



TRAVELERS CAN “LIVE LIKE A LOCAL” ON OFF-THE-TOURIST-BEATEN PATH VACATIONS WITH USTOA

NEW YORK – September XX, 2013 – For travelers seeking greater fulfillment and a deeper understanding of the regions they visit, taking the opportunity to journey off the tourist-beaten path and “live like a local” – by tasting honey at an artisanal beekeeper’s shop in Morocco, dressing in traditional mahout attire and learning to command and bathe elephants in Chiang Mai, Thailand or visiting galleries with a local artist along the Akureyri Art Trail in Iceland – adds a meaningful and memorable component to a vacation. Tour operator members of the [United States Tour Operators Association](#) (USTOA) offer inspiring global tour programs and packages that allow guests to forge deeper cultural connections to the people, traditions and customs of the places they are visiting.

USTOA’s President and CEO Terry Dale commented, “Today’s travelers want more than to just see a destination and check the major attractions off their bucket list, they want an intimate look at life beyond the main tourist sites. USTOA member tour operators provide limitless opportunities to do just that, along with the peace-of-mind that each program has been developed by knowledgeable and experienced professionals.”

From Peru to Thailand, authentic travel opportunities to “live like a local” offered by USTOA tour operator members include:

South America

Travelers on “Peruvian Legends,” a 12-night Discovery Tour from **Gate 1 Travel**, will visit a local school in Urumbamba, learn about traditional cuisine in a cooking class in Kenko, hear about local festivals, dances and costumes while eating lunch with the humble Aymara people, enjoy a demonstration on the intricate techniques and coloring of back-strap weaving from native women in Chinchero, and eat dinner in a Cuzco family home. Guests will also have the opportunity to relax in thermo-medicinal baths in Colca, get an intimate view of farming fields while hiking, and explore the picturesque temples and sanctuaries of the famous Machu Picchu. Available over numerous dates throughout 2014, prices start at \$2,699 per person based on double occupancy. Visit www.gate1travel.com for more information.

Europe

Uniworld Boutique River Cruises offers guests the opportunity to walk in the shoes of local citizens with its exclusive guided “Do as the Locals Do” program. These programs are offered in a variety of European cities on numerous itineraries, including the eight day “Enchanting Danube” from Budapest to Passau. In Budapest a local team will take guests to Market Hall via a metro ride to see how locals shop for their everyday necessities and in Vienna guests will visit a traditional coffee house to enjoy coffee and baked goods before enjoying a live show featuring a parade of 12 historical figures. Available over several departures dates March through November 2014, rates start at \$2,799 per person, cruise only, based on double occupancy. Visit www.uniworld.com for more details.

Regional arts, tastes and traditions are the focus of **General Tours World Traveler’s** seven day “Adventures Across Iceland” itinerary, during which groups no larger than 16 people explore the Akureyri Art Trail with a local artist and spend time with residents in their studios, galleries and local cafes. Additionally, while exploring the scenic yet remote northern coast, travelers will engage in authentic

encounters with locals eager to share insight into their lives as fishermen, micro-brewers and farmers. Available over several departure dates March through November 2014, prices start at \$3,399 per person based on double occupancy. Guests can save \$50 to \$200 per person when three or more friends and family travel together. For more information visit www.generaltours.com.

In addition to taking in the famed sites of Rome, such as the Trevi Fountain, Piazza di Pietra, Spanish Steps, Vatican City and St. Peter's Basilica, guests on **Celtic Tours World Vacations'** "Culinary Rome – Cooking and Tour of the Eternal City" journey will take part in a special walking tour hosted by a local chef. The tour visits the chef's favorite places to shop, including two bakeries for bread and sweets, a butcher shop in the Jewish Ghetto for special dried beef, and a local market for fresh produce. The tour culminates with a four hour cooking class, accompanied by local wines from the region. Available through October 31 and again in 2014, prices for this four night journey start at \$979 per person. Guests who use the promo code USTOAPR813 save 10 percent. Visit www.celtictours.com for more details.

