

Read about our fabulous new tour to Ecuador, the Galapagos, the Amazon and Machu Picchu ... see p.24

Travel Scoop

*The Newsmagazine
for Members of
The Travel Society*

Vol. 20, No. 8 October 2002

TALES OF TURKEY

by Ann Wallace

In the early Spring of the year 2001 I paid my third visit to a country that had already become one of my favourites: Turkey. I was going to write this story for you in the Fall of that year, but then 11 September came and went and everything changed. While I remained positive that people would still want to enrich their lives with travel, I didn't know what the final months of that year would bring and didn't want to encourage any of you to any areas that might conceivably become unstable.

Now more than a year has passed and, apart from Americans, most people's travelling patterns are returning to normal. So now I return to my tale of Turkey; a magical, historic land that, probably more than any country in the world, looks in two directions at once ... to embrace the modernism and economic patterns of the west while encouraging liberalism within its eastern, Islamic framework.



Two Turkish girls gain an unusual view of the costumed players in a mehter band (Wallace)

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TravelScoop

The Newsmagazine for Members of
The Travel Society

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October 2002

Vol. 20, No. 8

From your Editor's desk...



Fall is making its flaming progress across our land and I hope you are all out and about exploring somewhere new, even if it's close to home.

It still seems like summer here in Toronto as I write this in the second half of September, so it's hard to be thinking about the gift-giving season (see our books column). But it's not hard to be planning The Travel Society's trips for next year as they all sound so tempting. Nor was it hard to write my story on Turkey for you, for it's such a fascinating country and fabled Istanbul is definitely one of my favourite cities. So whether you like to travel independently, or are tempted by The Travel Society's luxurious and comprehensive tour, I hope you will include Turkey in your plans soon.

Changing topics completely, many of you may not have been aware that a World Ecotourism Summit was held in Québec City in May of this year, with subsequent praise from the World Tourism Organization for the smooth running of the conference. The outcome of the Summit was the Québec Declaration on Ecotourism which can be read on the internet at www.world-tourism.org and then by clicking on Ecotourism. The Declaration reads rather like an "In a perfect world" piece, but it is interesting and let us hope it will come some way towards protecting our planet, preserving traditional cultures and lifting some people out of poverty through tourism.

Another subject change ... our promised article on Hong Kong will now appear in our next issue. Enjoy the fall!

coming in *November*

- *Maui and Molokai*

- *Hong Kong*

- *A little more on Turkey*

Update Items

If Europe is in your plans this fall and you're thinking of travelling between London, Paris or Brussels on Eurostar through the channel Tunnel you can save 20%. Tickets must be booked between 8 October and 22 November for travel between 15 October and 15 December. There are 21 daily departures in either direction between London and Paris (3 hours) and 10 departures between London and Brussels (2 hours, 40 minutes). For reservations call Rail Europe at 1 800 EUROSTAR, visit www.raileurope.com or consult your travel agent.

For those who love to cruise ... Holland America have announced 12 Canadian and New England sailings for 2003, with itineraries ranging from seven to 16 days and departures from Boston, New York and Montreal. All cruises are highlighted by scenic cruising in the Saguenay Fjord and the St. Lawrence River, there are a variety of special shore excursions (become a soldier for a day at the Halifax Citadel or tour Québec City in a horse-drawn carriage and enjoy a gourmet dinner at the Chateau Frontenac) and in addition there are many active shore excursions such as cycling and kayaking. Other destinations include Newport, Lunenburg, Sydney, N.S. (with a tour of the Cabot Trail), Bar Harbor and lots more. For full details see your agent, call 1 877 724 5425 or visit www.hollandamerica.com

The Tourist Office of Spain has launched a new website. Log onto www.spain.info if you are thinking of joining the more than 75 million people that visit Spain very year.

Oops ... a little slip in our exchange rate at the bottom of column 1, page 4 in last month's issue. That cottage in Ireland is *one hundred* and twenty seven Euros per week.

This Month's Winning Scoop

A Hidden Treasure

by Gundi Jeffrey

Mexico is full of wonderful little boutique hotels that are off the beaten track, but offer first rate accommodation, comfort and even adventure. I'd like to tell readers about yet another gem we've recently discovered, La Escondida, which translates into "The Hidden Place" or "Hideaway." We like it so much that we now use it as headquarters for our annual week-long mushroom excursion held in this region for fungi/culinary enthusiasts around the world (see www.mexmush.com).

A former 17th century hacienda devoted to raising fighting bulls (it still has a bull ring carved into the hillside in the back), La Escondida was converted a few years ago into a small hotel on the outskirts of Huamantla, Tlaxcala. This typical Mexican town is nestled into the foothills of La Malinche, the tiny state's largest mountain – and a thankfully extinct volcano. The hotel has recently undergone extensive renovations, adding tennis and squash courts, a lovely indoor pool and spa and – very soon – several new rooms.

Close to nature and one of Mexico's best-known towns for bull-fight aficionados, it is an oasis of tranquility. Set around a small courtyard filled with flowers – someone in the family must adore exotic begonias – birds and a bubbling fountain, the hotel currently has 10 rooms of varying sizes and appointments. All are lovely and comfortable, with antique, colonial furniture, flowered wallpaper and huge windows. Prices run around \$75 a night.

The building, which about 100 years ago acquired a gothic castle look, also has a first-rate restaurant, serving the best Tlaxcaltecan food in the state. Apart from conventional fare, it also includes items such as fried ants' eggs (texture a lot like mush-

Members are Rewarded for Sharing!

TS rewards members for all submissions published.

The Winning Scoop receives a 1-year membership extension.

Your Scoops receive a 3-issue membership extension.

Favourite Places receive a 3-issue membership extension.

Reader Reports receive extensions depending on length.

Submission Guidelines: TS welcomes reader submissions but cannot guarantee they will be used. We reserve the right to edit submissions should they be used. It is very important to include specific travel details: costs, discounts, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, etc., for the benefit of other readers. Submissions can be sent by mail, e-mail: brit@interlog.com or on diskettes.

rooms), maguay worms (very crispy and tasty), filet of beef with huitlacoche (corn fungus) sauce and chicken in pulque sauce (made from fermented maguay cactus juice). But don't forget, I did say it serves conventional fare too!

The hotel is close enough to let you explore the attractions of Huamantla, which happens to have the national puppet museum, the best bullfight museum in the country, a thriving market, a city hall with historical murals and some lovely churches. Or you might want to try a horseback ride into the hills of La Malinche (the hotel has a well-stocked stable), get a guided tour into the mountain and look for mushrooms (in season, of course), or visit some of the picturesque indigenous villages nearby. The hotel is really a great base for exploring the state of Tlaxcala (120 km east of Mexico City), which is virtually virgin territory as far as tourists go.

Of course, it is also in a prime location for enjoying Huamantla's celebrated annual fair in August (usually running the middle three weeks of the month). Although of particular appeal to bull-fight aficionados – there are bullfights virtually every day during the fair, with Mexico's top talent appearing alongside celebrated fighters from Spain – it can be enjoyed for its other activities as well. Artisans come from all over the country to show their wares, food vendors show off their particular specialties, from broiled hot dogs to complicated seafood dishes, all types of music fills the air, there are art exhibits and more.

Of special note are the renowned flower carpets that fill

the street on the night of the procession of the Virgin. Lovingly crafted from flower petals and coloured sawdust, these "carpets" eventually cover most of the streets of the town. Then, there is a procession whereby those elected to do so carry the town's virgin over these carpets, followed by most of the townsfolk, beginning around 2:00 a.m. It's an amazing sight. Best of all, La Escondida is far from the noise of the fair, allowing you to enjoy the fun without losing your sleep.

Contact congenial bilingual manager Javier Zamora at 011 52 247 472 1466 or e-mail him at soltepec@huamantla.podernet.com.mx. He'll do everything he can to make your stay as pleasant and relaxing as possible. 🇲🇽

Your Scoops

Cruises ... some thoughts and a request for information

Are you looking for independent information on cruise ships? There are many web sites and much printed information on cruise destinations but good, *independent* evaluations on the ship is a little harder to find

A knowledgeable travel agent in a firm which specializes in cruising, of course, is a good starter. But in doing research on a planned Tahitian Cruise, we came across two travel books which go into some detail on each cruise ship: *Berlitz Complete Guide to Cruising 2002* (the data is from 2001) and *Frommer's Unofficial Guide to Cruises 2002*. Read the

reviews carefully and you will find useful kernels of information on even the most luxurious cruise ships – i.e. stateroom locations to avoid due to engine noise, engine vibrations, noise from early morning tenders, etc. We were not provided with this information on our first trip on the *Norway* and had unwanted "early morning wake up calls" at several ports. And if you are looking for gourmet food, the Berlitz guide offers excellent information.

But we would also like to enlist the help of *TravelScoop* subscribers! We would appreciate information from anyone who has travelled on the *Paul Gauguin* (Radisson) and *R3* or *R4* (former Renaissance Line, now Princess) or done any cruise in Tahiti. Please let us know at DGFThornhill@rogers.com Thank you!

Dean & Gayle Feltham
Thornhill, ON

A 'Fairmont' in Acapulco, Mexico

If, in the coming chilly months, a getaway to sunnier climes seems to be in order and you see a special to the Fairmont Pierre Marques Hotel in Acapulco, grab it! This is a delightfully intimate, 'boutique' property nestled beside its flashier and bigger sister property the Fairmont Acapulco Princess. I think most *TravelScoop* readers would prefer the smaller property where the rooms and suites are in low-rise villas set in pretty gardens, on its own golf course, where there are few conventioners, and where the atmosphere is calm and peaceful.

