en route to Suomussalmi. An in-depth tour of the area offers a unique insight into the conditions of this important battleground, walking alongside renovated dugouts, trenches and armaments with a specialist guide.

The strategic town of Kuhmo was bombarded 48 times during the short Winter War. A guided tour of the Kuhmo Winter War Museum brings to life the hardships of the Finnish and Soviet soldiers, who fought in crushing temperatures as low as -30°C. Wrap up warm for this pioneering small group tour which departs on 5th November 2015.

● *Regent Holidays' 5-day Frozen Hell group tour costs from £1,285 and includes flights, accommodation in 3 and 4-star hotels and sightseeing with specialist guides.*  
[regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131

## BEHIND THE SCENES IN NORTH KOREA

Let's face it. It doesn't get much more pioneering than North Korea. The secretive socialist state which is never too far from the headlines – be it over hair cuts or nuclear weapons – is one destination that none of us can fathom. No independent travel is permitted and only a handful of tour operators are trusted to bring in travellers from the outside world.

Even those pioneering travellers who just have time to explore Pyongyang will soon be swept up in the bizarreness of local life. A visit to the capital's impressive Mansudae Grand Monument, with its 20-metre bronze statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, has travellers laying a wreath of flowers and bowing in unison in front of the Great Leaders.

Regent Holidays however, who have offered tours to the DPRK since 1985, go one step further, with an epic 18-day tour which blows the socks off your 'regular' North Korea holiday. Travelling to unknown parts of a largely unknown country, there are few opportunities these days to experience somewhere so far removed from tourism. Regent charts a private Antonov 24 aircraft to access the more off-the-beaten-track parts of the country such as Chongjin, a northerly port city closer to Vladivostok than Pyongyang. Here travellers can have a drink at the Foreign Sailors Club – under the watchful eye of official local guides of course.

● *Regent Holidays' 18-day Pioneering North Korea Tour has sold out for 2015. Call or email to register interest in the 2016 departure.* [regentholidays.co.uk](http://regentholidays.co.uk) 0117 280 0131



# Voyage to the end of the world

An immense continent populated only by wildlife and researchers, a voyage to Antarctica is truly a journey to the end of the world. Six hundred miles below the tip of South America, this giant wilderness is nearly twice the size of Australia – a vastness almost too huge to comprehend without first-hand experience of its enormous ice shelves.

Rainbow Tours offers an Ultimate Antarctica Adventure in partnership

with Polar Latitudes, the cruise operator behind the Sea Explorer; an all-suite expedition vessel accommodating a maximum of 114 passengers. From this intimate boat, pioneering passengers can expect to get up-close and personal with the continent's unperturbed wildlife in small-group zodiac excursions.

There are no fixed itineraries in this land where weather and ice conditions set the agenda. After a two-day

journey through the Drake Passage, possible landings include picturesque Neko Harbour, home to around 250 breeding pairs of Gentoo penguins, and Wilhelmina Bay, choice feeding ground for humpback whales and seals.

● *Rainbow Tours' 16-day Ultimate Antarctica Adventure costs from £6,950 and includes flights, 4 nights' accommodation in Buenos Aires / Ushuaia and 10 nights aboard the Sea Explorer with specialist guides. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304*



## OFF THE grid in MALAWI



Rainbow Tours, a pioneer in its own right when it comes to responsible travel, has launched a new nine-day holiday in southern Malawi. An often-overlooked destination, southern Malawi offers safari pioneers the

opportunity to experience game viewing away from the herds. Starting in wildlife-rich Liwonde National Park, a boat safari on the Shire River provides countless opportunities to see the large numbers of hippo and elephant for which the reserve is renowned. And keep eyes peeled for jumbo crocs too, lurking in the murky waters.

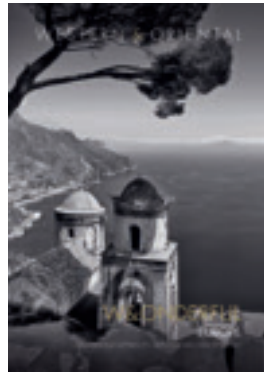
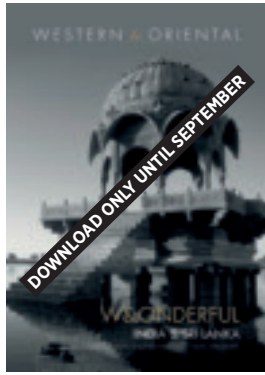
Not pioneering enough? Then how about following the wilds of Liwonde with a deserted island floating on the clear waters of Lake Malawi? Rainbow Tours has added three days to this itinerary at the incredible Mumbo Island Camp, where seven eco-tents

are the only signs of human habitation. George Clarke would be in awe of these amazing spaces made entirely of timber, thatch and canvas, which include their own shaded decks, hammocks, hot bucket showers and eco-toilets. The tiny island is entirely off-grid to allow it to remain in its pristine state, with lighting only by solar power, paraffin lamps and wind-up torches.

