



Date: January 2010
To: Utterly Sophisticated Travelers
From: Teresa Beall Expeditions

Hi Savvy Travelers!

Don't let all this cold weather and rain push you inside to hibernate. Winter demands motion and action, not submission. Get up and get on it! Following are some travel ideas that won't let you slumber on the sofa for the rest of the winter season. We hope they get your traveling juices flowing and prompt you to call us to help you orchestrate any or all of your travel arrangements for 2010. We do sincerely appreciate your business!

Getting the word out on recent travel specials, our uber special organized group expeditions, and scheduled day trips is important to us. If you find the information in this e-newsletter helpful, please let a friend know and encourage them to call our office (or log onto our website – www.teresabeall.com) if we can be of service. After all, sooner or later everyone needs a vacation. And, don't forget us for your simple vacations too – we serve up some delicious independent journeys for you and your family.

SNOW BALL

Rio's Carnival and New Orleans's Mardi Gras can seem to be all about gratuitously exposed flesh, but at the third largest pre-Lenten celebration in the world you probably won't be seeing many peekaboo costumes. It will be more like flannel and down. Up in Quebec City, the Winter Carnival makes up for the cold by throwing a great party complete with massive ice sculptures, concerts, parades, snow rafting, ice fishing, winter games and fireworks. Stay at Le Chateau Frontenac, one of Quebec's finest and most historic hotels, eat a full buffet breakfast to keep you warm, and then bundle up and head outside for winter fun. It's especially fun (and much cheaper) to visit post carnival, when the crowds (and prices) have fallen like the snow flakes outside, yet the surroundings are still perfectly white and magical. Let it snow, baby, let it snow!

WHISKY RIVER

Picture yourself briskly walking the heathered moors, dressed smartly in hound's-tooth and shod in sturdy Oxfords, whistling to a spaniel. Doesn't a walking trip in through Scotland's whisky country sound like a great idea? Take a self-guided walk from Aviemore along the Speyside Way to Buckie. Pass towns and distilleries with names that ring like poetry to whisky lovers – Glenlivet, Cragganmore, Craggelachie, Macallan. Walk approximately six days and stay in B&Bs and inns along the way while your luggage is transferred for you. Walks average 10 miles a day and follow historic footpaths and beautiful vistas along the River Spey and the coastline above Aberdeen. Pack up your sneakers...

SOUTH PACIFIC SOJOURN

Tahiti, one of those distant, exotic destinations you probably thought you'd never get around to visiting, is actually within reach right now. During select weeks in winter and spring, you can fly roundtrip to Tahiti from Los Angeles and stay for 5 nights for prices that start at about a grand. For slightly more you can upgrade to a lagoon-view room or visit Moorea or Bora Bora instead. The idea of a South Seas adventure just got a little more realistic, huh?



MONT BLANC? CHECK

Chamonix, that high-altitude Swiss playground of skiers, can be the site of your Winter ski vacation for next to nothing. Deeply discounted packages include roundtrip airfare to Geneva, transfers up the mountain by bus, and 5 to 7 nights' accommodations at low budget hotels (ok, so they are not a five star resort – but you'll probably be too tired from all that skiing and playing hard in the snow all day to care what the room looks like after you are fast asleep). Chamonix offers challenges to great skiers and is definitely not for the faint of heart – after all, that IS Mont Blanc looming above town. The valley's villages offer loads of Alpine charm and activities even for non-skiing or faint-of-heart companions.

TAWNY, RUBY AND YOU

To sip port among the steeply terraced vineyards of the Douro Valley in Portugal is to understand the drink's precious heritage. When you see the old estates, the ancient methods of manual grape harvest, and the huge tubs in which the young wine is fermented, you'll understand the traditions that go into each bottle before it's corked. Take a week-long off-season cruise of the Douro River, leaving from and returning to Porto. Discover the quiet charms of Portugal and its wine. Eat at charming quintas (wine estates) and a refurbished monastery. Tour wineries and historic estates as well as the main town of Porto, where ancient wine lodges spill down the bank of the Douro and from which all those casks shipped down from the country are tapped and blended into port wine. The cruise includes seven nights' accommodation, all meals, and sightseeing. Just be sure to leave room in your luggage for the bottles of port you'll want to bring home with you. Cheers!

EAST OF ST. TROPEZ

On my first visit to the Italian Riviera, a friendly waiter gave us directions to the best beach near town. After a bus ride, we found ourselves waiting in line for the short climb down a rocky cliff with Italian women wearing bikinis and high heels. Oh la la – Viva Italia! Though winter weather may be a little nippy for sunbathing, an early season getaway is timed perfectly to give a more mellowed look at the charming fishing-villages-turned-summer-playgrounds that dot Liguria's rocky coast. For rock bottom prices, fly roundtrip to Genoa, rent a car, and stay a few nights at (for example) the Gran Albergo in Sestri Levante. Drive the two-lane road that winds the rocky coast between the towns of the Cinque Terre. Visit churches and seaside cafes in Portofino and Santa Margherita de Ligure. Enjoy pesto, fish stew, vino and coffee. An intensely pleasurable time is guaranteed. Viva Italia in deed!

HIP JOINT SESSION

The joke about the difference between yogurt and Washington, D.C. (one has active culture) is starting to sound pretty old-fashioned. For one thing, D.C. now boasts some seriously cool places to stay. Some of the boutique hotels are on sale for prices that beat the competition by a mile. And for something very special, Kimpton's Hotel Rouge, is too cool and too hip for words. Hurry and visit while Congress is on winter break. You'll experience the fresh and cutting-edge destination that Washington has become. Or, if you wait until the big boys reconvene, we can help you secure passes to the White House for a private tour. Be proud to be an American!

Happy Traveling, Teresa

NOTE – Each month (sometimes more or less often than that) we send out an e-newsletter containing timely announcements, notices and tips intended as useful, up-to-the-minute information for discriminating domestic and international travelers - you, our clients. The intent is NOT to send unwanted information to anyone. If you are not interested, please let us know and we will promptly remove you from our database!