

Volume 14

Issue 10

Happy 2006

The Women's Travel Club

"designed by women for women"



Dear Members,

Well I am just back from the enormous London Travel Mart where thousands of travel people display the newest trips, hotels and events. Some nitty gritty: 2005 has been the best year for European travel in a long time. And it helps that the British Pound and Euro are falling against the US Dollar. New capacity is being added by both international airlines and intra Europe. (Remember we did recommend www.opodo.com, if you wish to book a flight between two European cities). And there are still deals out there: see **Portugal February trip** inside.

Areas being promoted heavily are Dubai and environs (fascinating Persian Gulf countries which have excellent 5 star hotels). India, of course, one of the most popular destinations for the last few years. (Next India Club trip Fall 2006). China and the new areas outside of the Beijing/ Shanghai, Xian/Guilin route. And of course many more places. The buzz on who will be doing the traveling in future: The Chinese, Indians and Russians!!! And the buzz on Avian Flu: American hype. No one else is even talking about it and the Europeans think once again how silly we are!

We visited the Libya Tourist Authority at the Mart and spoke with Libyan tour operators and guides. They are very excited that Americans are coming back. As one put it, she learned English in school years ago and finally she can use it to welcome us back.

I went to London with a newspaper travel editor, who participates in our trips. We talked about how one can really eat well on a budget in Europe. Some rules: 1. Eat local food and peak thru the window of the restaurant to see who is there and how full it is. 2. Eat your big meal at lunch if you crave fancy places. 3. Search out a price fixed meal, usually a deal over a la carte. 4. Check on the menu to see if service is included. 5. Try museum cafes. 6. Most department stores have restaurants at all price points. 7. Instead of asking the concierge where to eat, ask him or her where they eat. The Club usually includes dinners the first few nights so you can get to know your fellow travelers before you venture out to enjoy local cuisine without breaking the bank!

WARNING ON THE FOLLOWING TRIPS// ALMOST FULL OR LITTLE SPACE LEFT.

Thailand Jan. 11-22 Winter warmth with its diversity (scenery, temples, saffron robed Buddhist monks, gem and silk markets, gourmet food, hills, beaches, winding rivers full of tribal life. First Class Deluxe Hotels \$1050 + air on Singapore Airlines \$1040 from E. or W Coast. Singapore and Anghor Wat's Unesco Heritage Fantasma all nearby and cheap to add.

Libya and Malta Feb. 24-March 5 The best Roman ruins in North Africa and a new friend of The United States. Phenomenal desert scenery, Tuareg tribes people on camel back, Unesco Heritage Sites. Then add Malta if you wish to extend the trip. Men invited. \$2075 plus air on British Airways Visas needed for this trip. Our President will accompany this group.

Annual Ixtapan de la Sal Jan. 29-Feb. 5 our annual discount week 21 treatments, all meals etc. \$1125 twin. \$1275 single and limited.

Portugal Feb. 23-March 1, we need to have deposits by Dec. 20.

See important notice on back page about trip surcharges.

Phyllis Stoller

Ixtapan de la Sal Spa Jan. 29-Feb. 5. What is this???

10 years ago one of our members shared the secret with The Club. Ixtapan is located in the mountains, amidst colonial towns, 1 1/2 hours from Mexico City. This is a family owned hotel spa with 220 modern rooms, two dining rooms, 2 pools, golf, tennis, and side trips you can book there. The spa package includes all meals, 7 nights, and an amazing 21 treatments. And a massage here is a full hour no skimping. Taxes and service charges are also in the price, but you will want to tip the engaging staff.

Food is spa cuisine or Mexican gourmet, There is a bar, gym, plenty of bottled water and soft drinks. You will use a spa robe and slippers so don't bring those along. Products are organic and you can buy them there or in town, nearby at some of the local pharmacies.

Each year when we have 30 women, we get a free trip to Taxco, the colonial city known for silver. Some of the best silversmiths work here-you will definitely enjoy the ride and shopping. Ask the veterans in our group to identify who in Taxco makes the silver for a big Fifth Avenue store!

Treatments in the package include massages, manicure, pedicure, hair and nail treatments, facials, loofah, mud etc. Classes include walks, salsa and water aerobics, pilates and yoga. There is internet connection and English speaking staff. We pick you up in the Mexico City Airport and bring you back.

\$1126 twin \$1275 single. Group discount included.

www.womenstravelclub.com
Local NY 646-723-2188
Fax 360-935-5080

womantrip@aol.com
800-480-4448

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25-30 trips a year...first-class/superior first-class hotels unless noted...group airfares (flights from many cities)...transfers...room shares on first-come, first-served basis for non-smokers...all sightseeing...English-speaking guides...meals as noted...private deluxe buses...complete pre-trip packages...and new: Travel Companion Bulletin Board! Ask about airfare from your hometown-we are a national group with different time zones and hometowns.

