

## Hi Everyone

We're truly in the depths of mid-winter now but although I know it's going to get colder before spring, I do think that the tiny bit more daylight each day definitely helps.

In the Burrows/Meadowcroft-Chishimba households we're counting down the days (I think Atkins is actually calculating it by the hour!) to our week-long holiday in Samoa this month. It's only been delayed by four years! Originally it was going to be Tonga but sadly, the small family resort we were going to stay on there was totally swept away in the tsunami, so we had to change nations!

So, spending a few days in warmth and sunshine is something we're all looking forward to! Although I have no tours running in the depths of winter this year there are tours coming up that promise warm days and balmy nights, so here's the latest on what's coming up in the world of Jill Worrall Tours.

## South India

November 09 – November 28



We are so close to be able to making this tour a confirmed departure but to be completely open, we need two or three more bookings before we can do this! I absolutely do not want to cancel this tour, especially as some of the people who have booked have been waiting about four years for this tour (another consequence of the pandemic, just like my family holiday!)

If you've never thought about South India rather than the much better known northern Indian destinations such as Rajasthan, then do think again! Especially as this will 100 per cent be my last tour to India before I decide it's time to retire!

South India is at the heart of Indian Hindu culture and THE place to gain some understanding of Hindu spirituality and to admire the spectacular architecture of its temples. The scale, the colours, and the vibrant life around and in the temples are like nowhere else on earth.



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What also strikes me about the south every time I visit is the genuine warmth and friendliness of the people. Whereas sometimes in the more touristy centres in Rajasthan you can feel like the only contact people want to have is to sell you something or take you to their brother's cousin's jewellery store, in the south people mostly want to say hello and welcome you. It's much more low-key and genuine.

The food too is wonderful - whether you're a carnivore, omnivore, vegetarian, or vegan there's delicious dishes to suit everyone. I love having freshly made dosa (wafer-thin rice pancakes stuffed with lightly spiced potato) for breakfast, Keralan prawn curry and beautifully fresh tropical fruit.

South India is also lushly beautiful, with forests and tea plantations covering the hills, rice paddies where you can still see buffalo pulling ploughs and groves of coconut palms fringing the warm tropical seas that surround it.

This will be small group travel at its best with flexibility for unscheduled stops, individual interests and all in the company of a great guide (several of the people on this tour have travelled with Kush before so that's a real testament to his knowledge and wonderful personality). I've packed the itinerary with some fantastic experiences – from cruising the Kerala backwaters, an evening of sparkle and lights at a maharaja's palace, a hotel stay with your own personal plunge pool and in a heritage home still full of original antiques and family portraits and visits to spectacular architectural masterpieces.

India can be a challenging destination, especially if you are the one having to work out tipping, where is safe to eat, where to shop and so on but on this tour, you have me and Kush to look after all that. We will be working tirelessly to make sure all you have to do is enjoy yourself!

There is still time to book this tour, there won't be another to South India with JWT so do get in touch if you'd like to join me!

## How are things going for 2025?

### Totally Turkey

**April 29 – May 20**

Although this is my second tour for 2025 it's the first to be launched, not the least because the Turkish operator is under pressure to confirm our hotels. Turkey is always super-popular, so hotel rooms are always in huge demand.

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Bookings are coming in already and we're not far off being able to make this tour a confirmed departure but it would be great to have more bookings soon so that I don't lose some of the hotels I've carefully chosen, like the small hotel in the heart of the historic Sultanahmet quarter of Istanbul where we will be based for a total of five nights (four at the start of the tour).

As well as more time in Istanbul than most other tours (including a cruise along the Bosphorus almost to the Black Sea) and a gentle walking tour of fascinating neighbourhoods well away from the main tourist routes, we will have a short trip by boat along the Gallipoli beaches, stay in a cave hotel in Cappadocia and travel far to the east to Lake Van and the astounding UNESCO-listed monuments of Nemrud Dagi. This is about as comprehensive tour of Turkey as is possible to fit into three weeks (a length of tour I think is ideal to be long enough but not to become too exhausting!)

