

The Silver Traveller

EXPLORE THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

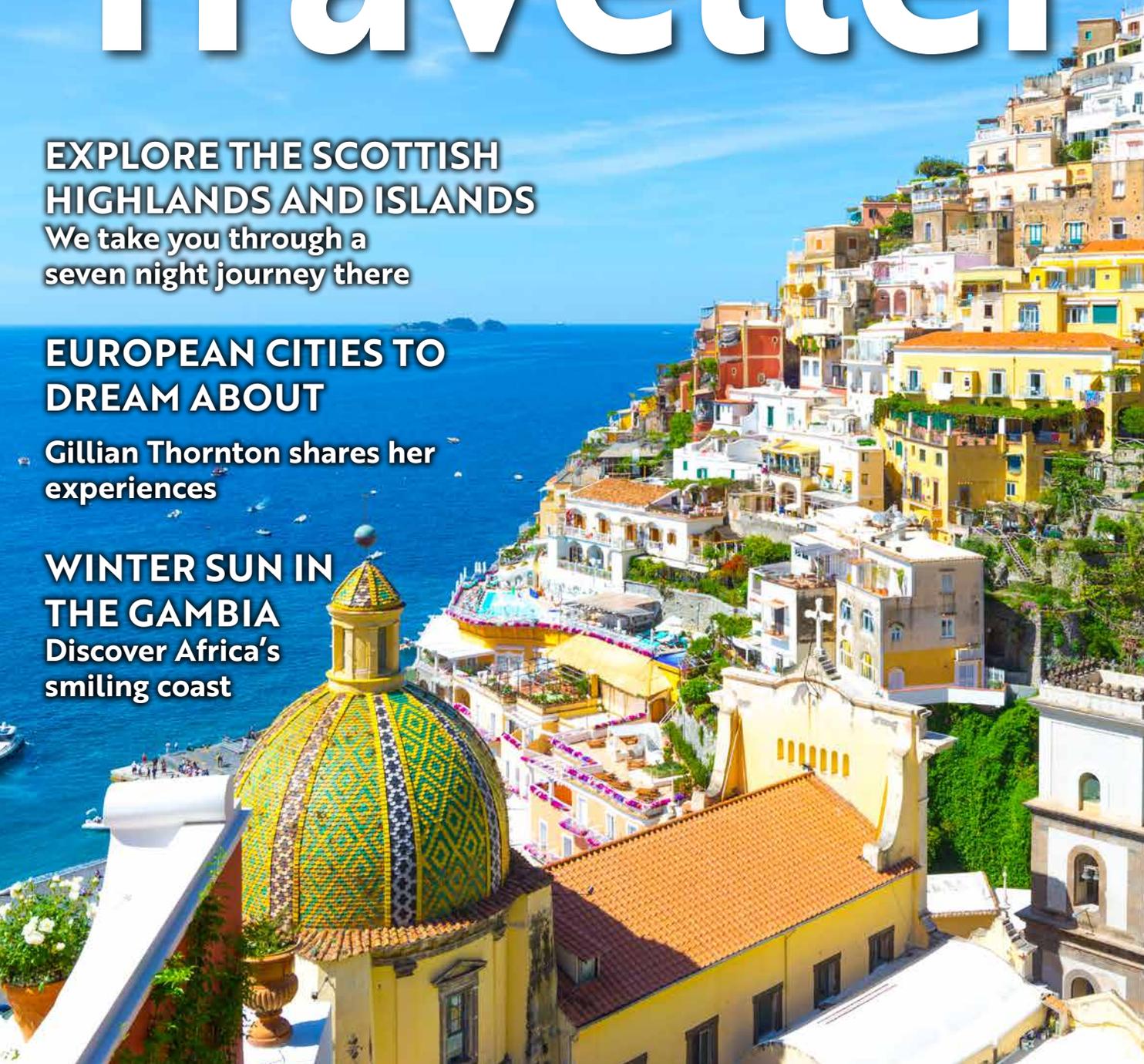
We take you through a seven night journey there

EUROPEAN CITIES TO DREAM ABOUT

Gillian Thornton shares her experiences

WINTER SUN IN THE GAMBIA

Discover Africa's smiling coast



Brought to you by your local Advantage travel agent

WELCOME

TO THE SILVER TRAVELLER

This is the first edition of The Silver Traveller for 2021 after a year like no other, and we hope you enjoy the read as you plan for and dream about your next holiday, wherever it may be. The hardest part about writing this introduction is not knowing when you will be reading it. At this moment (February 2021), there's a positive mood in the air after difficult and challenging times.

The vaccine is steadily making its way through the decades, and we know that many silver travellers are yearning to go away on holiday again, after nearly a year of what feels like continuous restrictions of one kind or another. After cancelling and postponing so many trips, we're all hoping that 2021 will be a year when plans and dreams become reality. After all, there's a limit to how much time you can spend planning the next meal or walk! So, we've approached the publication of our new edition of The Silver Traveller magazine with positive spirits with an aim to inspire you with a range of different holiday styles, near and far.

It almost goes without saying, but please check the latest government updates before you book a holiday and make sure you have the right travel insurance. We also strongly advise booking with your local travel agent, they offer excellent impartial advice, can ensure your booking is financially protected and includes flexible booking conditions, should you need to change your plans.

We wish you, with careful optimism, happy and safe travels ahead, whether that is later this year, in 2022 or beyond. And in the same vein, we look forward to the decade ahead. We hope you will stay with us on our journey.



Debbie Marshall and Jennie Carr

Debbie *Jennie*

Book your holiday with confidence

Silver Travel Advisor has partnered with Advantage Travel Partnership, the UK's largest consortium for independent travel agents, to help provide you with trusted recommendations of who to book your travel with.

Our recent research has highlighted more people now plan to use high street travel agents to book their holidays, because of the advice and expertise travel agents provide, and for reassurance of having someone to help if needed.

There are over 350 travel agency businesses who are part of the Advantage Travel Partnership, spread across the UK. Member agencies offer you a wider range of products and services than many other larger, non-independent, travel companies, and ensure your money is financially secure, the service you receive is exemplary, and you enjoy exceptional value for money.



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UK

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland

Retired Broadcasting and Satellite Executive, Peter Marshall toured Scotland in September, and shares his experiences and tips for those who are seeking an adventure within the UK.

This was a first time visit to see whether Scotland lived up to its reputation - and it succeeded beyond all expectations. For a late September trip, we took waterproofs, boots, umbrellas and warm sweaters but needed none of them. The weather was dry, partly sunny and 15-17 degrees every day!

The trip began in Edinburgh, where we enjoyed the open top bus tour, stopping to see more of Holyrood House (an excellent tour and commentary), the new Parliament Building and in the Queens Gallery - a quite

remarkable display of Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical drawings. In the evening, we discovered and can thoroughly recommend Hewat's Restaurant near the University area to the south of the city centre.

Then it was northwards to the Inverness area and the small town of Beaulieu on the southern edge of the Highlands. This was a base for a day-trip eastwards to Nairn on the Moray Firth and the historic Culloden Battlefield, where the displays in the visitor centre were dramatic and state-of-the-art. This route also encompassed the Cardhu Distillery (just one of the several it was difficult to pass - among the total of 102 distilleries in Scotland). From Beaulieu, it was also quite easy to head into the more spectacular scenery of the Highlands and take a gentle climb in the foothills



Isle of Skye



Ben Nevis



Edinburgh

of Ben Wyvis. On the way back, we diverted eastwards to Black Island where we watched a beautiful sunset from the terrace of Kinkell House before dinner.

Our itinerary then took us through the mountains and down to Ullapool, once a thriving port where a fleet of over 30 steamers provided links to the west coast islands - but now a small but attractive fishing port. From here we were recommended by the tourist office to take the coastal route to Skye and every view surpassed the previous one as we rounded each loch and bay.

Over the bridge to Skye might not have the same ring as “Over the Sea.....” but the rewards are still there in an island which is much larger than expected, with its own mountain ranges and lochs and varied scenery (and distilleries). In the north of the island was Dunvegan Castle, still occupied by the McLeod of McLeod family and full of traditional Scottish history. We stayed at Carbost on the edge of Loch Harport (close to the Talisker distillery). And in the same part of the island was Three Chimneys, a well-known Michelin-rated restaurant with some unique items on the menu - more affordable for lunch than dinner!

