



The bit late for April but spot-on for early May newsletter

Hi everyone

It seems, finally, that all of us who love travel can start thinking again about seeing more of the world. All my friends and travel colleagues around the world are reporting people are definitely on the move again and they keep checking to see where the Kiwis have got to!

But, we're getting there and I'm delighted that I already have two confirmed departures for this year, and hopefully more to come.

Here's an update on what's happening this year and what I hope to offer you next year:

Confirmed departures

My Top End tour through Australia's Northern Territory in mid-August is ready to go and the tour is full.

The expedition cruise through NZ's southern fiords from June 08 to June 16 is also confirmed. I do have two spare double cabins still available, so it is not too late to join me on this.

This month's feature tours

The Great South-Western Edge (Western Australia), Sept 30 – Oct 13

I would love to have a few more people join me on this tour. It has been carefully scheduled to coincide with WA's famed wildflower season but also a prime time to enjoy whale-watching in one of Australia's best places for observing marine mammals and other sea creatures.

This part of WA is one of the least well-travelled by New Zealanders and we do tend to think of the region south of Perth as stopping at the wine region of Margaret River. But this tour goes much further– we're going to follow the coast right around to Esperance before cutting across Australia's golden outback on our return to Fremantle and Perth.



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This is a hugely diverse itinerary – we’ve got two wildlife cruises, national parks featuring some of Australia’s oldest and tallest trees, a spectacular cave system, treetop and granite mountain walkways, an historic whaling station and lighthouses, a winery visit and Australia’s largest artificial reef (which we reach by a unique jetty tram and underwater observatory).

I’ve also included the National Anzac Centre in Albany. This is a joint NZ-Australia venture, being opened by both countries’ prime ministers in 2014 to commemorate 100 years since 40,000 Kiwis and Aussies set off by sea from here to the First World War.

This really is a tour packed with interest for everyone.

As always there is quality accommodation along the way, a mix of included and independent meals and entertaining local guides.

Tasmania – the Grand Circuit, Oct 16 – Oct 30

As you can see from the dates for this tour I’m not coming home in between WA and Tasmania (and a few other tour members have also opted to have a month-long holiday in Australia with me too!).

This tour is very close to being a confirmed departure and with good reason – once again, I’ve tried to include as many Tasmanian highlights as I can, along with giving you a chance to relax on the way.

Our tour will include Hobart, of course, along with the infamous Port Arthur prison but there will be many places of outstanding natural beauty as well, such as a cruise along the Gordon River, a ride on the West Coast Wilderness Railway and time in the Franklin Gordon Wild Rivers and Freycinet national parks.



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We'll have guided tours around historic farming properties and get to taste some of the fine foods and wines for which Tasmania is famous. There are also overnight stays in two of Tasmania's most exclusive lodges, at Cradle Mountain and the other in Freycinet National Park.

It's a tour with a great mix of scenic and historic wonders, along with some excellent food and a little touch of luxury en route.

Want to venture further afield this year?

Island Hopping in Greece (Aug 31 – Sept 20)

This revised itinerary is due to be released any day so if you're already on the list for information about this tour it will be with you soon. If you are new to this tour (or any other in this newsletter) do please email Moray (morayj@hot.co.nz) so that you can receive the latest tour information.

My Greek tour includes Athens, Mykonos, more than a week on the island of Crete, a visit to Santorini, day trips to some tiny and much lesser-known islands and ends on the island of Rhodes. It's not a cruise as we want to have time to explore the larger islands such as Crete in more depth so we will use Greek ferries to travel from island to island. There are two special Greek parties included in the tour (one is a much-delayed milestone birthday for me!).



Oman and the UAE Nov 20 – Dec 5

The full itinerary and costing for this new tour will be ready any day now, so if you're not already on the mailing list do get in touch with Moray soon. There has been lots of interest in this trip which includes a tour highlighting the amazing architecture (old and modern) of Dubai and trips to two of the other emirates, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi, including special museum visits and a chance to meet the locals.

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Then it's off to the neighbouring country of Oman where traditional architecture and ways of life have been treasured and as a result will give us a real taste of authentic Arabia.

We'll visit local souks, a camel market, oasis, spend a night in a desert camp, see traditional boat-builders at work and explore Oman's spectacular inland mountains as well as having breathtaking views of its Red Sea coastline.



And now for 2023!

Many of you have been asking about what I have planned for 2023. So, here it is! Behind the scenes work on these tours has either been completed or is well advanced so it's definitely not too early to register your interest.

Lord Howe Island, the Snowy Mountains and Canberra – 18/28 Feb - This is rescheduled tour and there's only limited space now available.

Japan at Cherry Blossom time – approximately 04/18 April - This is another rescheduled tour and includes spectacular Japanese spring gardens, historic gems such as Kyoto, a stay in a traditional Japanese inn, visits to Hiroshima and Mt Fuji and, of course, Tokyo. We also spend a night on the island of Shikoku.

Cruising the Croatian Coast aboard Luna - mid-May - I'm offering this tour again partly due to inquiries from travellers who have already experienced this idyllic cruise or people who have simply heard how great it is! This holiday starts in Croatia's capital Zagreb and ends in the wondrous walled town of Dubrovnik. But, in between we spend two weeks aboard the motor cruiser Luna with her onboard chef and open bar. The Luna has only seven cabins available, so it is an exclusive JWT- only cruise. During our two weeks we will explore many Adriatic islands, including Hvar, Korcula, Brac, Lastovo and Vis.



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Walking the Pilgrim Paths of Ireland - June - This two-week small group tour scheduled for early June features leisurely day walks along some of Ireland's historic pilgrim paths in Wicklow, Kerry and Donegal, plus walks on one of the Aran Islands, Inishbofin, and a boat trip out to one of my top five places on the planet, Great Skellig Island. This being Ireland I've definitely included some classic Irish pubs with great entertainment and we'll be accompanied by my very knowledgeable and highly entertaining local guide, Frank.

Ecuador and Galapagos - July - Run in conjunction with Xavier Munoz, who many of you have travelled with in Brazil and Colombia, this tour will include cultural and wildlife highlights in Ecuador, including Quito, Cuenca, Cotopaxi volcano and cloud forests plus five nights in the Galapagos where we will be based on land (rather than on a cruise ship) with daily boat trips. This is a more economic option, thus opening up the amazing Galapagos Islands to more of my travellers) There will also be the option for an Ecuadorian Amazon jungle extension.

Spain and Portugal with Jill and Zlatko – September - This tour will feature some of the best sights and experiences in both Spain and Portugal, including the Andalusian cities of Seville, Granada and Cordoba, the capital Madrid and then into Portugal to the beautiful capital of Lisbon and the northern city of Porto. The tour will feature great accommodation, excellent food and wine and quality local guides.

Egypt and Jordan – November - I've run numerous tours to Jordan and am delighted to be going back there. In Jordan we'll visit the Roman ruins of Jerash, have the chance of a dip in both the Red and Dead seas, stay overnight in the legendary desert scenery of Wadi Rum and spend time in wonderful Petra where I have many friends, including our Jordanian guide, Harbi. Then it's on to Egypt and the spectacular new Grand Egyptian Museum (and the nearby pyramids and Sphinx) along with a cruise on the river Nile including Aswan and Luxor (and optional extension to Abu Simbel)

I maybe a bit biased but I reckon that all sounds pretty good! It's so exciting to be planning great experiences for you again and, once again, thank you so much for sticking with me over what has been a difficult couple of years which has meant I'm now able to be working really hard to help us all make up for lost travel time!

Very best wishes

Jill