In case you've heard bad things about Acapulco, let me hasten to reassure you. Both these Canadian

operated properties are set outside Acapulco on the fine long beach known as Revolcadero in the Diamante area. Yet you'll want to take the 20-minute shuttle into town for that incredible view – especially at night – and for some of the old resort's attractions. Don't miss the famous cliff divers of La Quebrada, the Fort Museum with its interesting history of Acapulco, the House of Masks near the fort, and the bustling *zocolo*. And catch one of the many buses you'll see along the main 'drag' clearly marked 'Caleta' and enjoy lunch at an open-air beachside restaurant with the locals.

And a word of caution about Revolcadero Beach. It tends to be windy and is dangerous for swimming. It's great for a walk, but take your dips in the hotel pool.

The Pierre Marques has a website with a frighteningly high rack rate. It's better to just enter 'pierre marques hotel' in your search engine and you'll get details of various tour operators' specials. Or check out your favourite last-minute site (or ask your agent) and if the price seems good go for it ... it's a luxurious property and a week in Acapulco will surprise you and be just what the doctor ordered in the middle of a Canadian winter!

*Derek Wilson
Toronto, ON*

A Place to Li-Inn

In the December 1999 issue of *TravelScoop*, Editor Ann mentioned the Li-Inn Sleeps B&B, conveniently located near that wonderful museum complex, the Edison-Ford Winter Estates. On a

recent visit I checked it out and found that the charming property has now changed hands. Jim Haas (and his friendly Lassa Apsu, Holly, the property's 'official greeter') have bought the inn and it's now a member of the Superior Small Lodgings of Florida. The five guest rooms are fresh and bright (and I'm happy to report that one is wheelchair accessible) and the full breakfasts are delicious. Prices from US\$75. The property is located at 2135 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers 33901, tel: 239 332 2651, fax: 239 332 8922, e-mail:

li-inn@cyberstreet.com, www.cyberstreet.com/users/li-inn/li-inn.html

*Isobel Warren
Newmarket, ON*



The Li-Inn Sleeps

An Istanbul Hotel

A hotel of note if you are heading to Istanbul is the Armada. It is located in the old city (the Sultanahmet) and is very central, within walking distance of all the major mosques, the Topkapi Palace, and a 15-minute walk to the Grand Bazaar and the Spice market. It is 15 km from the airport and overlooks the Sea of Marmara.

Here there are 110 air-conditioned, Ottoman-style rooms on two levels with cable TV, full bath,

phone, mini-bar and hair dryers. Our room looked out over the Blue Mosque, which was spectacular at night. There is a lovely roof top restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating, looking over the Sea of Marmara on one side and the Blue Mosque on the other.

The foyer of the hotel is huge, all marble with a pond in the middle with 12 resident turtles. There are many seating areas, tea can be bought to you as you read the many papers provided, and you can even have your shoes shined here. The price was C\$146.00 Canadian and included a huge buffet breakfast. The breakfast consisted of many kinds of pastries, some sweet and some not; many breads; huge bowls of yoghurt (the best we have ever eaten) that you garnish with all kinds of fruit and nuts; cereals, fruit; juice coffee or tea and many kinds of cheese. We found the feta in olive oil with spices very good.

The Armada is located at Ahirkapi 34400 Istanbul, Turkey, fax: 212 518 50 60, e-mail info@armadahotel.com.tr <http://www.armadahotel.com.tr>, rates from US\$110.

And another note for readers: there are internet cafes all over Turkey. The cost is about \$1.50 an hour. Our family did think we'd picked up the language quite quickly in Turkey as all the messages came through with the 'I's' changed to 'Y's'. It made for *ynter-estyng* reading!

*Thelma Sampson
Dryden, ON*

(Thelma's account of touring on the south coast of Turkey will appear in next month's edition of TravelScoop – Ed.)

Sometimes, amongst all the helpful, practical information our members send us, we receive a story that sums up the delights and surprises of travel. Here's Jack Collier's account of a dawn on a beach far away.

Strange Happenings in Durban, South Africa

The soft dawn light, rising over the Indian Ocean, peeped through the slit of the hotel curtains. I crawled from my bed and made my way to the window, hoping to see how the sunrise would highlight our splendid beachfront view.

As I stared into the half-light, I noticed a minivan pull up. Out stepped several people, then more people, and then even more. In all, I counted 21 heads. They appeared to be dressed in Indian or Oriental-style clothes. I watched as they slowly made their way out onto the sand, heaped what appeared to be large gym-bags into a pile above the high-water mark and then continued towards the waves.

Suddenly six of the shadowy figures dropped to their knees, facing one another in a full circle with heads bowed. Not one of them moved, but the rest of the group continued on to the ocean. Then, in knee-deep water, they formed a loose oval, lit candles, raised them momentarily to the heavens and then formed a tightly-knit circle. They remained motionless for several minutes, then four men moved away to jam about 15 stakes into the nearby sand.

It was time to dig out my binoculars! The light was increasing and through my glasses I

could see that the stakes were decorated with ribbons and flowers. Then the larger group waded, fully clothed, into the choppy water to chest depth. The lit candles were held high as a full circle was again formed and the group swayed in unison for a further five or ten minutes.

Suddenly there appeared to be a scuffle amongst the group and I could hear someone screaming loud enough for me to hear about 1,000 feet away and 22 storeys up. Through the glasses I could make out a person being systematically dunked into the water. When their ordeal had ended, a second person got the same treatment, and then two more. Then the tight circle was again formed, extinguished candles were re-lit and heads were bowed. I suspect some kind of baptismal ritual had taken place.

Then a stirring from the six on the beach caught my attention. Standing, they too headed for the ocean, fully clothed, and joined the rest in the water. They formed a close huddle for about five minutes, then disbanded and straggled up the beach in ones or twos. They headed for a number of open-air showers, where they all shrugged off their wet clothing and proceeded to wash themselves ... much to the astonishment of passing early morning joggers and walkers!

Then bags were gathered from the pile, opened, and dry clothing was donned. Several of the men gathered up the ornamental stakes, ceremoniously dunked them into the ocean and carried them up the beach where two other men wrapped highly coloured cloth around them (the stakes, not the men!). The bundles were then secured on the roof rack of the van

while all the other participants stood around laughing and talking in small groups. Then, after squeezing themselves back into the van, they drove away!

Thinking that was the end of two hours of intrigue and excitement, I started to turn away from the window. But no! Not 50 yards from where the original 'six' had been huddled I noted a dark spot in the sand. Probably a blob of seaweed or something washed up by the tide, I thought. But no again! The blob began to move. Lo and behold, first a head, then an arm and then another arm appeared from under the sand. Soon, up sat a fully-clothed man! When he stood up, I could see that he had a suit on. He brushed the sand from his hair and made a bee-line for the showers. Off came the suit and shirt, he enjoyed a good wash, then it was back on with the clothes and he walked away down the boardwalk, jauntily beginning a new day.

Thus it was that Gloria and I spent our first exciting morning in Durban, South Africa!

*Jack Collier,
Queen Charlotte Islands, BC*

www.thetravelsociety.com

Our website is now up and fully operational. To access the site the password will be up-dated monthly and will appear on the back page of your TravelScoop within your address box.

continued from page 1

I've travelled, now, in many parts of Turkey; covering its vast distances, and arriving in a variety of climates, by air, bus and boat. I've been alone there a great deal and have always felt safe. Turkey has long been a favourite destination of Europeans, especially the British. Of course all nationalities are to be found in the popular beach areas, but it's not unusual to come across visitors in even the most remote areas: perhaps historians or archaeologists, who may have made the exploration of Turkey's rich historic sites a retirement mission. Yes, there's always somebody interesting to talk to here.

No visit to Turkey is complete without a stay in **Istanbul**, one of my favourite cities. As capital of one of the world's great empires for over 1,500 years there's no shortage of important and wonderful sites. It's also modern and sophisticated. I've stayed, now, in several charming little hotels in the old **Sultanamet**

area, as well as in the towering **Ceylan Inter-Continental**, with its "must be the best in Europe" views across the Golden Horn to the ancient city, across the Bosphorus to Asia and down the Sea of Marmara to the open ocean. On being shown into my room here, when attending a tourism conference, I couldn't stop myself from execut-

ing a little dance of joy that my work had allowed me to sleep in such an unforgettable room! (If you plan to stay here request a room on what is called the Bosphorus side.) The **Hilton** also stands nearby, in extensive gardens and with superb views of its own. It was the first Hilton built outside the United States and is still known as one of the best in the chain.

Details of Istanbul's hotels could fill a guide book of their own. If you do plan to travel there independently let me recommend Fodor's pocket ***Istanbul: what to see and do if you can't stay long*** guide (C\$12.50). It will certainly help to keep you busy for a week or more. I used the list of accommodation in this little volume to check out many hotels and found the brief descriptions accurate. Before you make your



The Ayasofia Pansiyons in Istanbul (Wallace)

decision you should bear in mind that all the major tourist attractions – certainly those to be seen on a first visit – lie in the old city. This area is home to a wide variety of appealing, small, privately-owned hotels, the major exception being the fine **Four Seasons**, located in the old prison building beside the Topkapi Palace and the Aya Sofya. Most of the other big modern hotels lie across the Golden Horn in the newer part of town, which, nonetheless, does have some attractions of its own and is worth a visit. But if you stay in the modern area you will be faced with a 15- or 20-minute taxi ride over to the major sites (**Topkapi**, the **Blue Mosque**, **Aya Sofya**, the **Archaeology Museum**, the **Hippodrome**, the **Mosque of Suleyman**, the **Sunken Cisterns**, the **Grand** and the **Spice Bazaars** and so on).