Grand European Tours invites guests to visit a working rural olive mill for a hands-on experience and taste test, join locals in a village square for an Andalusian home-hosted lunch and enjoy an authentic, fiery flamenco show on its "14-day Spain, Morocco & Portugal" itinerary, available March through October 2014. Other highlights include a Moroccan feast with local entertainment, the world's largest gothic cathedral in Seville and the beautiful mosaic sidewalks on the Liberdade tree-lined boulevard in Lisbon. Prices from \$2,660 per person, based on double occupancy. For more information visit www.getours.com.

North America

On **Trafalgar's** 15-Day "Best of the West" discovery tour, guests will marvel at the sites of the Grand Canyon with a local geologist, learn about local agriculture and try a delicious date shake at the Coachella Valley Preserve, and browse boutique shops and visit local fruit stands in the quaint village of Carmel-by-the-Sea before enjoying a home cooked meal made of locally sourced food with hosts in Monterey. Other highlights a tour of the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, home of the Academy Awards, and a visit to the beautiful red-rock landscape of Sedona. Available January 17, February 14, October 4 and November 1, 2014, prices start at \$3,375 per person. Save up to \$338 per person if booked and paid in full by November 26, 2013. More information is available at www.trafalgar.com.

Australia

"Australia Uncovered" from **SWAIN Tours** offers a closer look at the wildlife, traditions and culture Down Under. On this 13 night voyage, available through March 31, 2014, guests help collect data on the population of wild koalas in You Yangs Park, learn about the importance of bush food to the people of central Australia from an Aboriginal host, and experience didgeridoo and firemaking demonstrations in Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. Travelers also have the opportunity to see the famous Tjapukai Dance Troupe, take a scenic hot air balloon flight and eat dinner in the historic Colonial Tramcar restaurant. Prices start at \$4,545 per person, based on double occupancy. Visit www.swaintours.com for additional information.

Asia

Pacific Delight Tours offers guests the opportunity to visit with locals at a farmer's home, a traditional market, a jade factory, and a countryside courtyard-style home known as a siheyuan on the twelve day itinerary "Imperial China & Yangtze River Cruise Gold Experience," available March 2014 through March 2015. Other trip highlights include a traditional performance of music and dance from the Tang Dynasty period, visits to Tiananmen Square, the Imperial Palace and the Great Wall, and a cruise along the Yangtze River with on board lectures, Tai Chi, Chinese language classes and more. Prices from \$3,299 per person, based on double occupancy, land only. More details can be found at www.pacificdelighttours.com.

The day-to-day life of elephants and the mahouts, or trainers that take care of them, is the focus of **Travel IndoChina's** "Lampang Elephant Conservation Mahout Program" in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Guests will dress in traditional mahout attire, meet the staff and learn the language used to command elephants, before being paired with a designated animal. Guests then bathe their elephant, ride it and participate in an elephant show. Available through March 2015, prices for a full day program start at \$286 per person. Two and three-day itineraries are also offered. For more information visit www.travelindochina.com.

Africa

Goway Travel invites travelers to fully immerse themselves in Moroccan life with an insider look at the flavors of the country on the 11 day "Morocco Foodie Tour" itinerary, available November 1, 2013, March 20, 2014, May 1, 2014, June 26, 2014 and September 25, 2014. On this extraordinary journey, guests will visit women-cooperatives to learn about saffron, the most important spice in Moroccan cooking, taste honey at an artisanal beekeeper's shop, tour a couscous co-op, and compare modern and traditional forms of olive oil production. The tour also includes two cooking demonstrations led by local chefs and grocery shopping in a number of regional markets. Prices from \$3,013 per person, based on double occupancy. More details can be found at www.goway.com.

For questions and more information on USTOA, visit www.ustoa.com, call 212-599-6599, or email information@ustoa.com.

About USTOA:

Representing more than \$10 billion in revenue, the member companies of U.S. Tour Operators Association provide tours, packages and custom arrangements that allow six million travelers annually unparalleled access, insider knowledge, peace-of-mind, value and freedom to enjoy destinations and experiences across the entire globe. Each member company has met the travel industry's highest standards, including participation in the USTOA's Travelers Assistance Program, which protects consumer payments up to \$1 million if the company goes out of business.

As a voice for the tour operator industry for 40 years, USTOA also provides education and assistance for consumers and travel agents.

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