In 1980 Lake Malawi National Park became the first fresh-water marine reserve in the world, and with its maze of giant underwater boulders and innumerable colourful cichlid fish, the opportunity to snorkel and scuba dive in this private paradise should not be missed.

● *Rainbow Tours' 9-day Liwonde and Lake Malawi Safari costs from £3,140 and includes flights, 7 nights accommodation, all meals, game viewing, snorkelling and scuba diving. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk) 020 7666 1304*

# JOURNAL BROCHURE COLLECTION



## REQUEST A BROCHURE

Feeling inspired? Visit our websites to download or order your free travel brochures, or fill in the form below and return it to us FREEPOST to receive any brochure from our worldwide collection



### PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING BROCHURES

**Tick the brochures you would like to receive and return the completed form without a stamp to:**  
Brochure Requests, Western & Oriental, Freepost Plus RSTS-YJKJ-SLKL, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5QU

#### WESTERN & ORIENTAL

- ☐ India & Sri Lanka **FROM SEPTEMBER**
- ☐ Caribbean & USA
- ☐ Indian Ocean & Middle East
- ☐ Far East
- ☐ Europe

#### REGENT HOLIDAYS

- ☐ Iceland & the Arctic
- ☐ Russia & Europe:  
The Alternative Collection
- ☐ Alternative Asia

#### RAINBOW TOURS

- ☐ Africa & Madagascar
- ☐ Latin America

#### VILLA SELECT

- ☐ Hand-Picked Villa Holidays

#### WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS

- ☐ Western & Oriental and  
Rainbow Tours

Title \_\_\_\_\_

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

WESTERNORIENTAL.COM

RAINBOWTOURS.CO.UK

REGENTHOLIDAYS.CO.UK

VILLASELECT.COM



# KENYA, WILDLIFE & WARRIORS

With its iconic acacia-dotted landscapes, world-class game viewing and proud tribespeople, Kenya has long tugged at the heartstrings of travel romantics. One collection of boutique Kenyan lodges is working hard to prove that luxury tourism can work hand-in-hand with conservation and a commitment to local communities




## SARUNI MARA

A private wilderness bordering the world-renowned Masai Mara National Reserve, Mara North Conservancy is a partnership between conservationists, investors and over 800 Masai landowners, where game-viewing is simply world class. Nestled in a hidden valley at the heart of the wilderness, Saruni Mara is the only small, boutique lodge in the Mara. Five deluxe cottages and two private villas are elegantly furnished with beautiful antiques, and extensive verandas provide endless views over the Mara and its wildlife. Off-the-beaten-track safaris here are a humbling and special experience where the lodge's Maasai guides share their ancient wisdom of the area and its wild inhabitants.



## SARUNI WILD

A centrally located tented camp in the wilderness of Lemek Conservancy, Saruni Wild is hidden in a secluded valley where a large resident population of elephant, giraffe, zebra and impala roam the land. Just three tents form this well-appointed camp which looks out onto the vast plains of the Mara ecosystem and its resident game. Sleeping under canvas is a wildly intimate experience where oil lanterns, bush fires and calls of the wild add to the romance of the setting. Private game drives and walking safaris are led by authentic Maasai guides, proud warriors with an unparalleled knowledge of the land, who lead the dancing around the camp's mesmerising bonfire at night.



## SARUNI SAMBURU

Centred around a core conservation area, the Kalama Community Wildlife Conservancy borders northern Kenya's Samburu National Reserve. At the centre of Kamala's boundless wilderness, the six eco-chic villas of Saruni Samburu blend beautifully with their natural surroundings. Designed for families and couples, each luxury villa has a large, airy living space, opulent bathroom, private outdoor shower and spectacular veranda. Guided by Samburu warriors, passionate about their land and culture, the safari experience is truly exceptional. As the only lodge in over 200,000 acres, encounters with elephants, lions and leopards are exclusively yours.



## SARUNI OCEAN

Warm, turquoise waters lap the white sands of Msambweni, a small, traditional fishing village on a secluded stretch of south Kenya's Indian Ocean coast. The perfect post-safari hideaway, Saruni Ocean is located right of the beachfront, where each of the beautifully-styled suites is a private paradise with unending views of the ocean. Centred around an authentic health and wellness experience, guests can rejuvenate at the unique Saruni SPA, relax by the tranquil infinity pool or simply soak up the sun from Msambweni's warm sands. For true romantics, private candle-lit dinners on the beach provide gourmet bliss as the sun goes down.

**Win!**

- Return flights with British Airways
- Three nights in Bratislava's first 5-star hotel
- Wine-tasting on the Small Carpathian Wine Route



hotel's intimate L'Olive Restaurant serves creative Slovak cuisine in the historic vaults, and the serene Arcadia Spa is an oasis of calm where guests can enjoy the Finnish sauna, Turkish steam sauna and wonderful whirlpool with hydro massage.