So ... which old-city properties have I stayed in or seen? The **Armada** is quite large for this area and

is in a fine location overlooking the sea with a great terrace restaurant. I've stayed there and enjoyed my old-fashioned Turkish-style room overlooking the ancient city wall and the ocean. It's also the recommendation of *TravelScoop* subscriber Thelma Sampson, so I'll leave it to her to describe (see p. 6).

The **Ayasofia Pansiyons** would also be a memorable choice. This property is a row of restored 19th century wooden houses situated in a pedestrian-only cobbled street right against the outer wall of Topkapi Palace with view of the Aya Sofya. They also have another old property – **Konuki Evi** – set in a pretty garden across the street. (All contact details can be found at the end of this article.)

Around the corner stands the **Yesil Ev** (Green House), another fine restoration project and a favourite hotel of many, with its Ottoman style décor, its pretty courtyard and its quite spectacular location in a quiet park between the Blue Mosque and the Aya Sofya.

A little less expensive is the **Celal Sultan**, an old town house that has been restored and decorated

with antiques and kilims. It has a very warm and welcoming atmosphere and the restaurant is very popular. Its rooftop terrace and many of the 32 rooms have fine old-city views. The **Celal Sultan** is very popular with Canadians ... I actually met a couple from Vancouver in the lobby. When I dropped in, manager Mustafa Ciplak greeted me very enthusiastically but could not show me a room as they were all occupied. But he welcomed me to look around the attractive public rooms and has reminded me by e-mail that he would be delighted to welcome me back to stay one day. The **Ibrahim Pasa Oteli** is another delightful, renovated house with a rooftop terrace overlooking the Blue Mosque, though it's worth noting here that the rooms are very small and quite basic, although they do have a certain appeal. Another charmer is the **Hotel Empress Zoë**, located in the heart of Sultanahmet. There's a delightful little courtyard here and, again, a terrace bar. All the guest rooms are accessed by a spiral staircase and, again, some are very small.

I – and others – have written about Istanbul's highlights in the pages of *TravelScoop* many times before. Those articles, together with your guidebook and/or your real guide if you are on a tour, will lead you in all the right directions. But having spent a considerable amount of time in Istanbul I do have a few suggestions to add to your itinerary.

Don't be tempted to pass on the **Archaeology Museum**, for it's very fine and the highlight – the Alexander Sarcophagus, one of the masterpieces of antiquity – is magnificent. This is not, in fact, Alexander's sarcophagus, but that of Sidonian King Abdalonymos, but it bears that designation because handsome Alexander is clearly depicted in a battle scene on one side. And don't miss the wooden chests in the Egyptian Gallery which contain small models of people. They were 'substitute servants'; the chest would have been placed in the tomb of a prosperous man to ensure that he would have servants and slaves to look after him in the afterlife. Here, also, is what is considered the world's oldest (2037-2029 BC) love poem, carved in Sumerian on a terra cotta table. This museum won the Council of Europe Museum Prize in 1993.

Do make sure you visit Istanbul's **Underground Cisterns**. On my earlier visits to Istanbul I hadn't

included these in my plans, thinking that they would be rather miserable and uninteresting. In fact they are quite wonderful, with their soaring columns, classical music, constantly dripping water and eerie lighting. And while you're in the **Blue Mosque** I hope your guide whispers to you the fact that recently *one*, just *one*, Iznik tile fetched £546,000 at auction in Sotheby's, London!

Just a couple of blocks from the Cisterns, up busy **Divanyolu Caddesi** (which you can't miss because it's the busy road with the noisy trams) book lovers will enjoy a visit to **Galeri Kayseri**, known as the English Bookshop and reputed to be the world's best bookstore for works on Turkey. It's small, but it does indeed carry a wonderful selection of books on Turkish travel, history, art, architecture and so on and I have made a visit – and purchases – on every trip to Istanbul. It's at No. 58, across the road from McDonald's.

Divanyolu Caddesi leads up to the **Grand Bazaar**, a 'must' for every visitor to Istanbul.

However, I was told that the rent in the bazaar is very high and most items can be found more cheaply elsewhere. And yes, the touts in the tourist

areas, selling postcards, guide books and taxi rides and those outside carpet shops, are a nuisance ... especially to women alone. "Where you from ... Française, Eeenglish, American?" Don't grin, but learn to bear it; they're harmless and only trying to make a living. Elsewhere, alone in restaurants and hotels for example, I was always treated with great respect.

In spite of my encouragement to stay in the Old City area, a trip across the Golden Horn to the "new city" is a must. Of course most of this area isn't new at all, there are many historic areas and buildings there. But it is also where businesses, modern hotels and fine residential areas are located. You can walk across the **Galata Bridge**, enjoying the views, and then ride the mini-subway – the **Tünel** – up the hill. At the top of the Tünel there's a quaint little arcade of antique stores and little atmospheric restaurants. Charming Hacer Gündoğdu is owner of both the Artrium store and the Keve restaurant here and she loves to talk to Istanbul visitors. It's a great place to pause for browsing and a drink and snack. It's hard, here, to believe you're not in a city like Paris. Nearby

The Alexander Sarcophagus, one of the masterpieces of antiquity, is magnificent.

is the historic **Pera Palace Hotel**. If, like me, hotels that have seen a great deal of history intrigue you, you'll enjoy a visit here. And as you walk on up **Istikal Cadessi**, Istanbul's famous pedestrian street you'll feel you could be anywhere! Clothes, books and record stores, fast-food outlets, ice-cream parlours, crowded arcades, restaurants, jeans-clad young people ... they're all here. This road leads in **Taksim Square**, an unremarkable but busy space that is a central point in this area. If you wish to rest weary feet, the patisserie on the ground floor of the **Marmara Hotel** is very pleasant and popular with smart 'ladies who lunch' and other such types.

Over on this side, on the shores of the Bosphorus, stands another of Istanbul's highlights: the **Dolmabahçe Palace**, lavish home of the last sultans of the Ottoman Empire and later the home of Atatürk, who died here in 1938. The sultan under whose orders this palace was erected in 1853 instructed his architect to build a palace that would "surpass any other palace anywhere in the world". Perhaps if you've seen Versailles you may dispute this, but the Dolmabahçe, under construction for 13 years, sure comes close. It was the first western-style palace in the Ottoman world and its 285 rooms cover 15,000 square metres. They contain gold leaf, crystal, 600 paintings by European and Turkish artists, Limoges fireplaces, Turkish carpets and the sultan's personal treasury: silver articles, ceremonial swords, china, glass, gold items, a porcelain tea service set in gem-studded gold, opal wine glasses, a piano that was a gift from Napoleon, polar bear rugs from the Czar, plus massage and bathing rooms entirely lined with carved Egyptian alabaster. When you're just beginning to think you can't take any more opulence you reach the Ceremonial Hall, revered by modern Turks as the room where Atatürk lay in state. The Irish crystal chandelier here was a gift from Queen Victoria.



My driver gathers some mimosa for me (Wallace)

Beautiful **Yildiz Park**, once the private garden of the Palace, is nearby, providing a quiet respite from the busy city. The **Ciragan Palace Hotel**, probably Istanbul's most luxurious, is the next place of interest on the Bosphorus shore. What a location if you have deep pockets, with its pool right on the water's edge. Drop in for a look around and a drink.

Pages in this article are filling up and here I am still in Istanbul! And I haven't mentioned the not-to-be-missed experience of having a Turkish bath and massage in a historic bath house (two of the most famous – with guest lists that include kings and kaisers, Franz Liszt and Florence Nightingale – are **Cagalugluhamami** and **Cemberlitas Bath**, both near the Grand Bazaar, where the 'full treatment' will set you back about US\$20 and leave you feeling euphoric. For a peek log onto www.cagalugluhamami.com.tr and/or www.cemberlitashamami.com.tr), nor lunch in romantic **Maiden's Tower**, nor the ferries that criss-cross all the waterways and are a perfect means of exploring. If your time is short you may decide to take a Bosphorus cruise, or you can make your own way via ferry, crossing from Europe to Asia and back and alighting at the towns that take your fancy. If you can, travel quite far north on the European side, leave the ferry at **Sariyer** and walk south along the shore until you reach the **Sadberk Hanim Museum**, an old mansion that houses the art collection of Sadberk Hanim,

deceased widow of an extremely rich Istanbul businessman. The artefacts are well-worth seeing and it's interesting to be able to gain access to one of these old mansions that line the Bosphorus.

Another worthwhile ferry ride is over to one of the **Princes Islands** in the Sea of Marmara, a trip which takes about an hour. I disembarked at **Büyükkada** and had a wonderful day. I walked and admired the splendid Victorian houses, built – and no doubt still owned – by wealthy Istanbul families and, when my feet tired,

I hired one of the horse-drawn carriages for a circle tour. These carriages are not only for tourists; cars are not allowed on the islands and so the locals, too, use this form of transportation. My driver was charming and when I indicated the beauty of the mimosa blooming everywhere (it was early March) he stopped his horse, climbed a wrought-iron fence and picked me a bunch! Such are the memories of this fabled city.

All the above excursions can easily be made with the help of the little Fodor's guide mentioned above, which has clear maps and transportation information.

But let us leave Istanbul, for you – like me – will want to explore further afield in this country that has so much to offer.

Cappadocia is high on the wish list of most travellers to Turkey, and with good reason. I love the introduction to the souvenir guide, by Ozan Sagdic which I bought there: "Cappadocia is a geological poem written by time; by millions of years of wind and water sweeping or softly sliding by ... giving fan-

tafastic shape to a world seemingly not quite of this planet." In a world where superlatives are commonplace (and hard to live up to), Cappadocia certainly lives up to its reputation of being one of the most amazing places that I have ever seen. Not only is an area of many hundred square kilometres covered with a famed, eerie, lunar landscape but it also offers astounding underground cities that could house thousands; churches, wineries and homes built into the unique rocks, the fascinating **Goreme Open Air Museum** and many historic villages and towns. Yet it is the natural landscape that predominates in the memory ... a fairytale landscape, in fact "the most fantastic of all landscapes" as recorded Jesuit scholar Père Guillaume who discovered the rock churches in 1907.