MEMBERS' PRICES QUOTED BELOW

Dec. 22-28 Rome for Christmas 5 nights Grand Hotel Palazzo Carpegna, 3 dinners, sightseeing + a day to abbeys, castles. \$1170 + air. 3 coming early!

Jan. 11-22 Thailand with add on's to SE Asia. Bangkok to Mae Hong Sorn and Chiang Mai. LOTS of experiences \$2090 includes air on Singapore Airlines. First class & deluxe hotels. Easy to add Singapore or World Heritage Site: Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Shares

!!! FIRST TEN GET A FREE COOKING CLASS VALUE \$50 a person.

East Coast people leave from JFK- West Coast from either LAX OR SFO BUT FLIGHTS ARE VERY FULL AND WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU by Dec 2.

Jan 29-Feb 5 Ixtapan Spa. Spa deal in Mexican mountains. \$1125 twin and \$1275 single. Golf, swimming, walks, classes Pilates to Salsa aerobics, Mexican or spa food, clean air and water, silver shopping. The deal of spas and a good friend to the Club.

21 spa treatments

Feb. 24-March 5 Libya Best Roman Ruins in Africa **Add Malta** via Sicily. Men Invited. \$2075 plus air from many cities on British Airways. Remember, you will know ahead of time who is on your flight. We send out that information so you have buddies on the plane. Visas required for this trip.

Feb. 23-March 1 Portugal See inside story!!

April 5-17 The Silk Route. Like having tea with Genghis Khan! Phyllis went last year. You begin in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan and quickly find yourself between the middle ages and the Soviet Empire. Our trip covers Samarkand glorified by Tamerlane and Bukhara, both ancient trading towns with scenes from travel posters. Every day is stranger than the next in some of the most isolated cities on earth. I loved the mosques, carpets, gold toothed people, and Jewish history. Bukhara is Asia's oldest living city. In walled Khiva, you see weddings and camels on the street. Check out "1000 Places to See Before You Die" for ideas of this area. Finally Turkmenistan: the oddest place on earth: a capital personally dedicated to a dictator and a market called the most fabulous in the world, Ashkabad Sunday Market. Go via Istanbul or Moscow.

March 31-April 8 Tuscany/Florence

April 13-21 Provence

April 5-17 Silk Route The Stans add Moscow and Istanbul.

April 20-27 Paris

May 11-15 Red Mountain Spa near Las Vegas, Brice and Zion parks.

June 16-20 Canyon Ranch AZ discount

July 2006 Oaxaca Mexico, the most indigenous area of Mexico. Canyon Ranch Lenox with Tanglewood. **August 4-13 Yukon** to Alaska from Whitehorse. Ixtapan Summer again. And more and more.

Many more Summer trips coming.



Tuscany

One of the Most Popular all year.

March 31 Depart US arriving **April 1** Meet our escort who will be with you the whole week. Transfer time 1PM or ask for a private transfer. Tonight we feast at our welcome dinner. D.

April 2 AM visit Florence on foot and end at the Academia and David. PM Free but dinner as a group tonight. Our hotel is near major sites, shops B. D.

April 3 Full day at leisure ending with a special Tuscan dinner. Your free time is precious; shoppers might hit on Italy's largest discount mall - lookers Florence awaits. B. D.

April 4 Travel to Pisa in our bus, visit the Square, Baptistery, and leaning tower. PM Continue to walled Lucca, one of Tuscany's most charming. B. D.

April 5 Full day in the Tuscan hills to Siena and hilltop San Gimignano, jewel of Etruscan origin. Built by noble families, the 14 towers lining its ramparts invite your camera. B. D.

April 6 Day at leisure or join us to Venice with a 2 hour walking tour, visit of the Duomo and more fun. B.

April 7 Today a tour of the beautiful birthplace of Da Vinci, then the Chianti area: Passignano, Motefioralle, Greve and Volpaia, B L with wine.

April 8 Today transfer to the airport for flights home (early transfer). B.

\$2050 Single: \$595 limited. Deposit \$500. Hotel Grand Baglione, built as a palace modernized for comfort. Most dinners, lots of wine, our local rep will make you feel at home.

Portugal winter getaway. SHARES OK FOR 1ST TEN.
SEE NEW LATE BOOKING POLICY ON BACK PAGE.
Price: \$1495 for 1st ten to book then add \$100
Single: \$350

Trip includes: airfare non stop from Newark r/t, 5 nights 4 star modern hotel, all sightseeing as below, breakfast daily, gala welcome and farewell dinners, lunch in Sintra, porters at the hotel, airport transfers with English speaking assistant. Airline taxes to be added AND CONNECTIONS AVAILABLE TO NEWARK. .

Only a few hours from the E. coast, Portugal is warmer and sunnier than most of Europe and Mardi Gras is your arrival day! Lisbon was conquered from African Moors in 1147. The city lies on the banks of the scenic Tagus River in a green valley. The town was built around St. George Fortress with many medieval neighborhoods, and monuments dedicated to Portugal's seafaring history. Mansions are covered in ceramic tiles and fado music is heard from cafes and restaurants along the river's banks. Because of relative isolation, Lisbon is different from Europe, monasteries remain, fanciful Moorish architecture is everywhere and streets are cobbled. Lisbon is much less modernized than its neighbors and has many 800 year old structures! Sintra is a UNESCO world heritage site, built 1300-1900 The town is a museum with horse drawn carriages.