Then it was time to head south again, admiring Ben Nevis from a distance and driving through the Grampian Mountains to find the small town of Crieff in Perthshire and the excellent Barley Bree ‘restaurant with rooms’ in the nearby village of Muthill.

Also nearby was Drummond Castle with its quite stunning formal gardens which more than compensated for the fact that the castle itself is still occupied and not open to the public.

And so, the seven-day tour ended with the journey back over the Forth Bridge to Edinburgh, leaving us with memories and images of the Highlands and Islands, the history and traditions, the distilleries and the full Scottish breakfasts. Memories which will last for years!

SILVER FACTS

This route and itinerary was self-made - but it can be recommended to any Silver Traveller seeking a flavour of Scotland in a week (but we cannot promise the weather will always be so good)! To find out more and to plan your own itinerary of Scotland, contact your local Advantage travel agent.



UK

A visit to Blenheim Palace



Something as simple as a day trip is something we're all missing at the moment, but we can continue to plan ahead for those places we're wanting to see when it's safe to do so. With that in mind, we've shared Travel Writer, Gillian Thornton's experience and tips for a visit at the mighty Blenheim Palace, as we look forward to being able to visit again in the future.

You never forget your first visit to Blenheim Palace, UNESCO World Heritage Site and birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. Designed by Jon Vanbrugh in the early 18th century, the grandiose mansion set in rolling Oxfordshire parkland makes a dramatic statement from any angle.

Blenheim Palace was built for military commander John Churchill by his sovereign Queen Anne, a thank you for saving Europe from the French at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. Even Churchill didn't get that kind of thank you. I can still clearly remember the impact of my first visit in the early '60s with my parents. To a young schoolgirl like me, Sir Winston Churchill was a rotund and revered gentleman who had won World War II for Britain. So, to come here and see the room where he had been born in 1874 and a lock of his baby curls was something that sparked in me a lifelong love of history. Suddenly the man seen only in B&W became a colourful human being.

If this is your first visit, my must-see sights would be the magnificent State Rooms (free tours depart regularly) with their tapestries, sumptuous furnishings, and colourful family stories, the exhibition of Churchill memorabilia including childhood letters written from boarding school, and the ornate formal gardens close to

the Palace. If time permits, walk along the Great Lake past the Temple of Diana, where Winston proposed to his beloved Clementine, and up to the Grand Cascade, or follow the avenue to the Column of Victory for a panoramic view back to the Palace.

For those with limited mobility - or just tired legs - a 20-minute buggy tour will show you the highlights of the park (small charge). Wheelchairs and mobility scooters can be hired free of charge at the Flagstaff Visitor Information Point with a refundable deposit (best to phone ahead, especially in peak season). Just allow a little extra time for your visit. Even top 18th century architects didn't have the foresight to build for today's wheelchair users, so be prepared to sometimes take a longer way round.

And of course, no country house visit would be complete without appropriate refreshments. Blenheim Palace offers a variety of eating options, but I can personally vouch for the tiny sandwiches and savoury tarts, the miniature cakes and scrumptious scones included on the Traditional Afternoon Tea served in the new Orangery restaurant. After all, we all know there are no calories in cake eaten at heritage properties!!

SILVER FACTS

To find out more about making a trip to Blenheim Palace into a short UK break, contact your local Advantage travel agent, who can put together all of the arrangements for you.

Explore the UK with us



Explore the Dorset Coast

Enjoy a coastal getaway on the Isle of Portland, near Weymouth.

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2 nights from £114.50pp



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Escape to North Yorkshire

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Contact your local travel agent for more information

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Attractions of Snowdonia



Having explored Snowdonia, Travel Writer, David Powell has shared his experiences with us to inspire those of us who love outdoors and enjoy getting to know local cultures and history.

Snowdonia National Park is truly an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are unsurpassed views with Snowdon itself peaking at 1085 metres, mountain railways, historic castles galore, pretty coastal towns, wonderfully restored steam trains and so much more. Here are just a few of the attractions I visited on my trip.

Portmeirion Village

The famous Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis certainly picked a fabulous spot in 1925 when he embarked on creating the inspirational village and gardens known as Portmeirion. Finally completed in 1976, it has sensational views across the estuary, and I was able to wander and experience a charming, quirky world of meandering streets and cliff top towers. There are shops, cafés, an ice cream parlour and a lovely luxury hotel with a fine dining restaurant. The village is surrounded by over 70 acres of sub-tropical gardens and woodlands and there are lakes and miles of pathways with set routes to discover.

Castles and Culture

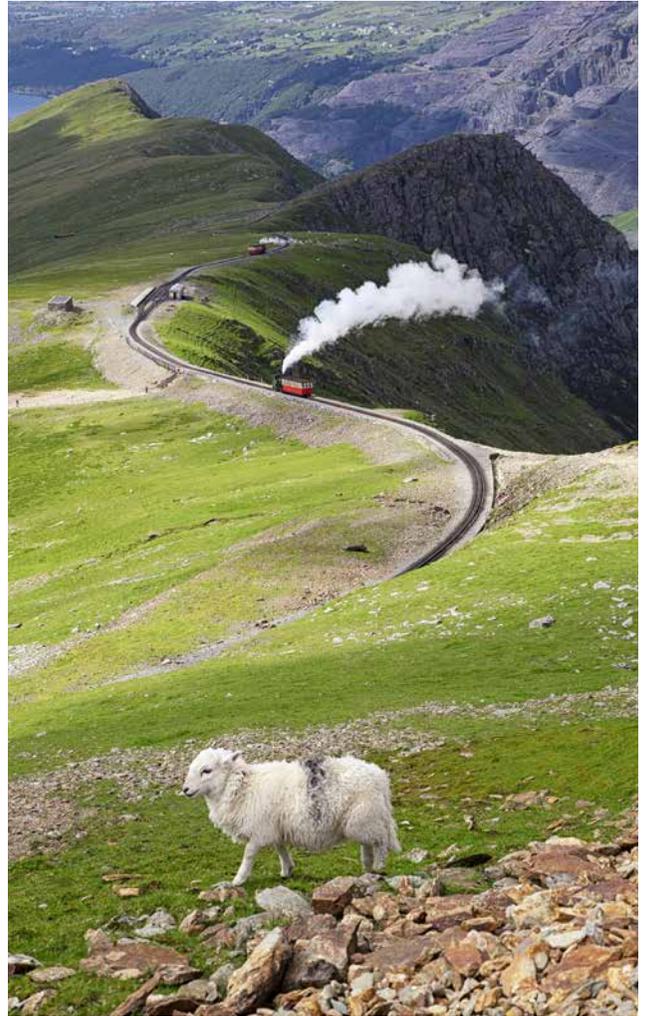
There are castles galore in Wales, and Snowdonia has its fair share. Probably one of the best known is Harlech Castle. Spectacularly located, Harlech Castle was built by Edward I and now keeps a watchful eye over Snowdonia with panoramic views of the sea and mountains from its lofty battlements.

The structure boasts two rings of walls and towers with an immensely strong east gatehouse. It was impregnable from almost every angle and its secret weapon was a 61 metre long stairway, which still leads from the castle to the cliff base.

Today a visit to Harlech Castle is a great day out. A newly installed 'floating' bridge connects the castle with the visitor centre, which is an integral part of the whole experience.

The Welsh Highland Railway

This is the UK's longest heritage line, running for 25 miles from Caernafon all the way to Porthmadog. The views on your journey are spectacular and travelling on



this railway is an exciting adventure and a super way to see the best of Snowdonia. To cope with its sharp curves and steep gradients, the railway uses huge Beyer-Garratt locomotives, the largest two-foot gauge steam trains that you can see anywhere in the world. Once your destination has been reached there is time to explore before rejoining the train for the return journey.

Holidays and UK breaks are back in fashion in a big way, especially right now, and I'm sure you'll find Snowdonia ticks many boxes. I have just covered three attractions, but there are many more!

SILVER FACTS

To book a holiday in Wales, contact your local Advantage travel agent.



