

# THE SERIOUS TRAVELER™

TOUR LISTING FROM TRAVEL CONCEPTS INTERNATIONAL, INC. • FALL 2014

Hello Travel Friends,

I am often asked, *What's your favorite destination?*

Well, I can honestly say it is usually the last place I have visited! As of this week I'm just back from a wonderful autumn trip to Russia, coming in a full circle to where I started my business nearly 30 years ago. Appropriately, Russia has once again become one of those places that seems a bit politically forbidding, just as it was in Soviet days. I assure you though, there is absolutely no reason to put off a trip; the places we visit in Moscow, St Petersburg and Suzdal are dazzling and the countryside enchanting. Plus, you can learn a lot by seeing and talking with the people there—exponentially more than you can ever possibly get from the 24-hr. “news” channels. I invite you, once again, to see for yourself! We've had requests for the winter tour for years. The memory of a troika ride in the countryside will stay with you always!

Two other favorites of mine that defy the critics, are Iran and Bulgaria. We have five trips in 2015 to each of these countries guided by my devoted friends and much sought-after guides *par excellence*, Bahman and Lyuba. We have Serious Travelers going back for the 2nd and 3rd time to both of these mysterious, but highly rewarding countries.

So have a look. I hope you enjoy this little printed newsletter. It is the first we have had printed in a couple years. You'll find tours from South America, across Africa to Asia and beyond! And, most of our tours will be repeated the next year if these dates don't work for you. Let us know your preferences so we can keep you updated. A phone call, email or note by post will be warmly welcomed!



*Gwen*

-Gwen Erwood

President, Travel Concepts International

## Register for Email Updates

These will keep you up-to-date with information about our tours.

Visit our website

[www.SeriousTraveler.com](http://www.SeriousTraveler.com)

and click on the link to register (name and email address required only).



SERIOUS TRAVELER...

## ASIA

### Experience South India

Chennai to Kanchipuram, Pondicherry to Thanjavur. Celebrate the Pongal Festival. Get in touch with nature at Periyar and Cochin. Hassan, Mysore and Bangalore make this program extraordinary. May be combined with Sri Lanka.

\$4250 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ JANUARY 10 - 23, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/SouthIndia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/SouthIndia.html)

(Asia continued on page 2)

## EUROPE

### Lapland - Magic of the North

Reindeer safari, dog sled ride, Finnish sauna.

\$1279 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ JANUARY 10 - 17, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Lapland.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Lapland.html)

### Russia in Winter

Red Square at night in Moscow, two days in the countryside of the Golden Ring with Vladimir, Suzdal and Fedoskino. St. Petersburg with sleigh ride, Maslenitsa Festival, theater and the Sapsan fast train ride.

\$3990 INCLUDING AIR FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR

□ FEBRUARY 12 - 22, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Russia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Russia.html)

(Europe continued on page 2)

## AFRICA

### Ethiopia's Historic Route

Experience the unusual Christian Sebaratmu Giorgis Festival and rock-hewn churches in Lalibela and Blue Nile Falls.

\$4990 FROM WASH, DC VIA ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES

□ JANUARY 17 - 29, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Ethiopia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Ethiopia.html)

### Omo Valley African Safari

Hammer, Konso and Mursi tribal culture.

\$3870 AS AN EXTENSION TO ETHIOPIA'S NORTH

□ JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 8, 2015

### Magic of Morocco

Casablanca, Rabat, Meknes, Volubilis, Fez, and Marrakech. This compact deluxe trip is perfect for those who can only spare a week of vacation. Combine with 1,000 Kasbahs.

\$3650 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ MARCH 8 - 14, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Morocco.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Morocco.html)

### Road to 1,000 Kasbahs

An incredible journey to Morocco's Marrakech, Telouet, Ait Benhaddou, Ouarzazate, Zagora, deluxe desert camp in Merzouga, Erfoud, Valley of Todgha and Essaouira.

\$3640 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ MARCH 14 - 22, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Morocco.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Morocco.html)

## South Africa Tour and Safari

Capetown, Kruger and Victoria Falls. Nelson Mandela's Robbin Island and house in Soweto. 4 days at the private Kapama River Lodge. 3 days on the Island of Siankaba.

\$6240 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ SEPTEMBER 2 - 16, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/SouthAfrica.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/SouthAfrica.html)

## THE AMERICAS

### Crafts and Culture of Ecuador

Quito, Otavalo, Avenue of the Volcanoes, Upper Amazon town of Puyo, Riobamba, train to Devil's Nose, Cuenca and Guayaquil.

\$3990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ OCTOBER 1 - 12, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Ecuador.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Ecuador.html)

### Colombia with Panama

Bogotá, Villa de Leyva, Coffee Region, Cartagena. Panama with full canal option.

\$4830 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL

□ OCTOBER 13 - 25, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Colombia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Colombia.html)

### Cuba - People to People

Fully licensed provider. Meet outstanding artisans and celebrities in music and art.