Feb. 23 Depart from Newark on non stop flight to Lisbon.

Feb. 24 Arrive Lisbon and transfer to our city center hotel, Mundial. Welcome dinner tonight on the roof garden.

Feb. 25 Full day tour of Lisbon, to include Jeronimos Monastery, Fundacao Medeiros e Almeida, Ancient Art Museum, Old Carriages Museum and more.

Feb. 26 Half day tour of famed Greenhouses and fabulous Gulbenkian Museum. The Gulbenkian Museum is a gem: 6,000 pieces of art from ancient onwards, housed in a lovely garden next to the Museum of Modern Art. It is a must see.

Feb. 27 Full day tour to Sintra, including Queluz Royal Palace and Pena Palace, Sintra Modern Art Museum. Built by the kings in the 18th c, Queluz has a series of wandering gardens, palaces and important collections of furniture, ceramics and art. B. L.

Feb 28 Free day to wander with new Club Friends. Farewell dinner in the Old Kitchens of the Royal Palace of Queluz. Markets abound and you will find glass, wicker, embroidery, ceramics, copper and wonderful foods to take home. Products are more economic in Portugal than in most of the EU. There are many museums and nooks to investigate. Have a fresh fish lunch in an outdoor café with a glass of local wine. Fish and cheeses are Portuguese specialties.

March 1 Transfer to the airport for flights to US and home.

Group flights: leave JFK at 6:15PM and return into JFK at 3:50PM. Flight time is short and great for connections to other cities!!

All trips subject to the terms and conditions of The Women's Travel Club. Penalties for cancellations, changes, deviations apply. A deposit indicates agreement with terms and conditions on our website or sent with your written confirmation. You may book a trip by phone, fax, or online. If by phone, we will read our policies to you if you require. Fewer than 20 women a surcharge can, but does not usually apply 30 days pre departure. Travel insurance protects if you need to cancel for specific reasons! Membership Non Refundable.

2006

Libya

We are so excited

To be able to visit

Liby again. If you loved Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt or any desert area, this is your next trip. From the best Roman ruins in Africa to the Tuaregs and tribes of the desert, Libyans welcome us back as new friends. You will benefit by the fact that this country has not been spoiled by hordes of tourists.

Libya Feb. 24-March 5 and Malta afterwards.

We go via London and visit Tripoli, The Sahara, the ruins of Leptis Magna, Roman Sabratha and more. You can add Malta via Sicily if you want to see the island fortress of the crusaders.

The Libyan landscape ranges from high mountains to deep desert. Olive trees, gardens, orange and palm groves decorate its villages which date from the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines and classical Arabs. They have bequeathed the tourist some of the most impressive ruins in the world, isolated oases and walled old cities. From the Med beaches to the "great sea" or Sahara, you will meet a variety of people: modern businessmen and women, Berbers on horseback, Tuaregs in blue robes astride fast camels, and Africans further south. Arts and crafts include carpets, silver, ceramics and pottery.

We include Tripoli, Leptis Magna, Sabratha (Roman areas of international renown), several nights in the Sahara in luxury tented camps, Gabroun, new to eco-tourism, is often in posters for its stark scenery and mysterious lake. 10 nights around the newest destination. Price: \$2075 plus air from any British Airways gateway. **ALMOST FULL**

THIS TRIP IS OPEN TO MEN FRIENDS. Said to me by a woman from the Libyan Tourist Authority: We have been waiting a long time for you Americans to come back. Welcome!





Our new early bird policy. We have to impose a surcharge on bookings within 60 days. We are sorry but our hotels and airlines are insisting.

Instead of early bird deals now, we are advising you that late bookers can still get a place on a trip and might get a share, but will have to pay more. Exact amounts are quoted to you when you book. They will be approximately 5-8% of the trip cost. This will not apply to Ixtapan, Thailand, Libya or Rome. And will be in addition to new member surcharges.

Antartica We were just notified that the January 21 2006 13 night sailing of a major cruise line to Antartica has no single supplement in some cabins. From: \$3595.Call today.

The Women's Travel Club®
Suite 301
36 West 20 Street

New York, NY 10011-4212

The Club was founded in 1992 by Phyllis Stoller, a then banker with a non-traveling husband. We are nationally known. Berkeley Insurance protects your funds. We donate to women's charities. **To keep prices fair quality high, we do not maintain a mailing list for non-members. Dues are \$35 1-year/\$65 2-years. Members of less than 3 months pay a surcharge. Membership non refundable. Need help with email specials or a password? Email us// do not call our office for email help**

**FOR MEMBERSHIP
STATUS, EMAIL OR
CALL US 800-480-4448**

Return Service Requested