UK

Isle of Man Magic

We are...the adventurers who surf the wake in the foam tipped waves and roam coastlines carved by Mother Nature herself...

Dive into rich history and ever-changing landscapes to uncover a place where tradition lies alongside enchanting stories of giants, fairies and cats with no tails. Ancient monuments, historic castles and museums narrate the 10,000 year story of the extraordinary lives of our ancestors. Follow in the footsteps of Vikings, experience how the Kings and Lords of Mann lived, trace the island's heroic poignant war story and journey through the legendary motor racing history which is over 100 years old. Experience the traditional crofting way of life at a living museum where Manx history comes to life or visit one of the famous landmarks - the iconic Great Laxey Wheel and the four-tiered Tynwald Hill.

Ride on the most impressive network of heritage railways in the British Isles, powered by electricity, steam and horsepower. Explore the south of the island on the Steam Railway or take the Manx Electric Railway up to the bustling harbour town of Ramsey. Aboard the Snaefell Mountain Railway and wind your way up 2,000ft to the summit where on a clear day you can take in spectacular views of the Seven Kingdoms of Mann, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the sea and heaven.

The island's coastal paths, country lanes, forests and glens provide the ideal playground for adventurers of all ages. Its UNESCO World Biosphere status recognises the island's unique way of life and its drive to preserve the nature, wildlife, culture and heritage. After an action packed day, discover why the Isle of Man is a



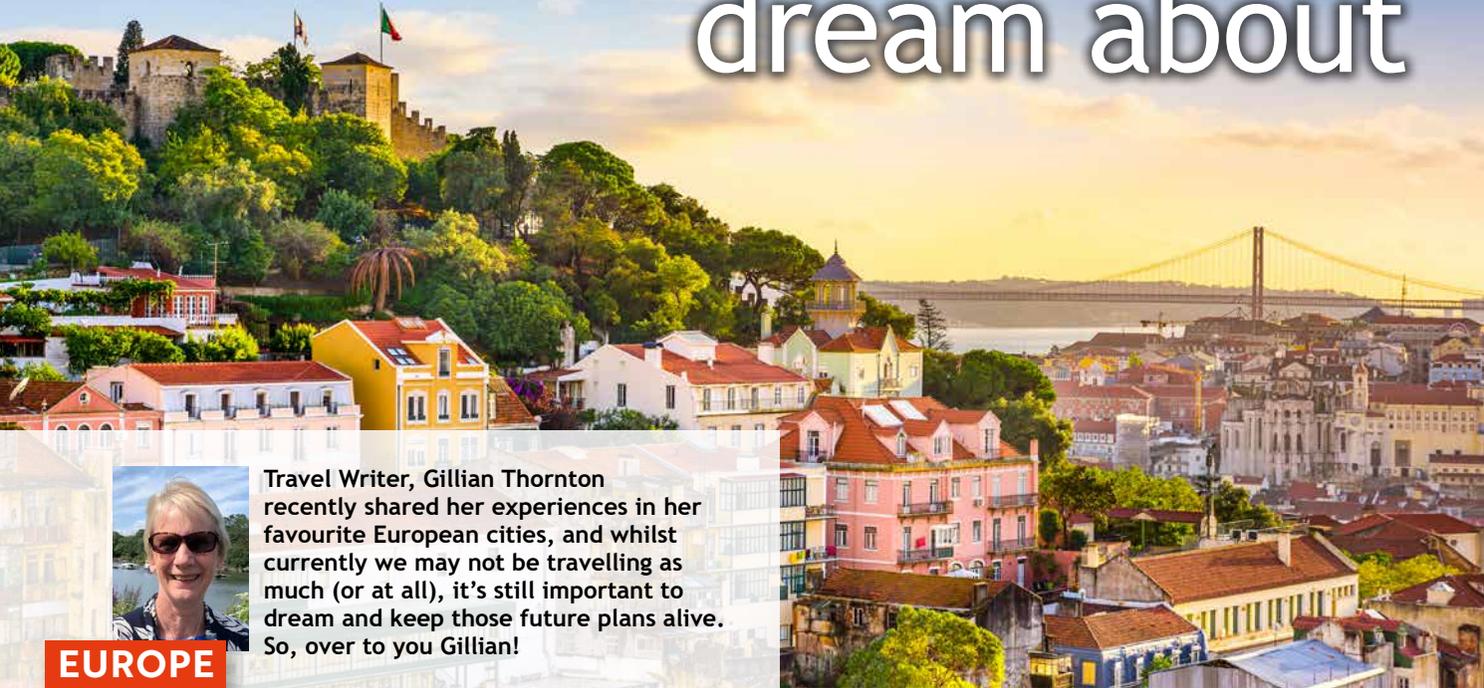
melting pot of character and taste, with a choice of over 70 award-winning gastronomic products to enjoy alongside the famous Manx Ales. Or make an afternoon or evening of it and take a tour of one of the local distilleries and wineries.

With regular flights and sailings from 10 airports and four ferry ports across the UK and Ireland, it's easy to reach the place that reminds you of how life should be.

SILVER FACTS

To read more about the Isle of Man, visit silvertraveladvisor.com/blog/isle-of-man or contact your local Advantage travel agent.

European cities to dream about



Travel Writer, Gillian Thornton recently shared her experiences in her favourite European cities, and whilst currently we may not be travelling as much (or at all), it's still important to dream and keep those future plans alive. So, over to you Gillian!

EUROPE

Naples

I'm a big fan of Italian cities and I love the big hitters like Rome, Florence and Venice. Last autumn, I fell in love with Bologna, heading out by train on day trips to Parma and Modena. But the city that surprised me most was Naples.

Like many historic ports, Naples has long had a reputation for being frenetic and rather down-at-heel, but that's only part of the story. Yes, it's predictably scruffy in parts and Napolitan drivers are a law unto themselves, but Naples has an authenticity and a buzz of its own. Just use common sense with possessions in crowded places. Naples offers plenty of beauty too - the fine mansions and designer shops of the Chiaia district, the flamboyant opera house, and the magnificent Baroque churches, plus of course that glorious bay in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius.

Naples is an easy train ride from picturesque Sorrento and the ruined Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Then you can come back to the city to see original artefacts in the archaeological museum, and enjoy the atmosphere of one of Italy's most exciting cities.

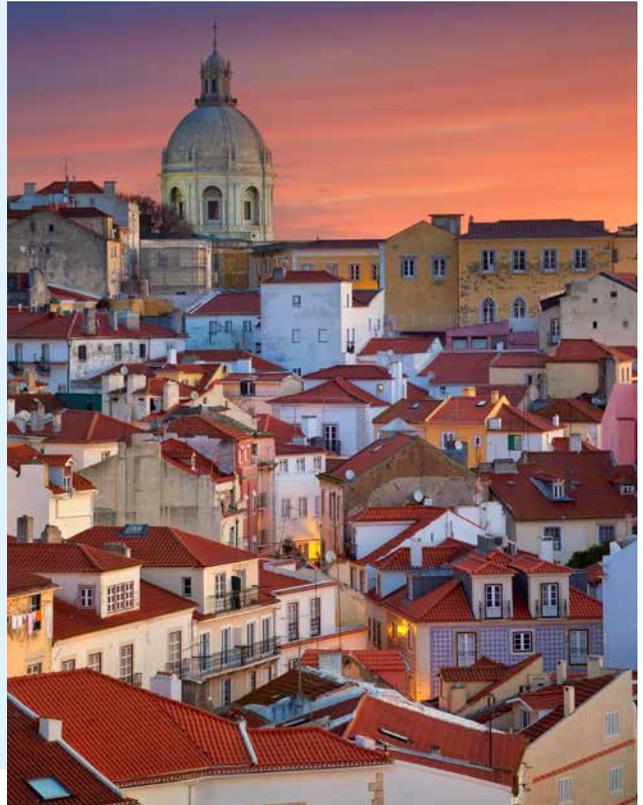


Lisbon

So many of my friends recommended Lisbon that I feared I might expect too much when I planned a surprise trip for my husband's birthday last year. Not a bit of it. One of Europe's smaller capital cities, Lisbon seems to embrace visitors to its spacious squares and broad avenues with arms wide open. We stayed just off the Avenida Liberdade, Lisbon's answer to the Champs-Élysées, and a comfortable walk from the Tagus quayside and main sights.