\$3990 FROM MIAMI VIA CHARTER FLIGHT

□ NOVEMBER 14 - 21, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Cuba.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Cuba.html)

## ASIA

(Asia continued from page 1)

### Sri Lanka's Art & Culture

Visit six of Sri Lanka's UNESCO Sites – Anuradhapura, Dambulla, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Kandy, Galle, Ruhunu National Park in Yala plus the enchanting Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage. Dine elegantly and stay in a historic beach resort in Bentota designed by iconic architect Geoffrey Bawa.

**\$3980 FROM COLOMBO AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ JANUARY 24 - FEBRUARY 5, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/SriLanka.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/SriLanka.html)

### Persia Revisited

See seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites and all four Persian capitals: Ecbatana, Susa, Pasargadae, and Persepolis. West to Hamadan to see the tomb of Esther and the monument to Avicenna, Persian Father of Modern Medicine. Continue to Kermanshah and Ahwaz to visit the site of Susa and the Chogha-Zanbil ziggurat. We won't miss Shiraz, Persepolis, Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great, and everyone's favorite, Isfahan. We'll take in the desert city of Yazd to learn about ancient technological systems using *bafgirs* (wind-catchers), *qanats* (water channels from the mountains), and *yakhchals* (ice houses), making life in the desert along the Silk Road thrive.

**\$6640 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIR**

☐ FEBRUARY 13 - 28, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html)

### Treasures of Northern India

#### with Festival of Colours of Holi

Celebrate the Festival of Holi in Rajasthan with the erstwhile royal family. Take heritage walks in Pushkar and Varanasi. Sunset boat ride on Lake Pichola. Lecture series in Udaipur and Agra by eminent scholars. Welcome the dawn on a boat ride on the Ganges. Taj Mahal? Of course!

**\$4640 FROM DELHI AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ MARCH 3 - 16, 2015

☐ MARCH 1 - 14, 2016 DARJEELING EXTENSION

[SeriousTraveler.com/IndiaHighlights.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/IndiaHighlights.html)

### Treasures of Iran

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

**\$5980 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES**

☐ APRIL 3 - 16, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html)

*Combine with Mashad and NW Iran tour*

### Bali and Beyond with Java & South Sulawesi

Have an intriguing look at three of Indonesia's distinct cultures. Java, South Sulawesi and Bali give you vibrant culture, unique art and mystical ceremonies! Watch a sunrise in Borobudur then continue to mysterious Toraja Land. Finally the Island of the Gods—Bali—to experience art-filled Ubud, Tanah Lot, and Sanur.

**\$3990 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ APRIL 12 - 25, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Bali.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Bali.html)

### Mashad and Northwest Iran

Travelers still charmed with Iran will find new delights. Fly to Ferdowsi's Mashad and see Omar Khayyám's Nishapur, then explore the Caspian region, Masuleh, Fuman and Rasht. On to Anzali, Ardabil, Zanjan, Soltaniyeh, St. Stephanus and/or St. Thaddeus and Tabriz.

**\$5990 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES**

☐ APRIL 15 - 27, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html)

### Summer Discovery of Persia

Have you seen our Fall through Spring tours to Iran? November through April is the best time weather-wise to visit central Iran with Persepolis outside Shiraz, Isfahan and Tehran. However, we know there are students and faculty in the academic field who can only travel during the summer months. We've designed a tour that visits the Northwest part of Iran, including the Southwest Caspian coastline and Tabriz.

**\$6910 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES**

☐ JULY 19 - AUGUST 5, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html)

### Central Asia's Silk Road

#### Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran

Complete your Silk Road experience in a seldom-visited area. This tour connects Central Asia to the Near East. Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, Tashauz, Ashgabat, Merv (Mary). The Mashad and Tehran extension is optional.

**\$6690 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES**

☐ OCTOBER 18 - NOVEMBER 1, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Uzbekistan.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Uzbekistan.html)

*Combine Central Asia's Silk Road with Passage Through Persia.*

### Iran - Passage Through Persian History & Culture

Don't let the naysayers diminish your enthusiasm. Experience Persian hospitality for yourself! Persepolis, a short drive from Shiraz, is one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world. Isfahan is a unique city with exquisite mosaic-clad domes, bridges

and Persian gardens. Travel in security with our experienced Iranian tour manager, Bahman. This perfect introductory tour also includes Kerman, the citadel of Rayen; Shiraz, the city of "Roses and Nightingales"; Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great; and ancient Zoroastrian Yazd.

**\$6640 FROM JFK VIA TURKISH AIRLINES**

**CASPIAN EXT (2 more UNESCO Sites) • \$2240**

☐ NOV 3 - 18, 2015 • EXT NOV 18 - 22, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Iran.html)

### Splendors of Burma

Capture the mystery and romance of Mandalay. Classic tour to the mystical lands of Burma featuring bustling Yangon, the magnificent UNESCO site of Bagan, a cruise up the fascinating Irrawaddy River. Restore yourself during a sojourn at Lake Inle.

**\$4420 FROM YANGON AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ JULY 4 - 16, 2015

☐ DECEMBER 1 - 13, 2015

☐ JANUARY 5 - 17, 2016

[SeriousTraveler.com/SoutheastAsia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/SoutheastAsia.html)

### North Thailand's Hill Tribes & Golden Triangle

Bangkok to Chiang Mai and on to Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen. Absorb the culture when you overnight in a Hmong Hilltribe Lodge. Markets, golden temples and wats, and long-tailed boat ride on the Kok River.