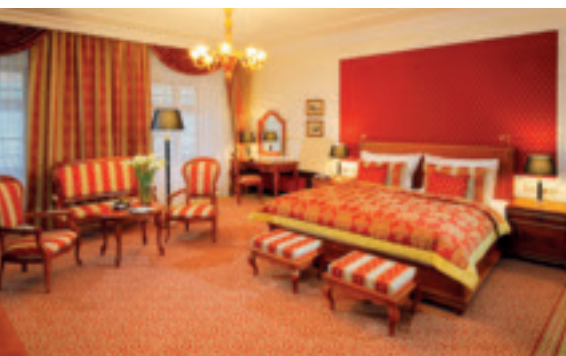
#### WINE TOUR

The prize also includes a wine-tasting excursion on the Small Carpathian Wine Route. Located on the south-eastern slopes of the Little Carpathians, just 22 miles from Bratislava, this historic viticulture area is one of eight wine growing regions in Slovakia. The tour visits the beautiful Červený Kameň, one of the best-preserved castles in Slovakia, before stopping to taste the local produce.

#### HOW TO ENTER

Enter by 30th September  
2015 at [regentholidays.co.uk/  
bratislavacompetition](http://regentholidays.co.uk/bratislavacompetition)

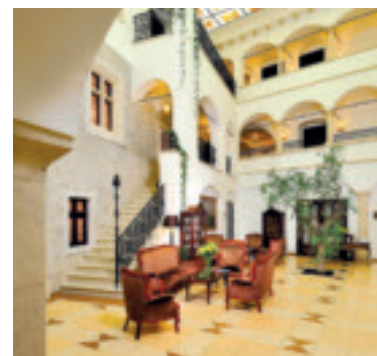
**REGENT HOLIDAYS**  
*holidays with stories to tell*



With its historic Staré Mesto and picturesque Danube vistas it's no wonder Slovakia's compact capital is a Regent Holidays favourite. A city settled by Celts, Romans, Germans, Hungarians, Jews, and of course Slovaks, Bratislava's cultural diversity shows in everything from its architecture to its cuisine. Visit the city's imposing 17th century Habsburg castle, look out over baroque town houses from iconic Michael's Tower, contemplate the exhibits at The Slovak National Gallery or spend the weekend strolling the Old Town's cobbled streets, looking out for playful outdoor sculptures and stopping to enjoy the relaxed café culture.

#### THE PRIZE

The prize includes three nights at the Regent-recommend boutique Hotel Arcadia, the first 5-star hotel in Bratislava. Located on a quiet cobbled street in the Old Town, this beautiful 13th century building is just a stone's throw from the baroque Primate's Palace and the Old Town Hall Museum with its renaissance courtyard. The



#### TERMS & CONDITIONS

The prize draw is open until midnight on 30th September 2015 and the winner will be notified by email on or before 14th October 2015. Entry is free and is via the Regent Holidays website at [regentholidays.co.uk/bratislavacompetition](http://regentholidays.co.uk/bratislavacompetition). The prize is for two people travelling together and includes return flights to Vienna with British Airways, return private transfers from Vienna Airport to Bratislava, three nights at the 5-star Arcadia Hotel with breakfast and a wine-tasting excursion on the Small Carpathian Wine Route. Additional meals, optional excursions and personal spending money are not included in the prize. The prize must be taken by 31st May 2016. Travel is not permitted during Christmas, New Year or May Bank Holidays. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash or exchange. The prize is subject to availability.





## HAND-PICKED VILLAS WITH POOLS

*Providing family villa holidays for over 32 years.*

Each of our villas is unique, offering *individuality, character and style*. From traditional, rustic properties to high-tech, luxurious hideaways, whatever your taste you can be sure to find the perfect villa for your well-earned holiday. Choose from a variety of locations across Europe and beyond, with an exceptional range of exclusive villas sleeping from 2 to 22 guests.



Browse our collection of villas and order a brochure at [www.villaselect.com](http://www.villaselect.com)

Speak to an expert on **01789 595433**



Villa Select is a trading name of Western & Oriental Travel Ltd



# ICELANDAIR

– A TRULY ICELANDIC TRAVEL EXPERIENCE



Reykjavik | New York | Boston | Orlando | Minneapolis/St. Paul | Washington D.C. | Halifax  
Toronto | Seattle | Denver | Anchorage | Edmonton | Vancouver | **New destination:** Chicago

When you fly on Icelandair you will enjoy our unique brand of Icelandic hospitality and comfort. Our Boeing 757 aircraft feature special touches from the latest Icelandic music to cosy leather seating with interactive in-flight entertainment systems designed to make the short flight to Iceland fly by. In addition, you can choose from three classes of service: **Economy Class, Economy Comfort Class or Saga Class.**

Icelandair serves the UK with flights from London Heathrow, London Gatwick, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow. Our flights provide onwards connections to destinations in the USA and Canada.

We look forward to welcoming you onboard.