Yes, Lisbon does have some steep hills. Seven of them in fact. But lifts, funiculars, and an efficient tramway system make for easy access to the different districts, all liberally dotted with some excellent museums and art collections. We particularly enjoyed the National Tile Museum where traditional blue and white Portuguese tiles are effectively displayed inside a 16th century convent building.

And no trip to Lisbon is complete without a visit to Belem, a short journey by bus or tram along the banks of the Tagus. Visit the UNESCO-listed church and cloister, stroll the waterfront gardens, but don't miss the home of the original Pastéis de Belem custard tarts! Delicious.

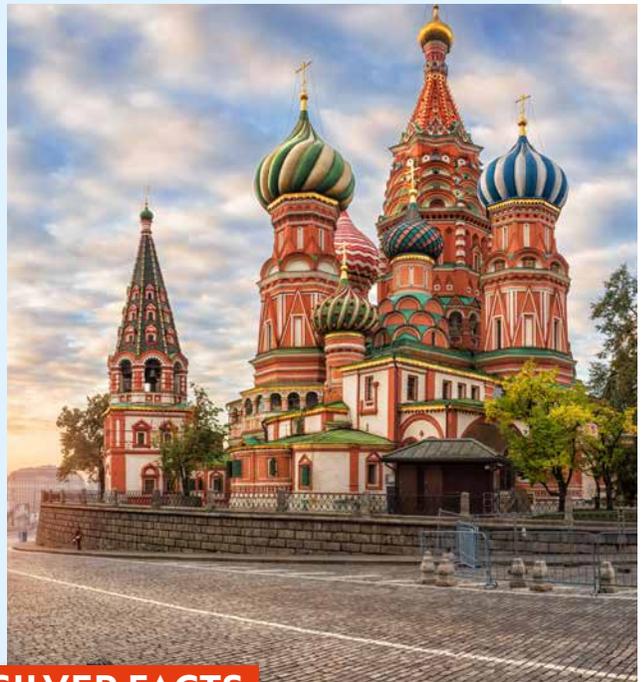


Moscow

If ever a city took me by surprise, it was Moscow. I still laugh to think back to our first evening in the Russian capital, newly arrived at an international hotel within ten minutes' walk of Red Square. Better not take the camera or a guidebook, we thought, don't want to look like tourists. So we left everything behind and just followed the throng towards the towering walls of the Kremlin, emerging into adjacent Red Square to find this vast space full of families with children in buggies and tourists taking videos with iPads!

Moscow has some grand and glorious buildings to explore. The multi-coloured-domes of St Basil's Cathedral, for instance, the four churches and Armoury Museum inside the high walls of the Kremlin, and the ornate decoration of the famous Moscow Metro.

The women too are surprisingly well dressed. At least in the city centre. "Fashion victims" remarked our deadpan Russian guide who arrived each day wearing stunning monochrome outfits with killer heels. A city and people we will never forget!



SILVER FACTS

To book a European city holiday, contact your local Advantage travel agent.

Tallinn: a small city but large at heart

The vibrant capital of Estonia blossomed after brutal decades of Soviet oppression ended in a bloodless revolution. But the timeless charm is still very much there, with more reasons for going there added to the mix and very little taken away.

A trek through the atmospheric Old Town with its stunning skyline and iconic Town Hall square is a must, and although rough cobbled lanes and steep inclines are a pain if you're not too good on your feet, it's so compact that most of it is manageable, with no shortage of bars and cafes for regular stops to rest and people-watch.

Move outside the Old Town and Tallinn begins to show how it has spread its wings - almost literally at Lennusadam Seaplane Harbour, which has to be one of the most impressive maritime museums ever. The huge triple-domed hangar on the waterfront has been restored with tremendous imagination, effectively showing three layers - above, on and below the sea. A raised walkway on the 'surface' of the sea leads from dug-out canoe to powerboats, then above you looms a life-sized replica of a British-built Short 184 torpedo-carrying seaplane from 1915.



After a day exploring, there's plenty to feed the mind and soul...with a range of bars, cafes, hotels and restaurants ranging from fast food to the very finest of fine dining!

SILVER FACTS

To find out more about what a trip to Tallinn has to offer, contact your local Advantage travel agent.

Cool cities

Our last survey told us that you really enjoy city breaks, it was the number one holiday choice!

So how about a look at the Scandinavian capitals: cool, designer chic, great café culture and pretty laid back. And all within easy reach too. The summers are comfortably warm, in stark contrast to the winters.

Norway is consistently at the top of Europe's happiest country ranking, and Oslo is a prime example as to why - it's friendly, with a neighbourhood feel, many green spaces, award-winning architecture and fabulous restaurants. If you're interested in matters nautical, visit the Norwegian Maritime Museum and the Viking Ship Museum, with vessels from the 9th century. Add a fjord visit or short cruise to your stay too.

Denmark and Copenhagen are now synonymous with Noma, the world-class restaurant that lifted Scandi cuisine into a whole new league. Just as Sarah Lund has done for Nordic detectives on UK TV screens. Add the Little Mermaid statue (it really is small) and evenings where it is light into the small hours - perfect



for strolling along the modern, trendy waterfront, and you've surely got a magical few days.

The medieval centre of Stockholm is bound to impress, and if you enjoy a market or vintage shops, then there's no better city around. It's built on the water with islands and bridges across it, so a boat trip around them is a must. Akvavit and craft beer tasting are top of the list here too.

SILVER FACTS

To find out more about Europe's cool cities, contact your local Advantage travel agent.

Summertime in Chamonix

By Silver Travel Advisor's
Debbie Marshall



It is rare to come across an alpine resort which bursts into life in the summer. This is one of Chamonix's most unique and appealing aspects, which gives everyone the opportunity to taste mountain life. It is the perfect destination for outdoor adventure lovers and families alike.

Spend a week strolling through the bustling streets, visiting a host of attractions which include all year-round glacier ice caves and the most scenic of railways, both

up into the mountains or down through the valley. If you are keenly active, take the Planpraz telecabine and choose between a number of wellmarked hiking trails - the winding path up to the Brevent top station ending in a delightfully scenic cafe, or the hike to Lac Noir as a more challenging option, again ending in staggering views. For an easier outing, take a string of different cables up to the very top Brevent viewpoint, where you can enjoy the buzz of activity all around - we could see hikers, paragliders, climbers and slack liners.

The e-bike is perfect for Chamonix, with power assisted pedalling taking the sting out of the hills, allowing you to ascend to astonishing heights with ease. From the traditional and authentic French atmosphere, to the delicious Savoyard cuisine, incredible range of activities and jaw-dropping panoramic views as standard, it took just a week for us to completely fall in love with Chamonix. Escape to the mountains for a different kind of summer holiday, and I guarantee you'll be delighted.

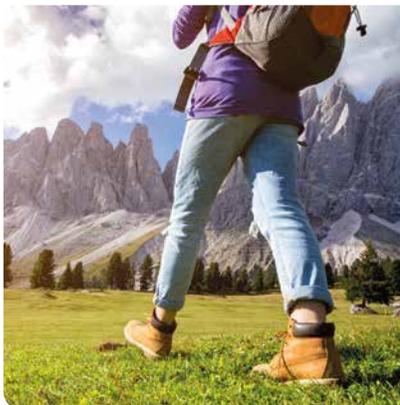
SILVER FACTS

Contact your local Advantage travel agent today to find out more about Chamonix, and read more about Debbie's experience at silvertraveladvisor.com/blog/Chamonix.

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EUROPE

Villas are just so much fun!

For chilled out holidays in the sun, whether you're travelling as a couple, a group of friends or a family, nothing quite beats staying in a villa in Europe. From Easter to early Autumn, there are days of bright sunshine where you can relax in the gardens, beside the pool or happily potter around, totally enjoying the comforts of home, whilst being somewhere different. There's such marvellous freedom in getting up when you like, eating what and when you wish as well as wearing your swimsuit or pyjamas all day, every day if the mood takes you.