**\$2120 FROM BANGKOK AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ DECEMBER 13 - 20, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/SoutheastAsia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/SoutheastAsia.html)

### Laos and Cambodia

See Vientiane, perhaps the best preserved city of SE Asia, and Luang Prabang, the crown jewel of Laos. Cruise up the Mekong to Pak Ou Cave. Fly to Siem Reap to visit the ancient capital of Angkor Thom and most famous of all Khmer temples, Angkor Wat. Boat ride on the Great Lake of Cambodia, Tonle Sap.

**AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ JANUARY 17 - 28, 2016

[SeriousTraveler.com/SoutheastAsia.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/SoutheastAsia.html)

## EUROPE

(Europe continued from page 1)

### Precious Stones of Apulia

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

**\$4640 FROM BARI AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

☐ MAY 28 - JUNE 5, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/ApuliaItaly.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/ApuliaItaly.html)

(Europe continued on page 3)

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

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Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Tour (s) \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

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(Europe continued from page 2)

### Easter in the Balkans

Twenty-four fascinating days including a week-long celebration of Orthodox Easter traditions. Start the odyssey in Sofia, Bulgaria. Continue to Thessaloniki, Greece. Meteora to Kalambaka and Ioannina and up through Butrint, Durres and Tirana, Albania. Ohrid and Skopje in Macedonia back to Sofia. Lyuba will show you places you might never find on your own, and bring them alive with her vast knowledge and love of Balkan culture.

**\$7420 FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

APRIL 4 - 27, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Balkans.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Balkans.html)

### Albania with Macedonia and Northern Greece

Our archaeologist guide will meet you in Tirana and introduce you to Kruja, Durres, Apollonia, Saranda, Gjirokastra, Permet, Korça, and Lake Ohrid. The highlight is the UNESCO site of Butrint, where our host Auron Tare, was a founding director.

**\$2290 FORM TIRANA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

MAY 30 - JUNE 9, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Albania.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Albania.html)

### Seven Wonders of Bulgaria

From Sofia to the Black Sea with Kazanluk, Arbanassi, Varna, Plovdiv and Rila Monastery. Learn about the Thracians, Byzantines and medieval Bulgarian cultures from Bulgaria's top guide.

**\$3990 FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

JUNE 9 - 19, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html)

### Traditions and Legends of Romania

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

**\$2990 FROM BUCHAREST AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

JUNE 19 - 30, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Romania.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Romania.html)

### Phi Mu Foundation Presents French Loire River Cruise

Cruise on the stunning new *Loire Princess* from Nantes to the Châteaux of the Loire and UNESCO sites.

**STARTING AT \$2407 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

JUNE 29 - JULY 6, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/France.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/France.html)

### Imperial Capitals & Retreats of Central Europe

Austria, the Czech Republic and East Germany. Spend three wonderful days in Vienna; stop in Cesky Krumlov enroute to Prague. Explore Kutna Hora and Karlovy Vary, Czech treasures. On to Dresden, Berlin and Potsdam with its Sanssouci Palace.

**\$4320 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

JULY 11 - 25, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/CentralEurope.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/CentralEurope.html)

### Holiday Treasures of Russia

Join Ambassador Charles Magee from Moscow to St. Petersburg when the theater is in full swing over Christmas and New Year's.

**FROM JFK VIA FINNAIR**

DECEMBER 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/RussiasBest.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/RussiasBest.html)

### Behind the Iron Curtain - Unveiled

Rare opportunity for students of history to delve into daily life as it was during this controversial period in Bulgaria. Lyuba tells the story of the past, dedicated to the future.

**FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

JULY 23 - AUGUST 3, 2015 • \$2990

OCTOBER 13 - 24, 2015 • \$3640

[SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html)

### Cinderella Turned into Beauty

Bulgaria hosts its once-every-five-year celebration of singing and dancing at the Koprivshtitsa Folklore Festival. A fairy tale story of music and love, gathering musicians, artists and craftsmen to an architecturally restored pastoral setting. Let the curtain come up!

**\$2990 FROM SOFIA AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

AUGUST 4 - 15, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Bulgaria.html)

### Wild Europe to the East

Walk with Lyuba on the wild side of Eastern Europe in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania. Five countries in two weeks!

**\$4640 AIRFARE ADDITIONAL**

OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 7, 2015

[SeriousTraveler.com/Balkans.html](http://SeriousTraveler.com/Balkans.html)



\*ALL DATES AND RATES ARE AS OF OCTOBER 2014 AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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#### Why Travel With TCI?

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

#### Expert Guides

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

#### Life Experiences

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

#### Detailed Brochures

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

#### Personalized Attention

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

#### We Go All Over

Yes, we go to Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. We also go to those much less visited places like Burma, Cuba and Iran - and when they open up again, Libya and Syria.

#### Cultural Visits

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

#### Choose Your Air Arrangements

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

#### Small Groups

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

#### Pre-trip Study Material

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

*Cultural Tours to Better Understand the World and its People*

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