



Jill Worrall Tours August 2023 Newsletter

Hi Everyone

Two weeks today (at time of writing this) I will be landing in Barcelona to begin a three-week tour of Spain and Portugal. Nine people will be flying in with me and we'll be meeting up with another four tour members who are already in Europe.

I realised, long after my tour to Japan, that I had missed a chance for a small celebration while on tour there. Japan was the 100th country I've visited. I don't make a big deal of statistics like this, but it is still quite a milestone, especially considering that I've visited many of these countries multiple times (more than 10 times to both Iran and Bhutan, for example, and nearly as many times to places such as India, Ireland and Croatia).

I have a fairly strict criteria about what I consider to be visiting a country - for example I've spent an hour or so in Mexico and passed through Sweden on a train, but I don't count those! I try to make sure I've slept at least one night in the country before I count it and that includes the continent of Antarctica where I've spent a night sleeping in a hole dug in the ice and snow on the Antarctic Peninsula.

So, I think I will have to do something to mark the occasion while in Spain!

2023-2024 Tours Update

My last tour for 2023 is Jordan and Egypt in November. It's another full tour and although I've been to Egypt before this will be my first time cruising the Nile (other than a rather incident-packed few hours on a felucca!). I wrote an article about this (I'd met up there briefly, with my Jordanian guide and some of his relatives some years back).

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/travel/luxor-sailing-the-nile-in-disguise/LHBYDQGS7N5X3OEW5XV6JCOPA/>

Scandinavia in Winter (Jan-Feb 2024) – a full tour again, this time to explore Sweden, Finland and Norway. Several of us who are off on this adventure have already had the fun of shopping for suitable boots and coats!

Last-minute vacancy: Due to an unexpected family event, I now have a vacancy on my 22-day Epic Scandinavia tour, departing NZ on 27 Jan 2024.

This has been an incredibly popular tour and has been full for some time so, for a space to become available now on what will be a once-only tour, is a rare opportunity for someone. The vacancy is for a single traveller so the single supplement will apply. But this is a very special chance to visit Sweden, Finland and Norway - experience sleighrides, ice-fishing, an ice hotel and a multi-night Norwegian cruise and much more. If you want to know more, please contact Moray as soon as possible.

Vietnam and Cambodia (March 2024) – this tour is also full and I am so looking forward to spending more time on the Mekong River after a few days cruising along it during my Myanmar and Laos tour a few years back.



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Central America: Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama (April 30-May 21, 2024) – the full itinerary and all price details is due to be sent out over the next two weeks to everyone who has registered their interest in this tour. It's taken longer than we expected because flights to and from Central-South America are extremely difficult to organise from NZ - it's given Moray more than a few headaches! If you haven't registered interest in this tour already I do suggest that you do so very soon as numbers are limited and LATAM (the only airline offering direct flights between South America and New Zealand) will allocate us only **four** business class seats for the flight from Auckland to Santiago, Chile, (we transfer to and from Central America from here) and the same number for the return flight. There's a little more information about this tour later in this newsletter.

Epic Eastern Canada (June 18 – July 9, 2024) – this tour will be ready to launch soon and you can read about some of the tour highlights below.

Zambia, Botswana and Namibia (September 02 – September 26, 2024) – another complex tour to organise (one very good reason why coming on a JWT makes very good sense as trying to organise travel through multiple countries, or provinces in the case of Canada) is extremely complicated and time-consuming!

South India, (November 2024) – the itinerary is organised but airlines don't release their confirmed flight schedules until about 10-11 months before our departure dates so this itinerary will be due to be released either later this year or early in 2024.

2025

It's been heartening to hear back from many of you who are enthusiastic about my plans for 2025. We're working on details of these tours now and as the year progresses, I will have more to tell you.

As a quick update the plan is:

March: Sri Lanka and the Seychelles.

May: A comprehensive tour of Turkey.

June: Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides.

July-August: Greenland, Faroes and Iceland.

September: The Pamir Highway (Tajikistan) and Uzbekistan.

November: Java by rail. This will be my 2025 short-haul tour option.

Jill's Journey Club and Refer a Friend

Eligibility for membership of Jill's Journey Club (which entitles members to a **2.5 per cent discount** on future tours) is back in force as is the **\$500 discount** on your next tour if you refer a friend to one of my tours and they subsequently book.

Eligibility criteria for Jill's Journey Club and Refer a Friend are as follows:

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Jill's Journey Club

Now travel is back to pre-covid levels and once again we have a full international travel programme, we are re starting our Journey Club for new members. Everyone who has been on two international (international being further than NZ/Australia) Jill Worrall Tours automatically becomes a member of the Club and is entitled to a 2.5 per cent discount for any subsequent tours they book and pay for.

Please do remember though that to get this discount you must book direct through Moray at House of Travel, Riccarton. We are looking now for potential new members and will be in contact if you qualify but unfortunately, we cannot offer any Journey Club discounts in retrospect to any tours that have already been paid for and/or departed.