It's easy to think of Spain's Costa Blanca as a region filled with hotels when there are villas aplenty in which to stay. From sumptuous properties, where you can sleep the extended family, with gated pools for the little ones' safety, to smaller, more intimate houses, perfect for a couple, this region of Spain has much to offer. Javea is a great location here, with a little-changed old town full of cobbled streets, it has a weekly market, a harbour lined with bars and restaurants and a popular main beach too. However, head off into the hills to discover its history, going back to the Romans.

No matter how many places you've visited, the charm of Corfu is hard to resist and many find themselves returning here time and time again. It's a dream for those who love the sea, for swimming or renting a boat for the day to explore hidden coves that you'll have to yourselves. And for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, there are paths and trails to follow, through timeless scenery, the air vibrating with the sound of cicadas. Corfu Town is delightfully elegant: centuries old Venetian architecture, mellowed by the sun, make Spianada Square



one of the most beautiful in Greece. Pick a villa that's tucked away in the countryside or stay closer to the villages of Agios Stefanos, Kassiopi or Paleokastritsa.

Islands make for great getaways, and Sicily is no exception. A stroll around an ancient Greek temple, a visit to one of the volcanoes for the energetic or time spent exploring historic Palermo is most rewarding. Then it's back to your villa for a siesta during the full heat of the day. Long Italian evenings, that start with an aperitivo or two, enjoying the warm air, perhaps on the villa's terrace, allow you to slip gently into the Mediterranean way of life. And this is surely what holidays are about. Restaurants welcome children of all ages, so if your grandchildren are with you, it is easy to enjoy meals out together. Villas in Sicily generally require a hire car, as they are a little off the beaten track, although never too far from civilisation.

SILVER FACTS

If the flexibility of a villa holiday appeals to you, there's plenty of choice! Contact your local Advantage travel agent who will give you a full list of options and help you decide the best option for you.

Crete: the place to be for Silver Travellers

Crete is considered by many as the most spectacular island in Greece and it is known across the globe for its captivating, white sandy beaches that also benefit from dramatic outlooks. For these reasons it is popular with tourists, who can enjoy a range of different holidays that will perfectly complement their budget, taste and preference.

It is a great place for mature travellers with a friendly welcoming feel and there are plenty of walking trails across the island, as well as pretty towns with interesting architecture and historical features for those who want to explore further afield. The fresh food and fish markets are great fun and good value, whilst the harbour or coastal bars and restaurants provide excellent food along with local wine at reasonable prices.

Other attractions

As well as the charming beaches and relaxed atmosphere, there are so many things that make Crete very attractive: it has the perfect blend of modern European as well as ancient Greek civilizations, superb coasts, and surprisingly high mountains in the interior.

When you are in Crete, be sure to visit the Dikteon Cave just outside the village of Psyhro. It is often one of the highlights of a tour of the island and is reputedly where Rhea hid the newborn Zeus from his father, Cronos. The whole area is filled with stalactites and stalagmites. It has long been associated with ancient worship and is rather a mystical place, originally uncovered by a British archaeologist in 1900. The caves are reasonably well lit, although the ground underfoot can be a little uneven.

Another highlight is a trip to Knossos the capital of Minoan Crete and home to the famous myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. And if you have time, venture out to Spinalonga, a small island near Elounda and previously a leper colony. It's almost unbelievable to think that lepers were kept here as recently as the 1950s.

Accommodation

Because Crete is home to some of the finest attractions in Europe, its hotels range from 5* to more simple establishments, providing accommodation to suit all types of tourists. Crete really is a place to unwind, relax and enjoy yourself.



SILVER FACTS

Crete really does have it all, whether you want to explore, relax or do a bit of both. Contact your local Advantage travel agent today, who can find you the perfect Crete holiday.

Making tracks worldwide

There's no doubt that rail holidays are becoming more and more popular, but we also know that with so many routes, trains, languages and providers, booking can be a confusing and stressful task.

That's where Railbookers step in! Routes via the Alps are very popular, which combine spectacular scenery along the Simplon Pass with many iconic cities including Venice and Rome or stunning regions like the Amalfi Coast or the Italian Lakes. And Scandinavia is a big hit too - explore the beautiful harbour city of Copenhagen, discover Scandinavian cuisine in Gothenburg, marvel at the Norwegian Fjords in Oslo and wander around Stockholm's beautiful old town.

Further afield, Canada by rail has an enduring appeal. The Canada Coast to Coast holidays are the ultimate journeys across North America, combining historic and cultural cities with the great Canadian plains and the Rocky Mountains. The epic 4-night ride across the country really has it all, with dining-car meals, private sleepers and best of all, the glass 'vista domes' on top of the train where you're free to grab a seat and take in the 360-degree views of the Rocky Mountain scenery!



And that's not all! Rail travel is available almost anywhere, which means you're travelling through countries rather than over them, often seeing a view that's only possible by train.

SILVER FACTS

Rail travel gives you the chance to appreciate the sights even when you're on the move. To find out more about rail holidays, contact your local Advantage travel agent.



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RAIL TRAVEL

Roaming around Europe by rail

by Margaret and David Pearson



Having travelled extensively across Europe over the years, Silver Travel Advisor readers Margaret and David Pearson tell us about their recent rail holiday through Europe and the adventures they faced!

After staying in London overnight, we boarded Eurostar and sped on our way to Gare du Nord, in Paris. The transfer to Gare de Lyon is so easy and we picked up some French treats for lunch before catching our next train direct to Geneva - with air conditioning and very comfortable seats.

The hotel for our first night in Geneva was a stone's throw from the station. We headed to the lake and enjoyed walking along the water before crossing the bridge to the old town, with a huge choice of places to have dinner and drinks. Two nights in Geneva allowed us to wander around and explore this lovely city, particularly Parc de la Grange with its spectacular roses.

Next morning we took the train, after a leisurely breakfast, from Geneva through to Milan via The Alps along the Simplon Pass. The view from our windows was incredible, from the lakes, to the snow-capped mountains, through the tunnels and past the vineyards. A particular highlight for us was travelling alongside Lake Maggiore as we crossed the Italian border.

We arrived in Milan Centrale and made our connection onward to Bologna. In a little over an hour, we were in

Central Bologna and on our way to the superbly located A Cappello Rosso hotel.

Bologna was everything we hoped for and more - a beautiful city, famed for its 38kms of porticos, and a food and wine paradise as seen on Rick Stein's Weekend Away series. From the Ragu Bolognese and the Pasta Arrabiata, to the best antipasti we have ever eaten at the oldest delicatessen in Bologna, Tamburini, we ate our way through four nights here.

Railbookers had booked tickets for us to visit Ravenna for the day, from Bologna. Another spectacular rail journey passing through Monza and countless apricot orchards. We visited four of the Roman mosaic UNESCO World Heritage sites and enjoyed more delicious food in the central Piazza. Our seven night holiday came to an end with an easy flight back from Bologna to London Heathrow. What a fantastic holiday, so good - we have booked again! This time, we're off to Spain to visit Madrid, Toledo, Salamanca and Santiago De Compostela.

SILVER FACTS

If you would like to explore Europe by rail like Margaret and David, there's plenty to see! Contact your local Advantage travel agent who will package the perfect break for you.



RAIL TRAVEL

Speedily to Amsterdam



Opting to travel by train over flying can sometimes be a more relaxing experience that gets you straight into the city centre from the moment you arrive - and Amsterdam is a destination where this is definitely the case. Reader, Peter Lynch tells us about his experience onboard the Eurostar to Amsterdam, plus gives us an insight about the wonderful sights he saw during his three days there.

The relatively new direct London to Amsterdam rail connection runs three times a day and is proving a hit too. Taking the train to Amsterdam generates 80% less carbon than the equivalent flight, so as well as being infinitely more enjoyable, it's also better for the planet. Rail travellers also enjoy the green rolling English countryside, similar to the French and Belgian landscapes. The low-lying countryside of the Netherlands however is noticeably different, far less hilly and to control the risk of flooding from the North Sea there are numerous lakes, canals, rivers and traditional windmills. Great travel scenery, without having to leave your seat.

