

Jill Worrall Tours February Newsletter



It's been an exciting past few weeks both on tour and family fronts!

So, here's the big news from the family.

On Jan 25, after a six-hour labour, my daughter Rachel and her husband Atkins welcomed Nathaniel Kalumba Chishimba into the world. Kalumba means Lightning in Atkins' first language (Bemba) and is in honour of Nate's rather rapid arrival at home.



They are all doing magnificently and because I'm in between tours I'm spending as much time as I can trying to be useful. He is a truly dear wee boy. One day I'll be able to tell him about how many good wishes he's received from all the wonderful friends I've made around the world. So far, he's had messages from Syria, Jordan, Croatia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, the US, Costa Rica, the UK, Vanuatu, Canada, Iran, Georgia and India. Not bad for a little guy!

Meanwhile it's full steam ahead with preparing for this year's tours and also planning for 2020!

In early March I'm off with my group to Myanmar and Laos. I have a great mix of regular travellers and newcomers so I'm looking forward to catching up with familiar faces and making new friends.

Tours of the Month

Mongolia in Depth 03/21 June

As some of you know this tour began as Mongolia and Siberia but I've now modified it to concentrate solely on Mongolia. So, if you had dismissed this tour as being too long and expensive do please have a look at it again! We already have six people very much wanting to go but do need at least a couple more.

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This is a tour designed for adventurous travellers who want to experience the fast-disappearing world of the Mongolian nomads along with contemporary Mongolian life; the endless skies of the Asian steppes

and follow in the hoof prints of Genghis Khan and Kubla Khan, who with their armies on horseback carved out huge empires and left indelible marks on world history.

Very few tours explore this region by road (rather than passing through by long-distance train). This is a tailor-made tour offering you a combination of sights and experiences that you will be very unlikely to find with any other programme. My operator has been working in this region for decades and is an acknowledged specialist who provides the very best available in accommodation and most importantly in services and quality guides.

An unforgettable highlight will be the mini Naadam being staged just for my group.

This is a highly inclusive tour – all meals and tipping are included, even bottled water with meals and on our bus journeys, so, other than any spending of a personal nature, there is almost nothing extra you will need to spend.

Mongolia in Depth will operate with just eight travellers ensuring you have an amazing, exclusive and highly bespoke experience in one of the world's most remote and least-visited countries.



Hola Cuba! - November 2019

We're aiming to pop an extra tour into this year's programme. I've been to Cuba four times and now have the opportunity to go back for a fifth tour. We're going to be staying in a carefully chosen selection of private bed and breakfasts (Casas) and using privately-run restaurants where ever possible. There's been quite a sea change in Cuba in recent years – there are some wonderful b and bs, often in historic houses where you will be able meet local people and stay in authentic neighbourhoods.

Our tour will include several days in Havana, a day trip to Vinales and then a journey across the island which will include Cienfuegos, Santa Clara, Trinidad, Sancti Spiritus, Camaguey, Santiago de

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Cuba and Baracoa along with many other highlights such as a visit to the Bay of Pigs, fantastic music and dance clubs, visits to cacao and tobacco farms, rum and cigar factories, museums, historic houses and of course, a chance to swim in the warm Caribbean.

Change is coming to Cuba but it's also an exciting time for this nation. There's been a major boost in recent years with restoration work which is great to see.

Please get in touch with me or Moray soon if you'd be interested in this tour. We will be taking a maximum of 15 people.



Still looking for an adventure in 2019?

I still have places left on the following 2019 tours:

Croatia Odyssey – May 6 to May 27, 2019

Our 21-day dream holiday in Croatia that includes a 14-day luxury small ship cruise (there are just eight cabins!) on the Adriatic. There are two cabins left on this tour which attracted rave reviews when we ran it in 2017. With an on-board chef preparing one fantastic main meal every day and an open bar policy for the entire cruise along with visits to Brac, Korcula, Hvar, Solta, Lastovo, Vis, Split and Dubrovnik included this is a wonderfully relaxing holiday.



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Zambia and the Zambezi - 31 Aug to 20 Sep 2019

This tour was full until late last year when a combination of changed circumstances and illness saw six people pull out. So, I do have room for new bookings on this tour which features superb wildlife viewing opportunities including time in one of Africa's very best parks, South Luangwa, the Victoria Falls and a chance to spend a few days in a small African town where we'll visit schools, a farm and have meals with my extended family.

Our accommodation on safari is in luxury tents with en suite facilities – we will have a safari vehicle just for our group. In 2018 we saw leopard, cheetah, lions, wild dog, elephants, giraffe, zebra and much, much more – including an entire elephant family wandering through one of our camps!



Off the Beaten Track in Nepal – 23 Sep to 15 Oct 2019

We hope to make this tour a confirmed departure soon but as this is a special fundraising community development project, I'm keen to boost the numbers! This tour includes a trek in a remote, but beautiful part of Nepal, little visited by overseas trekkers. There will be superb mountain views (including Everest, weather-permitting) but also many opportunities to meet the Sherpa people and see the work carried out by the Forgotten Sherpas Trust (based in Geraldine).

Islands of the Mediterranean – 21 Sept to Oct 14 2019

We have so much interest in this tour and places are filling up fast. Our island-hopping tour (it's a land-based journey using local ferries between islands) will take us to Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Elba. This is a region with an incredibly rich diversity of culture, history, landscapes, cuisine and wine.



And now for 2020!

Moray is already compiling a list of people interested in more information about my 2020 tour schedule as itineraries and prices become available. Here's what is planned (finalised dates will be available over the next few months)

Feb-March – **Colombia** including national parks, colonial heritage towns and archaeological wonders.

April – **Iran** including Tehran, Tabriz, Kerman, Shiraz, Yazd and Isfahan. My guide will be the incomparable Reza Mirkhalaf Zadeh.

May- **Romania and the Balkans** - we'll be starting in Romania and working our way through Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia – a great way to cross off a few more European countries off your list!

July – **the Pamir Highway (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan)** An intrepid journey for real adventurers including mountain passes, encounters with Central Asian nomads and to travel close to the Afghan border.

August – **Greenland and the Canadian Maritimes** – wildlife, stunning scenery and picturesque fishing villages in Greenland, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland Island and Labrador.

Oct-Nov – **Ethiopia** – the northern historical circuit including Lalibela and Axum, the Blue Nile Falls, wildlife of the Great Rift Valley and visits to some of Ethiopia's unique tribespeople.

Nov – **Antarctica and Patagonia** – a short highlights of Patagonia tour followed by a 12-day expedition cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula. Space on expedition ships (with just over 100 passengers enabling us to make many landings)" is highly sought after and can book up years in advance.