As well as guided tours around famous monuments such as the Roman ruins of Ephesus and the Topkapi Place in Istanbul, there will be a chance to take a dip in thermal pools close to where legend has it that Cleopatra once bathed. There will also be free time to explore on your own, shop in what must be one of the best countries in the world for such an array of beautiful things from ceramics to glass, spices to carpets. You can also sip Turkish coffee, or a local beer overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and literally experience to Turkish delight!

I absolutely love Turkey and I know you won't be disappointed. There won't be a second chance to come with a real enthusiast (me!) on such a comprehensive tour.

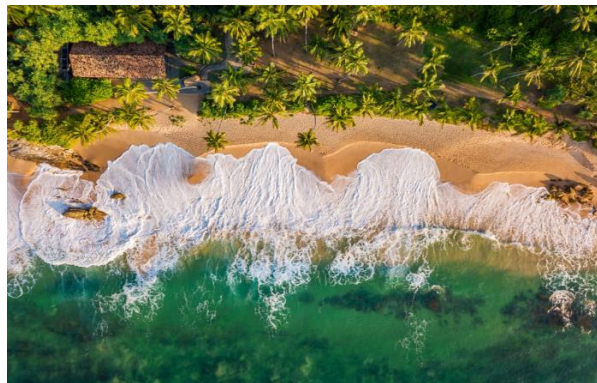


## **Sri Lanka and the Seychelles**

**March 17– April 07, 2025**

If are waiting for the full itinerary and prices for this tour you won't need to wait much longer. There's been a delay because the airline we use for the flights to and from the Seychelles direct from Sri Lanka is taking much longer than other airlines to release its 2025 schedule. As soon as it does, the itinerary will be emailed to you. If you're not already on the list to receive this, do get in touch soon.

This tour features a very comprehensive tour around Sri Lanka, including all the ancient cities in the north, the hill country kingdom of Kandy, and a trip on one of the most famous and scenic steam rail excursions in the world. Plus, two nights in a national park known for its population of leopards and four nights in the tropical beauty of the Seychelles.



## **The Scottish Isles – Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides**

**June 05 – June 25, 2025**

Again, we're just waiting on the final flight details for this tour. I've written the detailed itinerary and it's ready to go once we receive these. I'm so pleased with the itinerary – there are neolithic ruins dating back 5000 years, Viking settlements, wildlife and wildflowers, a whisky distillery, castles, lochs and a trip on one of the most famous and scenic steam rail excursions in the world.

Islands include Shetland, Orkney, Lewis and Harris, Benbecula, North Uist, Eriksay, Barra and Vatersay. We will have an expert Scottish guide with us throughout the tour but there will also be free time to relax, explore, take a bike, brave a swim and much more!



## **Greenland, Iceland and The Faroes (approx. 24 July to 12 August 2025) and The Pamir Highway (September 2025)**

These tours are also now waiting on finalised flight details and the full itinerary and prices will be released over the coming months.

### **Java by Rail**

#### **November 2025**

This tour is in the planning stages and more details will be released later in 2025.

#### **And 2026?**

I'm finalising my plans for 2026 but not going to reveal too much at present other than to say tours to four different continents are in the mix, including a trip closer to home for travellers who are not keen on long-haul journeys.

### **On the home front**

I'm very proud of my son Jono, who was a key member of a St John initiative that has made the finals of the Council of Ambulance Authorities Awards (an Australasian organisation). The winners will be announced in Melbourne next month.

It's all systems go for the trip to Samoa so there'll be a tour report with a difference next month! I'm doing my usual tour manager thing for the airport days but beyond that I'm taking a total backseat. Swimming with the grandchildren, Robert Louis Stevenson's house with Derek, cocktails with the adults, that's pretty much all I have planned. Rachel's in charge of the rest!

More tour news next month and do get in touch by email or text if you'd like any more information on any of the tours I've mentioned here. I know sometimes that people are reluctant to book because they have questions but for some reason don't ask me! Most times these concerns are easily addressed so don't miss out on a once-in-a-lifetime experience – I'm always happy to help and will always answer as soon as possible)

**Stay warm and you can always plan a tour with me while doing so!**

**Best wishes**

**Jill**