After a swift 30-minute check-in and passport control at St Pancras International rail station, the Amsterdam train follows the same high speed Paris bound route across Kent and through the Channel Tunnel to Calais. Here it veers south-east to Lille and on to Brussels in Belgium, where it makes a brief stop. Home to famously powerful beer, exquisite chocolate and waffles galore, there's Tin Tin street art everywhere, and museums for Rubens, Brueghel and Magritte. The train then continues north to Rotterdam and finally on to Amsterdam Central station, where passengers walk straight into the heart of the city.

Standard Class Eurostar tickets cost from L35 each way and it takes less than four hours to travel, with comfortable seating, Wi-fi and a couple of cafeterias for drinks and light snacks. More expensive Standard Premier and Business Premier options have larger seats, fewer family groups and complimentary food and drinks are served at your seat.

Amsterdam's canals, bridges, cobbled streets and seventeenth century gabled buildings are just the backdrop to one of Europe's most vibrant cities. As well as its world class museums, canal boats, famous cafés and easy-going lifestyle, there are a host of street markets. The trams and metro make it easy to get around, although it's perfect for cycling or walking too. A traditional canal boat is a more leisurely option for exploring and there are gin, cheese and wine and even pancake specialist cruises.

If you're more adventurous, some worthwhile trips beyond the city centre include the famous Dutch flower auction (RoyalFlora Holland) near Schiphol airport each morning from 7am. Depending on the season, trips to the stunning bulb fields at Keukenhof or the historic cheese markets at Edam and Gouda make excellent day trips and are just 30-40 minutes from the city centre.

SILVER FACTS

Want to know more about the journey itself and life in Amsterdam? Read Peter's full article at silvertraveladvisor.com/blog/amsterdam-rail or visit your local Advantage travel agent.



TOURING

Wildlife and winter sun in The Gambia

Blessed with constant winter sunshine, uncrowded beaches and a diverse array of wildlife, The Gambia is the perfect place to warm up in the UK's cooler months. Despite being Africa's smallest mainland country, almost entirely surrounded by Senegal, it's packed full of memorable experiences.

With upwards of 480 bird species and dedicated nature reserves for sighting chimpanzees and crocodiles, every keen nature-lover will be happy. After you've relaxed on the sandy beaches with a cocktail in hand, enjoy buying souvenirs and soaking up the atmosphere in the vibrant local markets, look out for colourful birdlife on the riverside or take a guided excursion to learn more about the country's fascinating culture and wildlife.

Unsurprisingly, many visitors say that what draws them back year after year is the people. Famously friendly and welcoming, the English-speaking locals are sure to make you feel at home in their country from day one. It's this warmth that's given The Gambia the nickname: 'The Smiling Coast of Africa'.

Temperatures average at around 31°C during the winter season. What's more, being in the same time zone as the UK means there's no time difference from November until March (and just one-hour difference for the rest of the year) - so no jetlag! This, when coupled

with the relatively short flight time of six hours, means that you can eat breakfast in the UK followed by lunch in the Gambian sunshine.



SILVER FACTS

To discover more about Africa's smiling coast and the incredible experiences on offer here, contact your local Advantage travel agent.

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TOURING

On the Silk Road

One of the Central Asian gems, Uzbekistan is now on the map for those who are looking for a tour filled with remarkable experiences: from the sand dunes of the Kyzylkum Desert and remnants of nomadic lives, to sophisticated, grand Arabian architecture in the cities.

Once the fourth largest city in Soviet Russia, Tashkent, today's Uzbek capital, has a long and exciting history, including destruction by Genghis Khan in 1219, huge success as a commercial centre in the 18th and 19th centuries, followed by a devastating earthquake in 1966. Not to be missed is its Khast-Imam mosque complex that houses what is said to be the world's oldest Koran, which itself has a turbulent past. There's a combination of old and very modern here, with much development having taken place since 1991, when the country declared independence.

Samarkand is synonymous with the Silk Road, and ancient trading routes. It is filled with stunning traditional Islamic architecture: mosques, mausoleums and madrassahs abound featuring exotic, geometric tiles. Much of it was the vision of Timur, who conquered this region in 1370 and expanded the city dramatically, having made it his capital. He was known for his devotion to the arts, despite having a fierce reputation in battle.

To complete your trip, visit Bukhara with its historic centre, containing the distinctive blue-domed Kok-Gumbaz mosque, that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Famed for culture, trade and learning, the name is thought to mean 'full of knowledge', it is also known for gorgeous Suzani textiles.



SILVER FACTS

Your local Advantage travel agent can tell you more about what the region has to offer and some of the incredible tours available.



ADVERTORIAL

Morocco's imperial cities

Morocco is a destination with cities that provide a wealth of history, colourful cultures and beautiful scenery, that will awaken the senses and intrigue any visitor. There are four cities in particular that we feel can't be missed on a trip to Morocco, and a tour encompassing them all is the perfect way to see them. Let us tell you more...

Marrakech

Also known as the 'Red City', Marrakech is home to many architectural treasures, including the Koutoubia Mosque and ancient Saadian Tomb, both must-sees and will give you the opportunity to learn more about the local culture. Some might say it's bustling and busy nature makes it a destination that feels a tad overwhelming to start with, but once you get to grips with it, the sights, smells and sounds will transport you into another world that you will find pretty fascinating. Take a stroll around the souks, and you'll no doubt find everything you're after, including souvenirs to take back home.

Rabat

Contrary to Marrakech, Rabat has a slower pace of life and albeit having less tourist attractions, it more than makes up for in its charm. Its palm-lined boulevards are sparkling clean and free of traffic - and there's even a central beach should you need some downtime. For a spot of history while in Rabat, don't miss the Mohamed V Mausoleum which inside contains the tombs of three of the Moroccan royal family, King Mohamed V and his two sons, late King Hassan II and Prince Abdallah.

Fez and Meknes

Fez, Morocco's oldest imperial city was founded all the way back in 789, although most of its landmarks date back to the 13th and 14th centuries. Today, it's one of the country's most authentic cities, and is perhaps best known for its traditional artists and artisans. Fez is divided into three sections: the original Old Town, Fes el-Jedid and the contemporary Ville Nouvelle Quarter - and we recommend visiting all three to fully get to the grips of the city. On your visit to the Old Town, stop to sample traditional foods and keep your eyes peeled for architectural landmarks dotted in between shops and alleyways - getting lost is sometimes the best way to explore!

Quieter and smaller than neighbouring Fez, Meknes is laid-back yet still has an authentic air as you explore - so take your time as you wander the winding narrow medina streets and grand buildings that warrants it as an imperial city. It's a city steeped in history too, the king's tomb sits at the heart of what remains of the original imperial city, flanked by an almighty royal granary, the magnificent Bab El Mansour - the likes of which even Fez can't compete with.

Inspired?

There's just so much to see and do when visiting Morocco - take a tour of the Kasbahs or find a tour around the country to suit you, from bustling cities to the Sahara Desert there are many tour options covering all the sights in Morocco.

To find out more about The Great Tour of Morocco and more, contact your local Advantage travel agent today.

The mystical Mekong



This extraordinary river runs through the heart of Asia from remote Tibet through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and, finally into Vietnam, so it is a vital resource for millions of people in Southeast Asia.

Mekong means 'the mother of water'. And it is this very water which sustains the staple food crop, rice. Indeed, the Delta region is known as the 'rice bowl of Vietnam' and it is estimated that of the 17 million people who live hereabouts, 80% of them are involved in rice cultivation.

The entire Mekong River region is considered the second most diverse in the world after The Amazon River. It is home to 430 mammal species, 1,200 bird species, 800 reptile species, and 20,000 plant species, one of which is the stunning Lotus Flower, the symbol of Vietnam.

The river is the main means of transport for locals and goods: you'll see busy sampans continually zipping across the water. Giant, rice barges sail by past floating villages built on short stilts rising out of the water, decorated with flowers and dotting the river edge.

You can visit Tiger Island to meet local people still practising traditional handicrafts such as net weaving, wood carving and incense making and go to Tan Chau where silk making continues in the age-old way, with plants and tree bark used to dye the fabric. You are recommended to try a sip or two of the local plum wine as well.

