



# THE TRAVEL ADVANTAGE

SPRING 2010 EDITION

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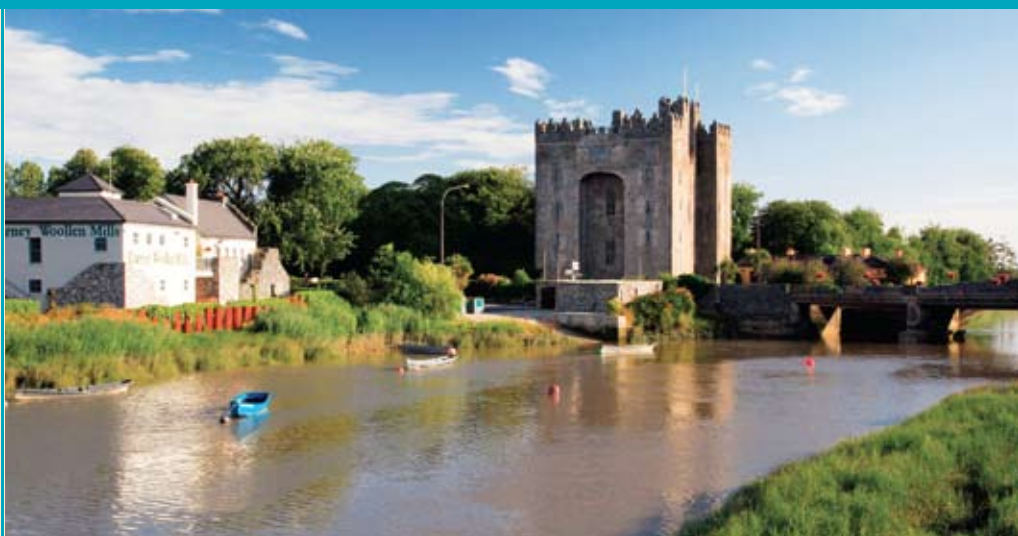
## Take Advantage and Pay With Points with American Express

As your local American Express Travel Service Representative, we want to share with you the Travel Advantage of booking an American Express Vacation package. That is why we are dedicating the majority of this Spring 2010 edition to American Express Vacations. You don't necessarily have to use an American Express credit card to receive the benefits offered by American Express Vacations. If you would like us to make any pre-trip arrangements, their Plan-Ahead services offers, at no extra cost to you, such concierge services as dinner reservations, golf tee times, children's services including babysitting, or making spa and salon appointments.

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Enjoy the peace of mind derived from a trusted brand, the security of knowing that American Express Vacations and Klingerman Travel will always take care of its customers, the assurance of premium value and exclusive Cardmember benefits.

Just a few of their special promotions are shown on pages 4, 5 and 8. Feel free to give one of our professional agents in New London or Old Saybrook a call. We mean that literally, feel free. We never charge for our services when booking a cruise or vacation package. Once again, that is your Travel Advantage.



## IRELAND – A PORTRAIT

The magical Emerald Isle in the North Atlantic Ocean known as Ireland is a legendary realm of exquisite landscapes steeped in historical significance. It's a land of warm camaraderie and a gift of gab. If it's a delightful experience you seek, seek no further than Ireland.

Neatly kept white cottages, many with thatched roofs, are encircled by rolling verdant hills and lush meadows bright with scarlet and gold wild flowers – more often than not strewn with silvery-gray rocks. The entire land is criss-crossed by dark blue lakes and rippling streams.

The temperature here in summer hovers around 65 to 70 degrees. Into this same milieu came Ireland's first known inhabitants who made their way from Scandinavia to settle in Northern Ireland at the mouth of the Lough Foyle 8,000 years before the birth of Christ.

From that ancient beginning, the history of Ireland flows down through Stone Age hamlets to the Celtic migration; from the Viking occupation to the medieval Anglo-Norman knights domination, and finally to the modern tourist invasion of today.

The land is littered with Neolithic tombs, remnants of once great abbeys and magnificent castles. Some medieval castles, such as the 13th century St. John's Castle in Limerick City, are having new life breathed into them. Many later castles are already authentically restored. In fact, visitors to the 16th century Bunratty Castle, near Shannon, can join in a sumptuous feast in the castle's grand banquet hall while enjoying the Renaissance chorale melodies of the Bunratty Castle Singers.

Some castles, the dazzling Ashford and Dromoland castles, for example, invite guests to stay the night in luxurious bedrooms and dine in elegant splendor in the manner of the great Irish royal families of yore.

And of course, the world famous Blarney Castle can't be overlooked. It's the seat of the Blarney Stone, which if kissed, bestows the gift of gab – something for which the Irish are noted. Example: No other place on Earth has produced so many great poets and writers.

For the some 40 million Americans who trace their ancestry to Ireland, a trip to the isle often takes on the aura of a pilgrimage. Each year thousands of Americans come in search of their roots.

For the some 40 million Americans who trace their ancestry to Ireland, a trip to the isle often takes on the aura of a pilgrimage.

