



Hi Everyone,

Well, what a tumultuous time to be in travel! As I write this, the Coronavirus situation is changing almost hour-by-hour but I'm still looking forward to our future tours. It's important to stay positive as History has shown us these events will pass and we can go back to what we love to do and that is Travel the World!

To say we live in uncertain times would be an understatement at the moment! I know that any of you who have booked on one of my tours or who were thinking about doing so, will be wondering what happens next.

First of all, you have my assurance, along with Moray and James (the owner-operator of House of Travel Riccarton with whom I work with in partnership) that we will always put your health, safety and well-being first and that these factors will be foremost in the decisions we make about upcoming tours.

As you know, much of what is happening now in the travel-world is beyond our control - i.e. countries closing borders (land, sea and air) and airlines reducing their schedules.

Please keep in mind:

- 1) We will be in touch if required to let you know the status of tours you may be booked on if there is any change.
- 2) We are still in the planning stages for future tours both those already scheduled for 2021 and even some exciting plans for 2022.
- 3) I am very, very thankful to be in partnership with House of Travel Riccarton as between us we have the resources, the back-up, the flow of sound, detailed information, the resolve and the enthusiasm to work through this crisis so that we can continue to deliver you my exciting, unique and memorable tours. I might not be going too far beyond Leeston at present but believe me my ideas are already in flight!

2020 tour update – tour by tour!

- 1) My **Romania and the Balkans** tour, scheduled for May, is now **postponed** until next year, likely to be early May with a backup of September 2021. Everyone who has been booked on this tour has been contacted by Moray (and I'll be catching up with you soon!)
- 2) My **Pamir Highway** tour departing NZ on June 30 is still all go with final payment now deferred to 16 April.
- 3) My **Brazil** tour in August is still being advertised as is **Greek Island Hopping** in September and bookings are still coming in for my two **Ethiopia** departures in October and November so at present it is absolutely business as usual with these tours and also for the **New Year in Europe** tour due to depart New Zealand on December 26 2020.4)
- 4) If any of these tours need to be cancelled at a later date, Moray will be in contact with an update and your options.



And now, time to escape from it all!

So, what have I been up to recently? I've just got back from the first tour of the year, so here's a short summary of what we got up to in Colombia!

Colombia with Jill Worrall Tours



Colombia is only recently back on the travellers' map after many years of violence and unrest as a result mainly of the cocaine trade and related political and military actions. So, taking a tour there was truly ground-breaking – in fact for most of the tour we were the first NZ group ever to visit.





This was an amazing experience but did come with its challengers – my tour manager Xavier Munoz (who comes from Ecuador but spends a lot of time each year in neighbouring Colombia) had to work overtime on translation as few local guides speak English as of yet. With only about 15 per cent of Colombian roads sealed we had to use local flights a lot and road travel was often a little bumpy to say the least.

I was very proud the way my group of Kiwis coped with all this and the upside was we were able to cover a tremendous range of Colombia's diverse regions – from the mountains and Caribbean coastline to the Amazonian basin and areas that were once in the heart of the cocaine trade. Colombia has Spanish colonial heritage treasures such a Villa del Leyva and Cartagena, more bird species than any other country in the world, archaeological treasures little known outside its borders and a population longing to see peace last and prosperity return. The gold museum in Bogota was out of this world – I think more than one visit is needed -there are so many spectacular treasures it's hard to take in one go!



We had some extraordinary encounters with former cocaine growers and an ethnic group living in incredibly harsh conditions close to the Caribbean. Both groups are now trying to forge small-scale tourism ventures. Along the way we saw a stunning flock of flamingos, incredibly rare birds in the mountains, saw the endangered pink river dolphins and were entertained by some fantastic Colombian musicians and dancers. The food was a huge surprise – we had some wonderful meals of fish, seafood and meat, along with divine avocados and amazing fruit juices.





Meanwhile back at home....

All is rather quiet here in Leeston although Derek and I are getting to share Jono and Em's excitement on having their first home built in nearby Rolleston. They hope to be moving in in spring – our house will seem empty without them. More of a worry is Flynn the cat who now ignores us totally in favour of Jono and Em. He even sits in the driveway and waits for them to come home, even Jono with his very unsociable hours. I think he might have to move in with them.

Nathaniel is now walking – we're all delighting in his progress, other than Flynn who is not a toddler fan, especially now that Nate has more chance of catching up with him!

A postponement

Our planned An Evening with Jill Worrall scheduled for this month (March) is going to be postponed until later in the year. It seems the responsible and sensible thing to do at this time!

This Month's Feature Tours

An important note! Do remember that with almost all my tours there is no guarantee they will be repeated! This is not because there's been a problem with a tour or travellers haven't enjoyed it – far from it. My tours to destinations such as Mongolia or Colombia have been amazing experiences for us all. It's simply that there is still so much of the world to see and I have so many people looking for new places. So, it's usually a matter of come now or miss out!

The Pamir Highway (June 30 – July 19)

It's onwards and literally upwards for this tour to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in June-July. Central Asia is, as of time of writing, barely touched by Coronavirus; it's a remote region with very few travellers – a great place to be!

I've been to both countries before but never had the chance to drive the Pamir Highway, one of the world's greatest scenic mountain routes. We'll get to meet people who still lead a fast-disappearing nomadic lifestyle, have a glimpse in to neighbouring Afghanistan and see some utterly spectacular scenery.

This will be a real adventure – there won't be many home comforts on some of the journey but the rewards will be immense as the people in this region are incredibly hospitable; we'll have a great team with us and once again we'll be setting foot (or wheels!) where few Kiwis have been before.

We do have room for a few more travellers on this tour, including a lady looking for someone to share with, but will have to close off the tour soon so don't delay if you'd like to come.



Ethiopia (Oct 14 - Nov 4 and Nov 4 - Nov 25)

This tour has proved so popular that we are planning two departures Oct 14 – Nov 4 and Nov 4 – Nov 25. Confirmed bookings mean we already have enough travellers for one tour and there's still lots of interested in the second. I will be escorting the first group to Ethiopia then waiting in Addis to receive the second group and then coming home with them.

As mentioned above, Ethiopia like many of my other destinations, will probably not be repeated, at least not in the next two to three years. Ethiopia is a stunning and surprising place - it has everything – ancient history, intriguing cultures, spectacular landscapes and fascinating wildlife. We'll see the source of the Blue Nile, visit World Heritage listed rock-hewn churches, desert towns, Rift Valley lakes with their hippos and crocodiles, unique

tribes and do it all before the rest of the travelling world discovers Ethiopia with a vengeance!

I've travelled most of our route before so know first-hand how amazing it is so, if you're not already booked, do get in touch soon. Numbers on each tour are limited to ensure everyone has a quality, small group experience.



Refer a Friend

This is proving very popular so don't forget that if you refer a friend (or mere acquaintance!) to us you are in line for a \$500 discount on your next tour. All you have to do is let Moray know who you have referred and when and she will take it from there. We think word of mouth is one of the very best ways to spread the news about my tours and this is one way we can say thank you for your support and enthusiasm!

Best wishes,

Jill