Visitors wishing to explore Cappadocia can fly to the nearest airport – Kayseri – or can reach the area by

road (within three to four hours from Ankara, for example). Visitors can see much of the region by driving around, but it's a good idea to get off the road and hike or horse-back ride if you can. I hiked here early in March, it was perfect weather for exercise, but still cool with puddles of snow still lying in sheltered, shady areas. If you're not with a tour I can recommend Argeus Tourism & Travel, located in Urgüp, who are experts on the area and can put together any kind of tour for you. Adnan from Argeus led our hiking group and pointed out so many wonderful things as we wandered through fairyland.

For a unique experience when in this region, you can stay in one of several cave hotels. One of these, also in **Urgüp**, is the luxurious **Yunak Evleri Hotel**. If you have internet access visit www.yunak.com, click on 'Magazine Comments' and scroll down. You will soon come to a familiar logo – that of *TravelScoop*, followed by an article by yours truly!



The Cappadocia landscape is unique (Wallace)

Read to the end and you will see the words "Special to The Globe and Mail". That, in fact, was where the article appeared – in January of this year – but I guess when I sent a copy to the hotel they were confused and copied our letterhead! (If you have no internet access you can find out more about Yunak Evleri by faxing 011 90 384 341 69 24.

For a unique dining experience, the **Old Greek House** in Urgüp specializes in home-made Turkish food, so why it's named that, is a mystery! You'll sit Turkish style on the floor ... fun and delicious too.

Next stop on my itinerary was the south. I flew to **Izmir** – ancient Smyrna – and enjoyed a treat in the luxurious **Hilton**, where my room offered a splendid view of the vast bay. On the evening of my arrival, the manager of the Hilton – Daniel Durand – was hosting a small cocktail party in the stylish rooftop bar. Upon

hearing he had a travel writer staying in the property, he graciously included me and there, overlooking the lights sweeping round Izmir Bay, I found myself talking of distant Canada ... because both Mr and Mrs Durand come from Québec!

The next day I set out to explore some of the area's renowned sites. Snow may have been still visible in Cappadocia, but here the late winter sun was warm and gentle and the countryside was splendid with the blossoms of the region's many fruit trees. A 90-km drive west through this gentle landscape will bring the traveller to **Sardis**, once the capital of the Lydian empire, where the **Temple of Artemis** towers above the undulating hills and grazing sheep. The Ionic capitals here are said to be some of the finest in the world.

Of course fabled **Ephesus**, one of the world's greatest archaeological sites was on my itinerary. Again it can be reached in a day trip from Izmir. If you can, pay a visit to the nearby town of **Selçuk** before your visit, for the Archaeological Museum there houses an impressive collection of statues and other artefacts recovered during the excavations and adds immeasurably to the visit to the site itself. (And it's in this museum that you'll see that famous little statue of the priapic man! Postcards are available with which to embarrass your friends!)

Don't leave **Selçuk** too quickly, for on a hillside nearby lies an important place of pilgrimage. It is recorded that St. John brought the Virgin Mary to Ephesus for safety after the death of Christ and that she spent the rest of her life – possibly 23 years – in a small house here on the slopes of **Mount Koressos**. Today tourists join clerics to walk solemnly through the pine-scented gardens to peek into the small **House of Mary**, who is revered not only by Christians, but also by Muslims, for Mary is mentioned 43 times in the Koran.



The Celsus Library at Ephesus (Wallace)

The history and descriptions of **Ephesus** – one of the world's most magnificent and important archaeological sites - fill many volumes, so I will merely urge you to go and give an important tip: timing! I was told that the site becomes extremely crowded – and hot – during the summer months, when coach parties and cruise ship passengers descend on the site in droves. If you can't avoid a high-summer visit, go as early as you can in the morning or later in the afternoon. Shoulder seasons are, of course, best. I was there on a damp early March morning and the site was almost empty and quite wonderful. Yes ... that is my photograph of the deserted Celsus Library, not a postcard!

Although both Sardis and Ephesus are good day

trips from Izmir, it is also possible to take in both in a longer, circular route and include the 'frozen falls' of **Pamukkale** in your travels too. This will take a minimum of two days. Pamukkale is undergoing changes at present, as attempts are being made to preserve the falls from damage caused by visitors and nearby devel-

opment. It is no longer possible to wade freely over the area and hotels that once diverted the water are being closed. I have to admit that I didn't find Pamukkale as thrilling as I had hoped, but the major ruins of Heirapolis stand nearby and again the countryside is beautiful, so if you have time do take the longer tour.

Again our pages are filling up. And again I've fallen short of telling you all I enjoyed in this area, especially a visit to the Turkmen 'Art & Rug' Weaving Centre, in the countryside on the road from Ephesus to **Kusadasi**, where I saw silk being spun and dyed and all aspects of carpet making, including the gifted woman who knots their finest carpets ... at 900 knots per square inch!

If you are travelling independently and would like

a tour with a guide in the Izmir area, I can highly recommend Ilknur Cankes. I travelled with charming Ilknur for two days. She taught me a great deal of history in that time and we enjoyed many far-ranging conversations. Ilknur travels widely all over the world, but especially in the U.S., promoting her country through the Turkish Ministry of Culture with lectures on the art of weaving and carpet making. As well as being a freelance guide, Ilknur is also a partner in a travel company and so is able to give visitors all kinds of assistance pertaining to travelling in her area. If you would like to talk with her, her telephone number is 011 90 232 463 56 81, fax: 011 90 232 464 44 29 or she can be contacted via e-mail at ilknurcankes@superonline.com. She will be delighted if she knows you've reached her via *TravelScoop*!

I have a dream that when I retire I will spend a year in Turkey. I will rent a little apartment with a wonderful view in Istanbul and have family and friends to stay and show them round that magical city. And in between I will take my car, or board one of the many modern buses that traverse the country, and set off on further adventures of my own. The only problem I envisage is that a year won't be *nearly* long enough!

A few details ...

As I've written many times before, Turkey is an easy country to explore independently. However, for a first visit many choose a tour and having a knowledgeable guide of this history-rich land is an advantage. Here at *TravelScoop* we are delighted to know fellow Turkey-lover Ron Waldie, who has put together a fabulous, luxurious tour just for The Travel Society. The details are on page 23 and I know Ron and know this will be a wonderful trip.

For those who decide to make their own arrangements, here are details of the accommodations mentioned in this article (country code is 011 90):

Ayasofya Pansiyons, Rates from US\$120. Fax: 212 513 36 69, e-mail: ayapans@escortnet.com.tr, www.ayasofyapensions.com. This property is owned by the Touring & Automobile Association of Turkey, which is involved in the restoration and preservation of many establishments in the country. You can also view this property, as well as **Konuki Evi** – and **Yesil Ev**, see below – on the association's website www.turing.org.tr, though on that site for some reason the houses are list-

ed under *So?ukçe?me Soka?i*. Also on this site are images of the Cultural Centre that I visited on Büyükada Island. All these images will help you to see what's in store for you when you travel in Turkey.)

Yesil Ev, Rates from US\$160. Fax: 212 517 67 80, e-mail: yesilevhotel@superonline.com.tr or www.turing.org.tr as mentioned above.

Celal Sultan Hotel, fax: 212 522 9724, e-mail: mustafa@celalsultan.com (Mustafa is the helpful manager and he will answer your e-mails very promptly. Rates are from US\$70, and if you reserve for a minimum of four nights you will enjoy free pick-up from the airport.) www.celalsultan.com

Ibrahim Pasa Oteli, rates from US\$80. Fax: 212 518 4457, www.all-hotels.com/a/tkpasha/tkpasha.htm e-mail: pasha@ibm.net,

Hotel Empress Zoe, rates from US\$70. Fax: 212 518 56 99, e-mail: emzoe@ibm.net www.emzoe.com

Note: As is usual in many older European hotels, single rooms are available in most of the above properties for those who would like them. They are, on average, about US\$20 cheaper. Cheaper prices can probably be negotiated outside the high summer season, when so many Europeans flock to Turkey.

The Hilton, Izmir, is located in a sophisticated section of town with great views. (Week-end rates about US\$130.) Fax: 232 441 22 77, e-mail: izmhitwsal@hilton.com, www.hilton.com

Breakfast in Turkey: Breakfasts are usually included in the hotel rates and they are very nice ... great bread, fabulous yoghurt, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, olives, out-of-this-world fruit preserves and honey and often bowls of nuts and dried fruits.

And while on the subject of **food**, generally you should find it excellent: fragrant stews, lots of fish, beautiful fruits and vegetables, exotic candies, pastries and puddings, *ayran* – a delicious yoghurt drink, excellent local wines and, of course, coffee and tea, tea, tea offered everywhere you go!

Climate: the shoulder seasons are definitely the best times to visit Turkey, although the size of the country means that temperatures vary widely at any one time. It may be snowing in Istanbul while the fruit blossoms are blooming on the coast in the south. But it can be very cold in some areas in winter, and very hot in the summer.

Important ... visas are required for Canadians visiting Turkey. These are obtainable when you arrive at Istanbul Airport ... you will need US\$45 in cash,

A VISIT TO CHINA (PART II)

by Ann Wallace

We have arrived in Chonquin and left our Yangtze River cruise boat, taking many happy memories with us. The weather is warm with weak sunshine today. Our bus was awaiting us at the top of the river bank, where we met our Chonquin guide Christina. Her English was the best yet (apparently she teaches at the University here) and soon she was telling us all about Chonquin as we made our way through the steep streets to the zoo. With a population of about 13 million, Chonquin is one of the largest cities in China. Built as it is on the steep hillsides surrounding the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing Rivers it comes as no surprise to notice that this city is without the cyclists that are so ubiquitous in China! Instead it offers seemingly efficient public transportation and a system of elevators, escalators, cable cars or steps cut into the hillsides providing access to the different levels.