SILVER FACTS

This part of the world is full to brim of fascinating cultures and lush scenery, leaving many visitors wanting to explore more. We recommend an in-depth tour of this region, but whether you just have one week, a whole month or more, there are tours available. Simply contact your local Advantage travel agent who will tell you more.

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Winter lakes and mountains

by Judith Quiney



I visited Canada and the snowy Rockies in November. Banff, with its Swiss style architecture, is surrounded by beautiful mountain views. It attracts 4.18 million visitors to its National Park each year. The Banff Gondola is an easy way to take in the sights of Sulphur Mountain. For those feeling more energetic skiing or snowboarding down is an option. A visit to Bow Falls is also a must, to see the frozen waterfalls and lakes.



Our coach driver, Mike McCormack, shared his experiences and love of the Rockies while travelling along Highway 93 to Jasper. He also schooled us in bear etiquette, should we inadvertently disturb one! There are wonderful glacial walks around Jasper, I can recommend a guided hike up the Miligne Canyon. The famous Fairmont Jasper Park Hotel, set in 700 acres around the shore of Lac Beauvert, has a reception that is styled like a Scottish Baronial Hall, with a Labrador in residence for those missing their own pets.

Our final stay was at Lake Louise. In the summer, it is transformed into a turquoise pool, in winter it becomes a massive ice rink, which you can walk on! The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise sits proudly to one side with iconic views. If you enjoy walking, taking in glorious views or like to ski you would enjoy this holiday.

SILVER FACTS

Read Judith's full article at silvertraveladvisor.com/blog/the-canadian-rockies or visit your local Advantage travel agent to find out more.

Australia and New Zealand by sea

A truly wonderful alternative to touring 'down under' is cruising, with the joy of unpacking just once, and having the benefit of letting the Captain do the 'driving' whilst you relax onboard enjoying all the ship has to offer. No strain at all, and no getting lost!

With wellness spas, pools and hot tubs, art appreciation courses, golf, a book club and dance lessons, every moment can be enjoyed. Onboard live performances and local foods will give you a deeper connection to this diverse continent. Leave the ship each day to explore and return to your most comfortable hotel at sea. Australia is home to the extraordinary city of Sydney, with its iconic opera house, rugged scenery on the island of Tasmania and the foodie and the sporting haunts of Melbourne. The Kimberley Coast, home to the world's largest population of humpback whales, is a coastal wilderness, where you can search for blue crabs, manta rays and sea turtles. A view from the deck is the perfect way to get the most from this.

In the south-western corner of New Zealand's South Island, cruise through Fiordland, a National Park and



the Marlborough Sounds, stunning sunken valleys, best appreciated from the sea. Watch the Maori Haka dance performed by burly young men with their faces painted and their tongues out as a sign of welcome. Find locations from Lord of the Rings, Middle Earth at its finest. Set sail for sensational sights on the other side of the world.

SILVER FACTS

To find out more about cruising through Australia and New Zealand, contact your local Advantage travel agent.

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This offer showcases some of Indonesia's highlights; however, we specialise in tailor-made holidays, so if you'd like something a bit different, or have a specific itinerary in mind, we can create a completely bespoke Indonesia holiday for you. To make the most of your visit to Indonesia, we would recommend adding on a stay at a Bali beach resort. Ask for details.



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Top luxury tropical escapes

Warm sunshine, lush vegetation, turquoise seas and pristine sandy beaches fringed by gently waving palm trees all spring to mind when you think of tropical destinations. Combine these with excellent customer service in a quality hotel designed to provide ultimate holiday experience and you have the perfect luxury tropical escape. But where will you choose? We've shared our top three luxury tropical escapes...



Costa Rica

An escorted tour is a great way to see the world's happiest country with its fabulous wildlife and friendly people who greet you with "Pura vida"! Arrive in the capital city of San Jose and travel to La Fortuna with its hot springs and volcano, visit one of the cloud forests and end your stay relaxing by the beach in luxury hotel accommodation on the Pacific coast near Manuel Antonio National Park. From your beach hammock, watch pelicans dive into the ocean to catch their dinner and crabs scuttling across the shoreline, and make sure you treat yourself to a cocktail as the setting sun slips into the sea casting orange and purple hues. Bliss!

Barbados

This Caribbean Island is a wonderful mix of British and West Indian charm. Regular flights from the UK make it a popular destination year-round for holidaymakers tempted by its breath-taking beaches, lush green interior and tasty cuisine. If you're feeling active, the island also boasts some of the best golf courses in the Caribbean. Out on the crystal-clear waters, why not join the locals at their favourite pastime of paddle boarding.

Head to the west coast, known as the Platinum Coast, for some of the best beaches, or travel down south for lively nightlife around St Lawrence Gap. With direct access to gorgeous sugar sand beaches and attractive pool areas, many of the luxury hotels have lush tropical gardens so you wake up to the sounds of tropical bird song and the gentle lapping of the waves on the shore.



The Maldives

This collection of low-lying atolls and islands in the Indian Ocean is truly paradise on Earth. Direct flights from Gatwick and Heathrow airports get you to Male in around 11 hours and a boat or seaplane transports you to your final destination. Thatch-roofed bungalows on stilts look out over crystal clear waters. Snorkel over coral reefs full of brightly coloured tropical fish, relax in the sun. Most of the resorts are designed to offer guests a peaceful escape for the hurly burly of everyday life with many offering extensive spa treatments, but if you do fancy something slightly more active, some resorts offer golf, yoga and cookery lessons, or even tennis, volleyball and badminton to keep your days busy!



SILVER FACTS

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Touring Croatia solo



Croatia is renowned for being a popular destination for solo travellers. Solo tour specialist Just You, sent TV presenter and newsreader, Jan Leeming on tour with other solo travellers to find out exactly why it's somewhere that those travelling solo should consider when joining a tour.

So, over to Jan to tell us all about it...

I was so excited to be heading to Croatia, a region with an abundance of history, culture and beauty. Arriving at dusk, it was not until the morning that myself and the tour group were taken aback by the magnificence of Croatia - a mountainous country clinging to a sea dotted with islands.

Our first trip was to Zadar, located on Croatia's Dalmatian coast, where after the World War II clear up, a Roman Forum was discovered in front of the 9th Century Pre-Romanesque Church of St. Donatus, which itself has been constructed using much 'debris' from Roman times. Recycling is timeless! The Sea Organ of Zadar, a construction of pipes under the sea where wind and waves play a somewhat haunting tune, is a truly captivating experience. Krka National Park was our next port of call, with its spectacular major waterfall, surrounded by little ones all around.

For me, one of the best things about travelling in a group of solo travellers is we were all like-minded. It was wonderful walking through the park sharing stories with my new friends. Our Tour Manager, Alen, kept the group entertained throughout with his wealth of historical information.

Twenty years ago I visited Split and was keen to see the Diocletian Palace again. Since then, much more of the palace has been excavated and our guide took us on a walk through the 'subterranean' rooms. The panoramic views from the belfry of the Cathedral of St. Domnius were breath-taking, if you climbed 366 steps, which I determinedly did, with pride in my success.

Reaching the half-way point of the tour, we were off to Dubrovnik, founded in the 6th century and with a fascinating history. Back in the 14th century, it became

one of the most important mercantile and maritime centres on the Mediterranean.

A real highlight was sailing to the islands of Brac and Hvar, where we had a brief stop in one of the smallest natural harbours you are ever likely to encounter. Some of us were determined to get our swimsuits wet, so I can now say I've swum in the Adriatic.

Our final day was spent in Mostar, it was here in the 1990's during the Bosnian War the historic Stari Most Bridge was blown up. It was re-built with local materials using Ottoman construction techniques, stones from local quarries and original material recovered by Hungarian army divers from the river. An uplifting end to a wonderful trip!



SILVER FACTS

If like Jan, you've fallen in love with Croatia - contact your local Advantage travel agent to find out more. There are plenty of options for solo travellers here!



SOLO HOLIDAYS

Travelling solo in India



Star of stage and screen, Claire Sweeney swapped the limelight for a two-week solo adventure through India with solo travel specialist, Just You, and tells us all about the sights and sounds of her trip there.

