

USTOA MEMBERS “GO FOR THE GOLD” WITH TRAVEL PACKAGES FOR OLYMPIC GAME ENTHUSIASTS



(Photo Credit: Sven Olof-Lindblad/Lindblad Expeditions)

NEW YORK – March 15, 2012 – As the 2012 Olympic clock counts down in the heart of Trafalgar Square in London, anticipation for this year’s games continues to build, inspiring travelers to join the celebration. In addition to tours to London and Great Britain this summer, USTOA members capture the spirit of traveling to an Olympic destination with an exciting array of tour programs that include sites from past Olympic Games held around the world.

“It’s a big year for tourism in London and throughout Great Britain and there are still plenty of opportunities for travelers to visit in 2012,” said Terry Dale, president of USTOA. “Past Olympic sites serve as fascinating destinations as well, especially in an Olympic year, and USTOA members offer sports fans and travelers in general the opportunity to experience the legacy of these historic games all over the globe.”

From Beijing and Whistler to Olympia in Greece, cradle of the Olympic Games beginning in 776 BC, below is a sampling of USTOA member offerings:

Olympic Destination Highlights:

- “Greek Odyssey,” a nine-day family program from Adventures by Disney, begins with private guided tours to some of the greatest archaeological sites in history: Athens, the sacred Acropolis and Olympic Stadium, **Panathinaiko, where the first modern Olympics** were held in 1896. Reconstructed from the remains of an ancient Greek stadium that dates to 566 BC, Panathinaiko is the only Olympic Stadium made from white marble. The program continues through Santorini to Spinalonga and Karouzanous before departing from Crete. www.adventuresbydisney.com Insight Vacations’ “Glories of Greece” eight-day tour, available April through October, also highlights a visit to Olympia featuring a special tour of the original Olympic Games site including the Gymnasium and Olympic Stadium. www.insightvacations.com

- “Norway’s Fjords & Arctic Svalbard,” from Lindblad Expeditions, is a 16-day expedition aboard the *National Geographic Explorer*, with departures on May 27 and August 13. The exploration of the Norwegian coastline includes a stay in **Oslo, site of the Olympic Games in 1952**, noteworthy for a number of “firsts” including the return of Japan and Germany to the Games following the aftermath of World War II, and the first triple jump in an international skating competition performed by Dick Button of the US. Also of note: the May 27 departure features guest lecturer Keith Bellows, editor-in-chief of National Geographic Traveler, author of the 1998 Winter Olympics ACCESS Guide for ABC-TV and founder of the Media Development group who launched the “1996 Guide to the Atlanta Olympics.” www.expeditions.com
- Tauck’s “Grand Autumn New England” available September and October, includes a visit to **Lake Placid, New York**, home of the **1932 and 1980 Winter Olympic Games** and the Olympic Ski Jumping Complex where guests will learn about the athletes who medaled there and enjoy a ski jumping demonstration. This 11-day itinerary begins in Boston and travels to Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and upstate New York, additional highlights include private Tauck schooner cruise on Boothbay Harbor in Maine and a behind the scenes tour of Ben & Jerry's ice cream factory. www.tauck.com
- SITA World Tours offers a number tour vacations to China that include the home of the **2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing**. SITA’s “Essence of China with Yangtze River Cruise” is a 12-day tour from Beijing to Shanghai, with a four-day cruise on the famed Yangtze River. Among the ancient attractions included in Beijing are visits to Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City – the 250-acre Palace with 9000 rooms which opened to the public in 1949 – and the Summer Palace. Not so ancient sites include the Bird’s Nest, the Beijing National Stadium built for the Olympics and recognized world-wide for its unusual nest-like design. www.sitatours.com
- The majestic Blackcomb Mountain in the mountain resort of **Whistler, British Columbia**, was the venue for the bobsled, luge and skeleton competitions during the **2010 Winter Olympic Games**. With multiple departure dates through September, Globus’ “Spirit of the Rockies” 12-day package through the Canadian Rockies begins in Vancouver and includes the Rocky Mountaineer train over the Continental Divide to breathtaking Banff National Park. From Lake Louise, it’s on to spectacular towering peaks and hanging glaciers of Jasper Park Lodge and then Whistler before returning to Vancouver. www.globusjourneys.com.

- Travelers can experience “Barcelona at Its Best” with go–today’s six–night vacation package to the home of the **1992 Summer Olympic Games**, noteworthy for being the last Summer Games to be staged within the same year as the Winter Games. Available March through October, optional sightseeing tours include Barcelona’s Olympic Stadium and Ring. www.go-today.com
- Goway Travel’s “Sydney Plus” is a five–day program available April 1 – March 31 with two nights in **Sydney, home of the 2000 Olympic Games**, before traversing the Blue Mountain Range to the Hunter Valley, home of Australia's major wine producing areas. The visit to Sydney offers an in–depth and active couple of days, including guided walking tours, Sydney Harbour cruise and visits to the Opera House, Watson’s Bay and Taronga Zoo. www.goway.com
- “National Parks of America,” a 12–day program from Collette Vacations offer travelers a two–night stay in **Salt Lake City, Utah**, host of the **2002 Winter Olympic Games**. Various departures from May to October showcase Yellowstone Park, the Grand Canyon, and the great Sioux Nations Territory before seeing Mt. Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Monument. www.collettevacations.com

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

About USTOA:

The member companies of U.S. Tour Operators Association provide tours, packages and custom arrangements that allow travelers 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.

***Editor Note:** Information was provided by individual companies and was correct at time of writing. All tours/packages subject to availability.*

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