As we approach the famous Chonquin Zoo Christina starts to tell us about its most eminent inhabitants – the giant pandas. Great hilarity erupts as she describes the physical and motivational problems pandas have when mating (or not) and Christina herself almost cries with laughter as she explains that movies have even been made to try to show the unwilling creatures the way. “Panda porn,” a few of us shout in unison!

We walk through the pretty zoo with some degree of trepidation for Christina has warned us that the two residents pandas – mother and three-year-old son – are not always visible. But oh! ... we are in luck. Mama is on the prowl, while son ChinChin is leaning back

against a rocky cliff enjoying his luncheon of bamboo. A great occasion for Kodak shareholders! We could not have wished for a better viewing and enjoy the ample time we have to watch and photograph these unique creatures. Once we have had our fill of the pandas we wander to other sections of the zoo, which is spacious and well-vegetated with good space for the animals. The Siberian tigers are a big draw too and many of us stop to appreciate the many birds and unusual flowers.



ChinChin enjoying his lunch (Wallace)

The attractive Chong-quin Art gallery is located in the zoo grounds and that is our next stop. We are greeted by an artist, invited to take a seat around a table laden with pens, brushes, paints and paper where we enjoy a short talk about the techniques and philosophy of Chinese art. Afterwards there is plenty of time to wander through the gallery rooms. Some of us just enjoy looking at the works, but several in our group make significant purchases after varying degrees of haggling over price.

We enjoy driving on through the streets of Chongquin to our lunchtime restaurant. This appears to be

a lively and prosperous city where the streets are lined with trees and the people are the most fashionably dressed we have seen so far. Our bus driver is constantly thwarted by massive construction sites but he is excellent – and patient – and we enjoy waving to the children in neighbouring buses when we are held up. After lunch and a visit to the People’s Great Hall we have time to explore the city centre on our own. For those who do not fancy an hour or so of walking there

is the offer of a massage or reflexology session, which a few accept, while others enjoy watching the local scene in the little park close to the bus.

Our next stop is to be another highlight among so many ... Xi'an is beckoning, so later in the day it's off to the airport for our one-hour flight. Upon arrival, we are met by Eric – our first male guide – who also speaks excellent English. We identify our suitcases efficiently and then are off for Xi'an central, listening to Eric's knowledgeable commentary as we go. Our hotel – the Grand New World – is very 'cool' and almost Japanese in style; I am more than pleased with my trendy room with its black, white and grey décor.

For some reason I had thought that Xi'an had achieved notoriety largely because of the discovery of the terracotta warriors, but I could not have been more wrong. Here I am to learn that human habitation in the region dates back 6,000 years, that Shaanxi Province

was once the centre of Chinese civilization and that Xi'an itself once laid claim, along with Rome and Constantinople, to be the world's greatest city. Our first stop this morning is at the elegant, world-class Shaanxi History Museum, which opened in 1991. Illustrious visitors such as the

Emperor and Empress of Japan and former U.S. President Bush have already paid visits here. The galleries, with English signage, are arranged chronologically by dynasty and thus provide an excellent overview of Chinese history as well as art. I would have liked a whole day here. We did, however, have time for quite a leisurely look at the major galleries and Eric's descriptions were outstanding. I bought the museum catalogue in the large gift store and will enjoy remembering, many years hence, the priceless things I saw here.

We are getting excited about our visit to the Army of Terracotta Warriors, but must be patient. First we are to pay a visit to the factory where reproduction model warriors are made. What an industry! We learn

something about the creation of the originals, though this information is mere conjecture as the creators of the original warriors were killed when their work was done so that their skills could not be used in the employment of another emperor, nor passed on. Now we watch to-day's craftspeople at work making the thousands of models for the gift shop, we make purchases and take photos in the store and pose outside for more photos with our heads poking out of a headless warrior!

Lunch comes next, then we're off on the one-hour drive through the countryside in gentle sunshine to the site of the 'real' warriors. A long, wide avenue of vendors leads up to the site entrance, but once inside it is quiet and so pleasant, with gardens and trees and wide walkways. It's also impressive ... a vast complex of museum buildings set against a backdrop of distant hills. There's a fine museum in addition to the three

enormous modern buildings that cover the pits where the thousands of warriors were found and where excavation and restoration work continues. Only a fraction of the work has been done and is expected to continue for decades as it is thought the area will yield more sites. First we watched one of those 360° movies which reconstructed



At the Xi'an Warrior gift shop (Wallace)

the incredible story of these warriors and then we proceeded to the first of the pit buildings. Eric explained a great deal and answered all our questions as we wandered on the observation decks surrounding the exhibits. This is a highlight for me and many others in our group. I kept trying to imagine the emotions of so many people: the artists who created these larger-than-life-size warriors, the Emperor Qin Shihuang who ordered this lifeless force to guard him in death, the farmers who discovered the first pieces of terracotta while digging a well in 1974 and the archaeologists who were subsequently called to what was to become one of the most important archaeological sites in the world.

The illiterate farmer who made the discovery now

sits in the museum gift shop every day and signs copies of the illustrated site guide. The never-ending book signing! What a twist of fate changed his life forever. Unfortunately he was ill on the day of our visit, but George and Eric somehow arranged for our books to be signed and delivered to our hotel rooms later.

We spent a total of three hours with the warriors. What a great afternoon! Back in Xi'an we had time before dinner to relax or to walk along the pleasant street where our hotel is located. Yes, we'd been walking most of the afternoon, but our delicious dumpling dinner is on the itinerary for this evening, so every bit of exercise helps. And after dinner our bus took us on to the theatre for Xi'an's famous Dynasty Show, an exotic spectacle of light, colour, movement and music that was enjoyed by all of us and provided those with good camera lenses some memorable shots.

We are to see some of Xi'an's other sites this morning: Xi'an's old city walls and the Big Goose Pagoda. Pretty gardens surround this Qing Dynasty temple pagoda which rises, leaning slightly, 64 metres from the top of a small hill. The structure has been restored many times and its history is important. It was originally built in 652AD to house the Buddhist scriptures brought to China from India by monk Xuan Zang. Upon his return from his travels he commenced his life work – translating the scriptures into Chinese and thus setting the scene for the rise of Buddhism in China.

We lunch at a good airport hotel and soon we are in the air for our two-hour flight to Hangzhou. There we are met by local guide Jimmy who is to accompany us for the rest of the tour. Our hotel – The Sunny – is located in a busy city street and, with free time before dinner, we are soon off for a walk and some shopping. Many in our group have made a considerable number of purchases by now and cheap extra

suitcases are needed. These are easily found for about C\$10 in a cluster of tiny shops close to our hotel.

Tonight is the night for our western-style dinner. This turns out to be an elegant buffet in the Sunny Hotel. Tonight we sit at smaller tables, choose from a wide array of dishes – many of them seafood prepared before our eyes – and help ourselves to an unlimited supply of local beer. Everyone seems to enjoy this departure from the large, round table scenario and a good time is had by all.

The Sunny Hotel's breakfast is also very nice and we enjoy it before setting off to the Lingyin Monastery, followed by a drive through misty green hills to the tea plantation that is next on our itinerary. Hangzhou certainly is set in an attractive part of China and we love the plantation visit, where we are shown the laborious process of drying the tea by hand before entering a conference-style room for a talk and a taste of Dragon Well, "the best green tea in the world". On hearing of its many "good-for-you" properties a large number of us buy some.

After lunch it's time to relax as we embark on our traditionally-styled boat for a gentle cruise across West Lake, one of Hangzhou's scenic spots. It is warm now after some earlier rain and at times a gentle mist shrouds the lake, adding beauty to the surround-

ing hills and the islands dotting the lake. We enjoy watching the many vacationing Chinese strolling around the perimeter of the lake and crossing the quaint bridges or out on boats themselves, some of them on small gondola-styled craft suitable for a family or small group with tea or a picnic being served. Everyone waves.

The next day we have a free morning. A chance to sleep in a little, to have a leisurely breakfast, to make a few purchases or find an ATM and then to prepare for the next stage on our trip. This consists of a three-hour drive to our next destination – Suzhou. We leave Hangzhou on good roads and pass through a few drea-



We are shown how the tea is dried by hand (Wallace)

ry industrial areas before reaching farmlands, most of which are growing mulberry trees to support this area's silk industry. We are surprised at the size and apparent luxury of many of the farmers' houses that we see ... many are four-storeys of 'over-the-top' architecture, complete with columns, porticoes, turrets and all kinds of stone embellishments.

Suzhou is famed for its gardens and I can certainly vouch for the beauty of these. (It was the Suzhou Garden Administration which chose Vancouver from over 50 proposed North American sites for the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden that is now a major Vancouver attraction.) Our first stop was the aptly-named Garden for Lingering In, more a work of art than a garden, where architecture, water, rocks, plants and trees are combined in a h a r m o n i o u s whole. This is silk country and our next stop is at an embroidery academy. We've already seen exquisitely sewn things from the past in the museums we have visited and now we see that the skills continue to this day.

We are shown how the young artists prepare their threads and create designs, and we also learn of their daily routines with long breaks throughout the day to rest and protect their eyes. What astounds us most are the double-sided embroideries, not merely fine works that are the same on the both sides, which are amazing enough, but also some that are *different* on each side. It was explained how this is done, but we are still almost dumbfounded.