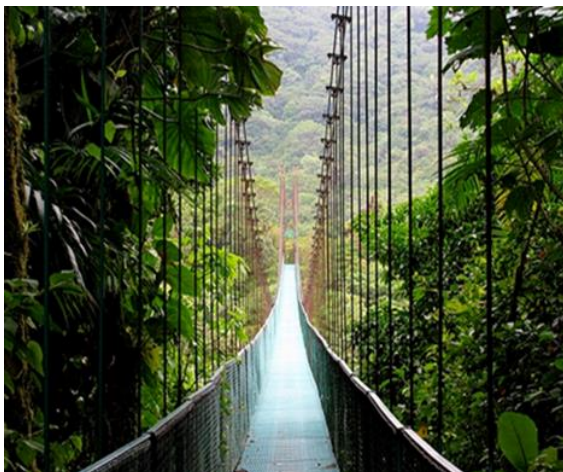
Re introduction of our "Book A Friend Bonus "

We are also delighted to re-introduce our "book a friend bonus". From the date of receipt of this newsletter, if you recommend a tour to anyone and they then book and pay for a tour you will receive a \$500 discount per person off the next Jill Worrall Tour you book. It is important that after you have made a recommendation that you do let Moray know as soon as possible so that she can record who has recommended whom!

Staying on the Wild Side in Costa Rica

It's always a bit risky to sing the praises of specific hotels too far in advance of a tour (very occasionally hotels have to be changed at the last minute) but I do want to give you an insight into the real delights of the kinds of hotels we will be using in Costa Rica.

In Tortugero National Park on the Caribbean Sea coast our hotel can only be reached by boat or by air. It's set within the rainforest, has its own pool, jungle walks and even a rainforest canopy walkway in the grounds. With fewer than 30 rooms, it's a small-scale facility right in the forest. Wildlife to be found in the grounds include sloths, capuchin and howler monkeys, along with dozens of birds including macaws and toucans. I loved lying in bed here listening to the howler monkeys as they whooped and hollered through the trees all around me.



The Arenal region of Costa Rica is famed for its hot springs, but we won't have to visit a separate hot springs complex, with all the palaver of tickets, changing rooms and so on because our hotel has its own hot springs with limestone-paved pool, a swim-up bar with volcanic rocks as bar stools, all in a tropical garden setting. This garden, incidentally, has recorded sightings of nearly 140 different species of birds.

This month's feature tour

The Atlantic Provinces of Canada, June 18 – July 9, 2024

This tour, many months in the planning, features the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. It's a part of Canada that, although still largely off the radar of New Zealand travellers, offers warm hospitality from the locals, comfortable authentic accommodation and great food. All of which enhance a stunning maritime region full of history, diverse cultures and spectacular scenery.

I've scheduled this tour to coincide with excellent opportunities to see whales in one of the best whale-watching areas of the world, puffins and even icebergs, which drift south along the Labrador Sea at this time of year.

Our tour begins in Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia, after flying from NZ via Vancouver. The Nova Scotia part of the tour includes the Unesco World Heritage-listed historic town of Lunenburg, the Grand-Pre-National Historic Site that tells the story of the Acadian settlers and the working fishing village of Peggy's Cove.

On Prince Edward Island we will learn about the First Nations people of the region and experience a traditional hall-style lobster supper, walk around historic Charlottetown and, of course, visit the Green Gables Heritage Site.

We'll be visiting Cape Breton Island with its Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, drive the famous scenic highway, the Cabot Trail, go whale watching and taking an overnight ferry to Newfoundland. Here, we'll drive through the Unesco-listed Gros Morne National Park (later in the tour we'll have a cruise on the breathtaking Western Brook Pond) before crossing by ferry to the Labrador Peninsula. Very few tours make the trip to this remote region which was first settled about 9000 years ago.



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Once back in Newfoundland we will check out the reminders of Viking settlements at the Unesco-listed L'Anse-aux-Meadows National Historic Site, look for icebergs along Iceberg Alley and stay at a cottage complex where E. Annie Le Proulx wrote the *Shipping News*.

We'll go whale watching again on the Gulf of St Lawrence, which attracts the world's highest concentration of humpback whales in migration season, and where there are good chances of seeing bald eagles on the wing and moose on the shores.

As we travel across Newfoundland we'll stop in Gander (where, after the Twin Towers attacks on 9/11, 38 international flights and 7000 passengers were stranded when the world's airports shut down) and visit some of the world's most picturesquely located lighthouses at Cape Bonavista and Long Point.

Our tour ends in St John's, the capital of Newfoundland and Labrador and one of North America's oldest towns. As well as exploring the town we'll also visit the continent's largest puffin colony and Cape Spear lighthouse, the oldest in the province.



This is definitely a one-off tour that would be very difficult to organise on one's own, especially as we will be accompanied throughout by an expert Canadian guide and is a far more comprehensive tour of the region than most others out there.

As some of the places we are staying in are relatively small, space on this tour will be limited. So, if you would like to register your interest and receive a copy of the itinerary as soon as it is available, do get in touch with Moray or me as soon as possible.

On the home front

It's hard to believe that we're now talking about Natey starting school at the start of the 2024 school year. He has been asking me where rocks come from so, I've made a start on sedimentary and volcanic rocks. He then wanted to know how rocks formed under the sea and get to the surface, so I'll be working on ways to explain tectonic movements as the year goes on. My dear, late Mum who was the family's keenest amateur geologist would have been delighted.

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Zoe wants in on everything Natey does, which this week prompted him to shut her in the laundry while he 'cooked' a bbq. When it was pointed out she might be scared in there, he opened the door, turned on the light, and shut the door again. Their wee cousin Georgia is climbing everything in sight so I think Jono will already be working out how soon he can introduce her to a climbing wall!

Derek is fine and I'm just in the throes of preparing his 'things to do while I'm away' list which I know he looks forward to (and I suspect, frantically works through about two days before I get home...).

All the best

Jill

Zoe....in a rare moment of sitting still. Note: Her wee boots were bought on my last tour to Spain and a few of you were there to help in the purchase!