My two-week, Spirit of India tour began in Delhi, a city that is a real assault on your senses. The noise, the smells, the colours and the hilarious rickshaw ride made me immersed in India almost immediately.

This was the first time that I had been on holiday with a group of solo travellers, it was a real eclectic mix, with ages ranging from 30s to 80s, I could not wait to hear everyone's stories about why they were travelling to India and where they had been in the past. Everyone's reason was different as I found out, some were divorced, widowed, their partner did not want to travel and some like me, single and looking for an adventure. The one thing that we all had in common was our love of travel and seeking out new cultures and destinations.

After Delhi we moved on to Jaipur, home to the magnificent Amber Fort, and while we were in Jaipur we were hosted at the 17th century Sankotra Haveli. This picturesque family home was straight out of the 'Real Marigold Hotel', it was a truly magnificent experience, stepping into someone's home, learning its history and being made to feel so welcome. You did not feel like a guest, you were almost part of the family, plus the traditional lunch was so delicious.

Ranthambore, considered to be India's best game reserve, was a real highlight for the whole group. As we headed out on our safari, there was such anticipation and

excitement, all of us wondering if we were going to get a glimpse of the elusive tiger. Then suddenly it happened, our driver spotted one! She came out on the road and was so close, she had no fear of us. It was thrilling, just one of those once in a lifetime moments.

Of course, the Taj Mahal was breath-taking, it was well-worth the early morning alarm call, the sight of this wonderful mausoleum surpassed everyone's expectations, it was a real honour to be able to share that moment with the group.

Towards the end of the trip we arrived in the holy city of Varanasi. On our first night we watched over 2,000 people praying in unison on the banks of the River Ganges. Words aren't enough to describe it, it was so emotional. The next morning, we sat in a boat on the river watching groups of children practising yoga as the sun rose, it was a very special moment.

It was a trip filled with memories and being able to share those moments with the group of like-minded people made it even more memorable.

SILVER FACTS

Inspired by Claire's experiences? India is an incredible touring destination with so much to see! And with plenty of solo traveller tours available to join, no wonder it's so popular. To find out more about Claire's tour and the wide range of solo India tours available, contact your local Advantage travel agent today.



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- Authentic local entertainment
- Gym and Wellness Centre
- The freedom of our e-bikes
- Cruise Directors to guide and assist
- Expert local guides
- Complimentary Wi-Fi internet
- Return airport transfers

Onshore

- Scenic Enrich – unforgettable and exclusive once-in-a-lifetime experiences
- Scenic Freechoice – a choice of excursions throughout the journey

Plus all tipping and gratuities

* All drinks are included except for a very small number of rare and vintage spirits, wine and champagne.

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Robert Powell voyages on the Irrawaddy

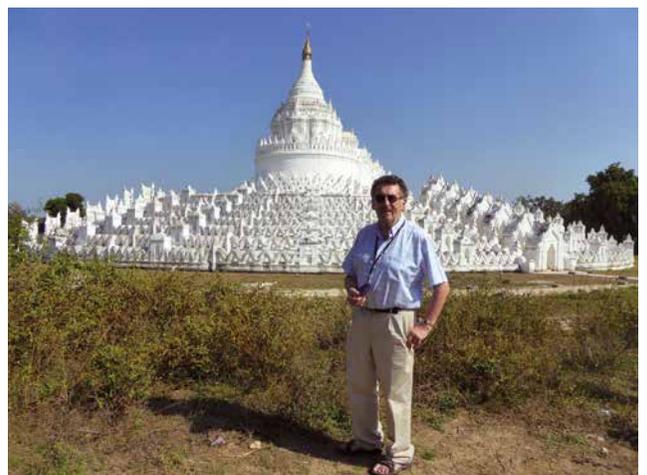
Actor Robert Powell took a cultural river cruise with luxury river cruise operator, Scenic, and delighted in every moment. His fascinating, daily account of this journey and stay in Yangon sounds like a truly incredible one, that's well worth the read. Find out about his experiences below.

We arrive in Pyay mid-afternoon to find Scenic Aura waiting for us. This is an exceptionally luxurious ship, with just 22 balcony suites accommodating 44 guests with an almost 1:1 crew-to-guest ratio. After checking in, we are invited to the sundeck for cocktails, marvel at a beautiful sunset, (they are never less than beautiful on the Irrawaddy), and a demonstration from local chefs of how to make parathas. A brief exploration before dinner leads to the discovery of a swimming pool, a library, a Wellness Centre, an extremely comfortable lounge with a very well stocked bar and the Bamar Dining room.

We have our first dinner on board: it is delightful, superbly balancing the local cuisine with a choice of western food, accompanied by excellent wines. And so to our suite which is immaculate, the bed very comfortable and the pillows superb.

One of the joys of this trip is the opportunity to discover the history of Myanmar along the way. Our young guide, Sai Sam, takes every opportunity to teach us about his country and none of us objects. A few days into our remarkable voyage, we have seized the opportunity to take a balloon ride over Bagan. The exhilarating sight of the sun rising in the still air of the early morning as we float over thousands of temples, pagodas and stupas makes the trip unforgettable. There are maybe twenty large balloons in the air at once, itself a thrilling sight. But this is only the beginning of an extraordinary day. Next, Mount Popa.

Mount Popa is a volcano 1,518 metres above sea level and is said to be home to the 37 most powerful spirits (nats) of Myanmar. The monastery of Taung Kalat, a complex of stupas and shrines, is perched on the summit of Popa's southern flank. We decide to climb the 800 steps to the top, as it is a religious site this has to be done in bare feet! The view at the top is good but whether it justifies the effort required..... We eventually join the others for pre-lunch drinks wondering whether we made the right choice. But after a beer and great food, sore feet are forgotten, and it's back to Bagan where we climb onto horse-drawn carts for a tour of the temples we had seen from the air 10 hours previously. Trotting down country lanes with golden pagodas and stupas of all shapes and sizes around every corner was a truly memorable end to a day filled with unique experiences.





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Mediterranean Adventurer

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DEPARTURE DATE

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Prices shown are subject to availability based upon 2 adults sharing the lowest available grade within the stateroom type specified. Prices and availability are correct at time of publishing, and may go up or down. £50pp low deposit applies to all passengers. If cruise falls within 90 days before departure, then full balance would be required as per standard terms and conditions. *7 night cruises (from Southampton) from £499pp based on voyage G129P. Offer is available from 16th December 2020 - 1st March 2021, and applies to cruises in this campaign only.





CRUISE

Expeditions on hybrid ships

Whilst our desire to explore the world seems to be increasing (and we're sure we'll be getting back out there when we can), there's always been an underlying concern for the environment and the impact it's giving to the world. We're sure that many of us consider this when travelling, but how much do we actually do, to make a positive (or little negative) impact on the environment? Not enough most of us would answer, we're sure.

However, we're delighted that cruise line, Hurtigruten's new (or re-modelled) ships are playing their part in ensuring we can now visit the Arctic and Antarctic whilst minimising the effect of these delicate environments for the generations of tomorrow.

Hurtigruten is refitting a number of existing ships from traditional diesel engines to hybrid power - combining liquified natural gas (LNG), bio gas (LBG) and battery packs. This huge green upgrade program allows optimisation of the full use of clean battery power and LNG - the greenest fuel currently available for shipping. The use of efficient LNG engines alone will reduce CO2 emissions by up to 25 percent compared to 2015 levels. NOx emissions will be reduced by a whopping 90 percent.

Add to this the ban on single-use plastics on all ships and by land-based partners, along with beach ups by crew and passengers, and it's clear to see that the cruise line has a clear commitment to conservation and preservation. Hurtigruten's stringent food waste policies, the recycling of heat from ships' engines and no liquids or solids being discharged into fjords or other vulnerable eco-systems are crucial to sustaining our polar regions.

As you adventure onboard these smaller cruise ships, with their attractive Scandidesign, locally sourced food and continuing dedication to sustainability, you'll be leaving a smaller, less damaging footprint. Positive news, we think!



SILVER FACTS

To find out more about the initiatives Hurtigruten and other cruise ships have put in place to lower our carbon footprint, contact your local Advantage travel agent today.

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