The following morning surmised that Suzhou's famous gardens must bring many Japanese tourists, as the excellent buffet breakfast at the Bamboo Grove Hotel included many Japanese offerings. I don't usually have sushi and smoked salmon for breakfast, so enjoyed them this morning! A visit to an exquisite bonsai garden was on the agenda for this morning, followed by a visit to Tiger Hill and Hanshan Temple, site of the lucky bells. The Silk Factory was the next place

to fascinate us. We were escorted into a smart reception room and given a talk on silk: the life cycle of the silkworm, how the silk thread is harvested and how to recognize the real thing from imitations. We then went into the factory where we watched the skilled women sort the cocoons and operate the spinning machines. Of course there was a gift shop, but here there was more to watch as we were fascinated by the four women who pulled squares of 'by-product' silk into much larger squares, layering them as they worked and finally adroitly placing them inside covers. Voilà ... silk duvets. Many in our group treated themselves to one of these luxurious items. (The king size was approximately C\$120 and shipping home to Canada is easily arranged.) The Silk Factory is quite the tourist complex.

We were told we were walking to our luncheon restaurant, and soon discovered it was a very fine place adjoining the factory where we had a most delicious meal.

We had been on our afternoon bus journey for about an hour when we reached the outskirts of



The bonsai gardens of Suzhou (Wallace)

Shanghai ... the last destination on our trip. It is no exaggeration to say that the sight of this city is literally jaw-dropping. First of all, there are miles and miles of elevated motorways that soar over the city, all woven into a complex but efficient road system. These are lined every inch of the way with flower boxes and, come night-time, we will discover they are lit with neon blue lights. Every mile or so there rise clusters of skyscrapers the size of Toronto ... and we aren't even downtown yet! If there was ever a city that looked like something out of the future this is it.

But our destination is the old Chinese city, which turns out, as we had hoped, to be everyone's idea of urban China in olden days. It's a maze of shops and street vendors, restaurants and food stalls; the buildings display intricate Asian architecture; red lanterns, flags and banners hang everywhere and the jostling crowds and street entertainers complete the

atmosphere. Some respite can be found from the crowds in the adjoining Yu Yuan Gardens, not only a garden complex but also a beautiful old house that once belonged to a wealthy government official in the Ming Dynasty. Once through the gardens George gave us time to explore the lively old city on our own. We all met outside Starbucks (where some in the group had enjoyed a quick coffee fix) before walking to our dinner restaurant. This was in the enormous Shanghai Zi Jin City Restaurant, on the fifth floor of the Zi Jin City Department Store, with time to shop afterwards.

There's a full day in Shanghai ahead of us the next day. First we are driven across the Yangtze River to the Pudong Development Zone ... Shanghai's newest business and hotel area that is rising out of the slums and factories of the past. We are amazed at the new development, at the often-strange modern architecture here and at the carefully tended gardens and wide landscaped roadways. Back on the opposite side of the river our bus leaves us close to the Bund, that famous – and infamous – embankment which has seen so much of Shanghai's colourful history. Today it is full of happy Chinese tourists taking photographs of their children on the lion statues, buying balloons and ice cream and waiting to board one of the boats for a river cruise. Again we are given time to explore alone. I am a lover of historic old hotels, and the art deco Peace Hotel, considered by many to be the most famous hotel in China, certainly fits that bill. So I cross the road and enter the stately lobby, peek into the famous bar where the Old Jazz Band performs every night, ride the elevators to the roof garden and take some photos and then discover there's a bookstore. It's up a narrow flight of stairs and is like a private library set in a gallery overlooking the lobby. The books are wonderful: coffee table books on many aspects of the city, glorious photography books revealing China's many faces, history books and a selection of novels in which Shanghai itself plays a part. I spend too much money and wonder how I am going to get them all home!

Dinner is early tonight as we have a show to see. It's the renowned Shanghai Acrobatic company, and it is excellent. There are plate spinners, trick cyclists, contortionists and so on who entertain us before the finale ... roaring motorcyclists who enter a wire mesh ball set on the stage where they ride around at great speed. It will spoil it if I tell you how many riders eventually enter the ball. Why, we were amazed when we saw two!

Tonight we gather in the lobby of the hotel as the group is parting company tomorrow. Some are returning directly to Canada, some are going on to Tokyo and some, including myself, have Hong Kong in our plans.



Some performers of the Shanghai Acrobatic Company
(Wallace)

George has clearly told us our transfer arrangements for the different airports in the morning, and now all we have to do is say “wasn't it great?”, “farewell”, “fun to travel with you”, “thank you, George, for looking after us”, “I'll e-mail”, “great to meet you”, “look after yourself”, “thank you for the band-aids/aspirins/magazines etc”, “keep in touch”, “good-bye, good-bye, good-bye”. Yes, it had been a great trip. ■

This brings to a close my account of The Travel Society's China/Yangtze Spectacular trip. A 14-page fully diarised account of my trip, that contains more than a dozen full-colour photographs, is also available from our offices if you send us your name and address and a cheque for \$5. Or

you can e-mail me at ann@thetravelsociety.com with your credit card details. This account gives details of the hotels and restaurants and food to be expected on the tour, plus practical details regarding money, shopping, washrooms, laundry, baggage handling and so on.

After taking this trip I made a few recommendations to The Travel Society on how I thought it could be improved - a few less temple visits, more time in Shanghai, etc., - and most of my recommendations have been included in next year's itineraries.

Details of this tour appear on page 21 of this edition. Please call the number shown and we will send you a full itinerary and additional information on travelling in China.

Travel Digest

Antigua and Barbuda

Thirteen of Antigua's most intimate inns and guest houses have formed an alliance to promote their establishments to budget-conscious vacationers. V.I.P. Antigua and Barbuda stands for *Very Intimate Places of Antigua and Barbuda*. It's a initiative supported by the Tourism Office and it features properties offering as few as four rooms and no more than 45. For more information visit www.antigua-vip.com, e-mail: info@antigua-barbuda.ca.com or call 416 961 3085. (Check out the Country Inn Cottages.)

Canada

PEI is encouraging travellers to its shores this fall with a variety of Fall Value Packages designed to save you up to 60% on accommodations, attractions and more. Check it all out by visiting www.peisplay.com/falldeals-c or call 1 888 PEI PLAY and ask for Gail.

How about treating the family to a winter-wonderland train journey in December? Travel in festive style with **Rocky Mountaineer Railtours**, complete with a Christmas tree, musical entertainment and a visit from Santa. Lots of extensions available in beautiful **BC** and **Alberta**. For details call 1 800 665 7245 or visit www.WinterRailtours.com Go on .. treat the (grand)children!

Randonnee Tours of Winnipeg have been recognized by the Canadian Tourism Commission as providing "new and extraordinary" vacations that highlight and embrace winter travel.

Randonnee's Whiteshell Winter Sampler tour of **Manitoba** captured second place in the CTC's Nature in Winter awards category. Details at 1 800 465 6488 or www.randonneetours.com

Cuba

If you eschew beach vacations, but have always wanted to visit Cuba and explore its historic capital, **Havana**, you may find the new offerings from Signature Vacations fit the bill. This coming season Signature is offering packages at three historic hotels in the heart of Havana – the 5-star Parque Central and Hotel Telegrafo and the 3-star Hotel Sevilla. Travellers can choose to stay in Havana alone, or can combine their stay with a beach vacation. Generous early-booking bonuses are available and Signature travellers receive free admission to the Havana Museum of Fine Art, to the Capital Building and to the Museum of the Revolution. In addition, there are well-priced local tours (history, rum and cigars and cabaret) available. Prices for a 3- or 4-night stay out of Toronto start within the \$800 range, rising to start at over C\$1,000 for 7 nights. Also available is a Cuban Discovery Tour that looks interesting. These vacations are not 'all-inclusive', but they are listed in Signature's *All Inclusive Fiesta Favourites and other vacations* brochure, available now from your travel agent, or call 1 800 830 1111 for a free copy, or visit www.signaturevacations.com. This brochure contains destinations in **Mexico, Costa Rica** and the **Dominican Republic** in addition to Cuba. If you're interested in Caribbean destinations (**Antigua,**

Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Martin and Turks & Caicos) request a copy of their *Caribbean Classics* brochure.

Germany

If you're visiting Germany you'll be pleased to know that all large cities, most smaller towns and a number of tourism regions have put together WelcomeCards. These cards, available at tourist information offices, start at about C\$10 and offer a variety of reduced rates or free admissions to sightseeing and cultural attractions, recreational facilities and, most importantly, use of public transit for specified periods of time. An example: for those spending three days in **Berlin**, the 18 Euro (C\$30) card includes the Sanssouci Palace town of **Potsdam** and provides unlimited access to all public transit. It also grants up to 50% off admission fees to more than 50 museums, theatres and other cultural institutions, city tours and boat excursions. For more details contact the local tourist offices via the links provided on the GNTO's website: www.visits-to-germany.com. For general information on Germany call 1 877 315 6237

U.S.A.

Arizona offers a welcoming climate to Canadians wishing to escape the winter. And a great way to experience this south-western state is on a dude ranch where as well, or instead of, riding one can hike in magnificent scenery, mountain bike, play golf, enjoy cookouts or just relax by the pool in the sun. There's a free *Dude Ranch Guide* now available to Canadians who may like to consider this vacation option. Call 1 888 520 3448 or

visit www.arizonaguide.com And for statewide discounts for anyone with Arizona in their plans, log onto www.arizonavacationsvalues.com

Orlando, Florida, has a money-saving campaign with Canadians in mind, which includes a number of 'at par' offers. Call 1 800 646 2079 or visit orlandokissimmee.com/canada if this destination is in your plans. There are similar offers in **Palm Beach County**, in a programme running until mid-December entitled "\$1000 worth of the Palm Beach for Free". Call 561 233 3000 or visit www.palmbeachfl.com for details.

There are lots of deals available to lure Canadians to Texas between 1 October and 31 March. If you'd like to stay in the Comfort Suites Hotel in South Padre for a month the rates start at US\$39 per night tax free. Or enjoy 50% off at Le Meridien in Dallas, while other chains offer 25% off at other locations. For your **Buckaroo Buck\$** coupon booklet along with a *Texas State Travel Guide* call 1 800 8888 TEX or download the coupons by visiting www.TravelTex.com

If **Yosemite National Park in California** has long been on your wish list, you may like to know that the historic Wawona Hotel in the park has midweek specials through to 19 November. For US\$69.95 double, with a breakfast credit of US\$7.95 per person, visitors will stay in one of the properties 54 rooms with in-room sink but shared restroom and shower facilities. For a glimpse of this venerable property visit www.YosemitePark.com or call 559 252 4848 for a brochure.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

As the gift-giving season approaches, here are some book ideas for your travelling family or friends ... or, of course, for yourself!

● If London, Paris, New York City or Florence are in your winter plans, chances are you'll be visiting some museums. Now those beautifully-illustrated *Insight Guides* have a new series: **Museums and Galleries of ...** (*insert one of the above cities here*). I have a copy of the London guide on my desk and I am impressed. I thought I knew the city of my birth well, but here listed are museums and galleries I've never heard of. A museum in a windmill in Wimbledon? An elegant Fan Museum in Greenwich? A Funeral Museum in Beckton? A Toy Museum in the West End? The Clink Prison Museum on the South Bank? Whatever your interest you're sure to find a fascinating destination listed in these pages: museums of social history, famous people, war, transport, science and technology, medicine, sport and so on are listed, along with all the major art and history museums as well as the city's mansions and palaces that are open to the public. The soft-cover volume is lavishly illustrated and provides a glimpse of the riches of each destination. And each venue (many of which are free) is listed with a map reference, transportation details, opening hours, wheelchair access information and details of the museum's catering options or recommended (or famous) restaurants or pubs nearby. Published by the Langenscheidt Publishing Group, these guides are about C\$27.95. www.insightguides.com

● Dreaming of a wildlife safari in Africa? Before you make any plans you may like to invest in a copy of the new, 6th edition of *Africa's Top Wildlife Countries* by Mark W. Nolting. This is the only book that covers all the major wildlife countries, parks and reserves in Africa, with listings for Botswana, Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Maps, migration movements, climate, accommodation options, best time to visit and many other details are included. Published by Global Travel Publishers, the price in Canada should be about C\$27 for 612 clear, illustrated pages. Also available from this publisher is an *African Safari Journal*, a book which contains a wildlife guide, language guide, safari tips, over 50 maps and space for your personal diary. About C\$25.

● If you like to travel well-informed on the history of the country you are visiting, you'll love the series *A Traveller's History of ...* There are 20 titles in this series and all have received glowing reviews from major publications in North America and Europe. "Ideal before-you-go reading" said one reviewer and, with the title covering Mexico on my shelves, I agree. A great way to pass the flight to wherever or a thoughtful gift for anyone you know who has travel in their plans. Prices are around C\$24 and the publisher is Interlink Publishing Group.

Continued from page 12 ... Turkey

per person.

There are ATM's almost everywhere that will make you instant multi-millionaires as one Canadian dollar equals about a million Turkish lira!

Although an Islamic country, **you'll find Turkey westernized and sophisticated**, certainly in tourist areas.

Religion and state are kept separate by law (for example ... no veils for women in state-run institutions such as schools, universities, government offices, etc.).

The Turks are great travellers themselves and you'll find **travel agencies** everywhere. Look out for membership in TURSAB, the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies.

Turkey is covered by large and efficient **privately-owned bus systems**. The more you pay (and it won't be much) the more luxurious the bus and the finer the service (an attendant providing coffee en route, sprinklings of rose-water for the hands and, should the bus ever become crowded, arranging for children to squeeze up and so on). Enquire whether the bus is **non-smoking** if this is your preference.

Hoteliers (and their concierges if it's a big property) will know all about **bus stations, taxis and other modes of transportation**.

Turkish Tourist Office, 360 Albert Street, Suite 801, Ottawa, K1R 7X7, tel: 613 230 6 54, fax 613 230 3683,

e-mail: toturcan@magi.com www.magi.com/~toturcan

They have a very fine *Tourist Map* which shows historical sites, panoramic roads, hiking and boating areas, golf courses and more. The map also lists such things as car rental agencies, the more than 100 Tourist Information Offices within Turkey and suggests some itineraries.

Turkey is most certainly a country where some understanding of its history greatly adds to one's enjoyment. For a comprehensive overview, complete with gorgeous photographs, I strongly recommend the ***Insight Guide Turkey***, published by Langenscheidt. It contains chapters on history, the people, art and architecture, food, music (from *mehter* bands to jazz festivals) and carpets as well as the places of interest across the country. Find it now and it will tempt you more than I can to visit this fascinating land. About \$35 in Canada.

Publisher's note: Over recent years articles on Turkey by Ann Wallace have appeared in Chatelaine Travels, Doctor's Review and The Globe and Mail as well, of course, in TravelScoop. Two short reader reports – one on hiking in Cappadocia and the other on exploring the south coast from Bodrum, south of Izmir – will appear in next month's TravelScoop. ▀

The Travel Society

Travelling companions wanted!

At The Travel Society we frequently receive requests from single members wishing to share accommodation on our tours. If you would like to travel on any of these dates, want to avoid the single supplement and are willing to share accommodation with fellow members, please call Nigel at 416 926 2500 x24 or 1 877 926 2500 x24 as soon as possible.

- A lady (smoker) wants to share on China Yangtze tour Spring 2003.
- A lady wants to share on China Yangtze tour Spring 2003.
- A gentleman wants to share on China Yangtze tour Fall 2003.
- A lady wants to share on China Yangtze tour Fall 2003.
- A gentleman wants to share on China Yangtze tour Spring 2003.

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members.

from \$3,924 for 18 days

See the gorges before they are gone forever!

China ... Yangtze Spectacular ~ 18 days!

Come with us on our most popular, unique tour and spend 18 days in China for an amazingly low price. Reserve now for departures on

12 April, 27 April, 9 September & 19 October 2003

It is vast, fascinating and mysterious and it has beckoned travellers from the west for centuries. Mention it to avid travellers and they are sure to say, "Yes, I hope to visit China one day." And what would they choose to experience? A cruise on the mighty Yangtze River (soon to be changed for ever); a look at the work-in-progress on the massive Three Gorges Dam; a walk on the ancient Great Wall; views of charming villages, lush terraced hill-sides and magnificent mountain peaks; visits to the great cities of Shanghai and Beijing; a trip to view one of the world's greatest archaeological finds ... the 6,000 terra-cotta warriors at Xi'an; scenes of palaces, pagodas, pavilions and pandas; tastes of Peking duck and Chinese banquets and so much more. So how do you choose? When you decide on The Travel Society's tour there's no need to choose because all these highlights are included. Yes, in these remarkable 18 days you'll stay in Beijing; you'll take a 4-day first-class cruise on the Yangtze with many shore excursions; you'll fly to see those centuries-old terra-cotta warriors in Xi'an; you'll visit bustling Chongquin and see its pandas; stay in Hangzhou and travel into the hills covered with tea plantations; explore the exquisite gardens of Suzhou, and visit Nanjing and Wuzhen. And you'll have time to explore spectacular Shanghai. Throughout the trip you'll see magnificent architecture, you'll be entertained at cultural events, you'll join your hosts at a variety of banquets, you'll have time to shop, and you'll marvel at some of the most wonderful scenery on earth, all in the company of English-speaking guides. You'll travel by plane, by luxury bus, cruise ship and river boat. Many of our members have told us it's an experience of a lifetime ... and all at an amazing price!

\$100.00 EARLY BIRD BOOKING BONUS!

Make your reservation with deposit 8 months prior to your departure date and we will deduct \$100 per couple.

Your tour costs includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air fares on Japan Airlines
- Chinese domestic airfares
- Canadian domestic airfares
- First-class hotel accommodation
- First-class 4 days/3 nights Yangtze River cruise aboard a deluxe cruise ship
- All transfers
- Daily sightseeing
- Three meals daily
- 2 Western style dinners.
- Special banquets in Hangzhou, Xi'an and Beijing
- Evening cultural shows
- Fully escorted by English/Chinese-speaking tour guide
- English-speaking local guides
- Free day and evening in Beijing & Shanghai

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Vancouver	\$3,924 pp/dbl
Victoria	\$4,068 pp/dbl
Calgary/Edmonton	\$4,164 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,344 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,269 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,344 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$4,464 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$1,040 (Sharing can be arranged.)
Taxes and visas extra. Prices are subject to change

GREAT ADD-ONS:

Hong Kong	4 days/3 nights	\$1020.00
Tokyo	4 days/3 nights	\$890.00

Our editor, Ann Wallace, has taken her first Travel Society Tour ... the April 2002 China Yangtze trip and her 14-page, illustrated (and honest) account is now available from our office. If you would like a copy please send us \$5 together with your address.

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

NEW

Panama Highlights

Departing 22 November 2002 & 21 February 2003

Imagine discovering colourful Panama during the coming November or February. Come with The Travel Society for 10 exciting days in four different locations. You'll stay at Fort Amador, famous for its views of the Pacific and the entrance to the Panama Canal. Then you'll travel on to a luxurious rainforest resort – the Gamboa – close to the Canal in the heart of the lush Panamanian rainforest. There you'll discover the secrets of the upper forest canopy – its flowers, mammals and splendid birds – on a unique aerial tram ride. A flight to the San Blas Islands is next on the itinerary, described in the October 2000 edition of TravelScoop as "A paradise ... truly special and beautiful." A stay in a resort on the Costa Blanca and a chance of explore Panama City will bring your trip to a close. What an unusual winter getaway!

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,480 pp/dbl	Taxes extra.
Ottawa & Montreal	\$3,480 pp/dbl	
Vancouver	\$3,564 pp/dbl	
Calgary	\$3,564 pp/dbl	
Halifax	\$3,580 pp/dbl	
Single supplement \$1,620.0 (Sharing can be arranged.)		

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international airfares
- 9 nights' accommodation in 4 different properties
- all land transfers
- flights to San Blas
- all breakfasts
- 4 lunches
- 4 dinners
- rainforest aerial tram tour

NEW

Copper Canyon & Guadalajara 9 days

18 October & 8 November 2002, March & April 2003

We are offering a new 9-day tour to the Copper Canyon, together with a stay in Mexico's wonderful city of Guadalajara. The Copper Canyon is four times larger than the Grand Canyon, and you'll enjoy a journey that is considered by many to be the world's most exciting train trip, with its 87 tunnels, 39 bridges and uncountable spectacular views. You'll meet the people, stay in unique accommodations and explore the present and the past in this astonishing region.

PRICES INCLUDE AIR

departing from:

Toronto	- \$3,245 pp dbl.
Ottawa & Montreal	- \$3,245 pp dbl.
Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax & Winnipeg	- \$3,460 pp dbl.
Single supplement \$600 Taxes extra	

NEW

Costa Rica – "Nature's Museum"

11 days departing 8 November 2002 & 7 February 2003

Costa Rica is known as Nature's Museum and with good reason. Come for a visit and you'll be impressed by this country that is dedicated to preserving its delicate ecology for all to enjoy and by its warm friendly people who are waiting to show it to you. During your 10-day tour you'll visit historic San Jose, stay in a tropical rain forest at a thermal spa resort; visit a vast jungle preserve; take a river boat trip to watch and photograph the wildlife; soak in the thermal pools of Arenal Paraiso and visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. And after all this you'll relax or play on the beach at Guanacaste. Also available is a 3-night jungle odyssey post tour extension, an exciting soft-adventure to Tortuguero, the Amazon of Costa Rica.

PRICES INCLUDE AIR

departing from:

Toronto	- \$2,920 pp dbl.
Ottawa	- \$2,920 pp dbl.
Montreal	- \$2,920 pp dbl.
Vancouver	- \$2,990 pp dbl.
Calgary	- \$2,990 pp dbl.
Halifax	- \$3,036 pp dbl.
Single supplement \$464 Taxes extra	

The Best of Australia, New Zealand & Fiji ...

Ancient Cultures, Modern Cities and Timeless Beauty with 2-days in Fiji

29 days departing 10 February & October 2003

High on the "wish list" of most travellers are those oh-so-different lands "downunder". How would you like to come with The Travel Society as we visit vast Australia with its Outback, stunning cities, unique animals, aboriginal history, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock and the Great Barrier Reef? Even the island of Tasmania is included! And yes, then we go on to New Zealand, with its scenic beauty, its mountains and farm lands and not-to-be-missed Milford Sound. And while we're going all that way we don't want you to miss the magic of Fiji. If you think all this is impossible in one reasonably-priced trip, now is the time to think again, for The Travel Society has organized such a tour. Call us for a copy of this amazing itinerary. **29 days, most meals and great guides!**

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from: Taxes included.

Victoria	\$10,590 pp/dbl
Vancouver, Edmonton & Calgary	\$10,530 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$10,710 pp/dbl
Toronto, Ottawa & Montreal	\$10,750 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$11,030 pp/dbl

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air on Qantas
- All domestic and Australia to New Zealand flights
- Canadian domestic air fares
- All fully escorted by knowledgeable tour guides
- All transfers
- Daily breakfast
- 17 dinners and 2 lunches
- 4 nights in the Outback
- 7 nights of planned evening activities
- All sightseeing tours, boat trips and fees to parks & sites
- A performance at the Sidney Opera House
- Departure taxes

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members.

NEW

from \$4,950 for 20 nights
including all airfares

Space limited to 20 people

A Traveller's Turkey

Departing 5 October 2003

It is one of the cradles of civilization and one of the most wonderful countries on the planet. Here there are fabled cities, unique landscapes, incomparable historic sites and calm, friendly people who are eager to show that their land is, indeed, both historic and modern.

Ann Wallace, our editor, has travelled extensively in Turkey and always returns claiming it is one of her favourite destinations. So now we have organized a luxurious tour exclusively for Travel Society members. It is due to take place in October 2003 for a maximum of 20 people.

No expense has been spared to ensure you see the very best that Turkey has to offer. You'll stay in first-class historic or very specialized hotels, travel in a 40-seat air-conditioned luxury bus, enjoy cruises on private boats, sample fine food and be entertained by cultural performances. And the itinerary? Magical Istanbul (plenty of time there); Ankara, home of one of the world's finest museums; the unique 'geological poem' called Kapadokya (or Cappadocia); mysterious and lovely ruins such as Aphrodisias, Pergamum and, of course, Ephesus; the fabled and beautiful Aegean coast; the peaceful Princes Isles in the Sea of Marmara and so much more.

Ann says, "This is the most perfect tour of Turkey imaginable; you will have an unforgettable time ... and such a small group, too! Sign up now!"

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton & Calgary	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$5,125.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$5,125.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Taxes included, visa extra.

Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic airfare
- 20 nights' accommodation
- most meals
- all domestic transportation
- 40 seat air conditioned luxury bus
- admission to all sites
- an English-speaking guide/director and a Travel Society host

In order to prepare participants for their visit to this historic land, an annotated reading list will be sent to all applicants and comprehensive tour kits will be sent 30 days before departure.

The Kingdom of Thailand

with optional Angkor Wat (Cambodia) pre-tour and Pattaya post-tour extensions
17 days departing April & October 2003

"Thailand is magical." So say the increasing number of travellers who journey to this exotic land, a land of majestic palaces, ornate temples, quaint cities, beautiful landscapes and charming, gentle people. Come with The Travel Society and over 14 memorable days we'll show you bustling Bangkok, the floating market and legendary canals of Damnoen Saduak, the Bridge on the River Kwai at Kanchanaburi, Ayutthaya – Thailand's ancient capital, the cool hills and forests of Chiang Mai with their Hill Tribes and working elephants and so much more. You'll shop for unique items, enjoy a Thai cooking class, witness cultural shows, take river trips, visit museums AND still have plenty of time at leisure to follow your own interests.

However, before your arrival in Thailand, you may like to enjoy a unique experience in Cambodia where you'll visit fascinating Angkor Wat. You'll view the Wats and Terraces at sunset and spend a day among the fascinating temple structures that formed the former capital and religious centre of the Khmer Empire.

And an optional post-tour will take you to relax at Pattaya – known as the Riviera of Thailand, where you can enjoy exquisite tropical gardens, a visit to the Mini Siam miniature display of Thai heritage and a catamaran cruise as well as the inviting beach. This trip is scheduled for Spring and Fall, 2003. Give us a call ... we'll add you to the list of those interested and send a full itinerary and applicable prices.

PRICES INCLUDE AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg & Montreal	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver & Calgary	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$3,100.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$3,560.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$4,095.00 pp/dbl

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air
- All domestic flights
- Canadian domestic air fares
- Fully escorted by knowledgeable tour guides
- All transfers
- All sightseeing tours, boat trips and fees to parks & sites

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

The Travel Society ~ tours for TravelScoop members and their friends.

Each tour is limited to 20 people

NEW

Galapagos Islands and Ecuador with options to Kapawi Lodge in the Amazon and Machu Picchu, Peru 14 days departing 12 November, 26 November 2002 18 February, 18 March 2003

The Travel Society is proud to be able to offer its members an outstanding trip to some of the world's most spectacular destinations. Who hasn't dreamed of cruising to the Galapagos Islands and seeing wildlife as Darwin witnessed it? Think of the unique adventure you will enjoy, of the stories you will have to tell and the photographs you will take! You will spend a week aboard your first-class 20-passenger ship, taking daily shore excursions to a variety of the islands with experienced naturalists in groups of no more than 10.

But of course there's more to Ecuador than the Galapagos. On this tour you will also visit Quito, Calderon (where you'll stay in one of the oldest haciendas in Ecuador) and Cotacachi. You'll travel through spectacular countryside with mountains, lakes and colourful Indian communities ... whose markets you will visit.

The optional extensions to this trip are equally exciting. Spend four nights in the Amazon's premier luxury ecological lodge - the magical paradise know as Kapawi - and experience the river and the rainforest up close. Machu Picchu in Peru is probably also on your wish list and we are offering a 4-day trip there too. You can travel from Quito to Lima and then on to Cuzco for a visit to this breathtaking Lost City of the Incas. We'll take care of all the travel details. All you have to do is marvel and enjoy!

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Table with 2 columns: City (Toronto, Ottawa & Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax) and Price (\$7,476.00 pp/dbl, \$7,476.00 pp/dbl, \$7,797.00 pp/dbl, \$7,797.00 pp/dbl, \$7,394.00 pp/dbl) including taxes.

- Your tour includes: - Round-trip air transportation - All domestic air transportation - All accommodation - All meals as per the itinerary - Admissions to all sites - Expert Galapagos guides - Transfers & baggage handling - Islands Park Entrance Fee (US100)

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office. TICO reg #01280649



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Don't let my membership run out ...

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Send to: TravelScoop 218-1033 Bay St Toronto ON Canada M5S 3A5 Fax: 416 926 0222 e-mail: brit@interlog.com

your membership expires on: (month - year)

Password: fall