Yet, it's the warmth and charm of this ancient land that is its real draw. And too, there is its wealth of accommodations and attractions that can suit the fancy of even the most finicky tourist.

One of Ireland's most widely acclaimed magnets is its friendly pubs where the Guinness ale and the patron's playful banter flows freely. And it's here you'll find Ireland's very special appeal – its people.

**For more information on planning a trip to the Emerald Isle, call your Klingerman Travel professional today!**

**Book any cruise or package as advertised in this publication prior to 05/15/10 and receive a \$50 GIFT CERTIFICATE toward any future cruise or tour package through Klingerman Travel.**

*Judy Klingerman*

# TRAVEL TRENDS



## NEW HIMALAYAN ADVENTURES OFFERED FROM GENERAL TOURS

As part of its 2010 Exotic World Journeys, General Tours' "Across the Himalayas" package is a uniquely designed 10-day journey from Lhasa to Kathmandu. Traveling by Jeep and Land Rover with their own personal mountain guides, guests explore spectacular high-mountain landscapes.

Privately guided sightseeing also includes the Potala Palace; the medieval Nepalese city of Bhadgaon; and the ancient royal quarter of Kathmandu. An excursion by horse-drawn cart to the Mt. Everest Base Camp provides guests with plenty of time to explore and revel in this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

## MEET THE PENGUINS OF PATAGONIA



The locals turn out in tuxedos when you arrive at Otway Bay in the Patagonia region of Chile, one of the best spots to see Magellanic penguins — the largest warm-weather penguins. From October to

March, enjoy a day tour on cruises calling at Punta Arenas. For information, visit [www.chile.travel](http://www.chile.travel).

## CRYSTAL CRUISES ADDS NEW BLACK SEA VOYAGES



Luxury specialist Crystal Cruises has expanded its 2010 European cruise collection to include two Black Sea voyages this summer. The two new itineraries feature a maiden

visit to Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as calls in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey.

Steeped in artistic, military and architectural history, the 12-day cruises go from Venice to Istanbul on July 19 and August 24 aboard the award-winning *Crystal Serenity*. Beginning with overnight stays in Venice, the itineraries visit Katakolon (birthplace of the Olympics) and Navplion, Greece; Nesebur, Bulgaria; Yalta, Sevastopol and Odessa, Ukraine; and conclude with an overnight stay in Istanbul, Turkey.

## NATIONAL PARK VACATIONS ON THE RISE



According to the National Park Service, trips to national parks are on the rise. Scott Nisbet, president and CEO of Globus Family of Brands agrees: "Bookings on our North American National Park tours have witnessed an increase of 180 percent in the last year," said Nisbet.

The Globus Family of Brands feature more than 35 national park-focused tours and vacations. A "National Parks and Canyon Country" tour takes you from Denver to Las Vegas and visits Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon and the Mount Rushmore Memorial. The 9-day "Heart of the Canadian Rockies" travels from Calgary to Vancouver and includes Banff National Park, Jasper National Park and a whale-watching cruise in Victoria, B.C.

## CELEBRITY'S ECLIPSE SET TO DEBUT



To witness the next solar eclipse, you have to wait until July 11, 2010. But to witness Celebrity Cruises' new *Eclipse*, you only have to wait until April 26.

As the newest member to the Solstice Class fleet, the 3.7-billion dollar ship will offer a series of Canary Islands, Scandinavia/Russia and Spanish Mediterranean sailings from Southampton, England before repositioning to the Caribbean in November, where she will offer roundtrip cruises from Miami. Call your travel agent for itineraries and rates.

## AMA WATERWAYS ANNOUNCES NEW SHIP ON THE MEKONG



River cruise line AMA Waterways has announced the construction of a second ship on the Mekong river as part of the line's successful "Vietnam, Cambodia & the Riches of the Mekong" program. The as-yet-unnamed new-build is expected to debut in late spring 2011.

When completed, the ship will join the luxurious *ms La Marguerite* in offering 7-day Mekong River cruises from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to Siem Reap, Cambodia and the reverse. The two vessels will depart on the same day of the week, one sailing downstream from Siem Reap, and the other sailing upstream from Ho Chi Minh City. Highlights of the itinerary include a visit to Ha Long Bay and Angkor Wat, both UNESCO World Heritage sites.

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# HEAVENLY HONEYMOONS

BY JUDIE KARHAN



*Honeymooners in Punta Cana*

**A HONEYMOON SHOULD BE THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY VACATION OF YOUR LIFE, FILLED WITH MEMORIES YOU WILL CHERISH FOREVER. SO DON'T RUN TO THE ALTAR BEFORE STOPPING TO TRULY CONSIDER THAT PERFECT HONEYMOON ESCAPE ONCE THE VOWS HAVE BEEN RECITED.**

## ROMANCING THE SEA

If you've ever taken a cruise, you have to admit... it's romantic. There's nothing quite like watching a sunset at sea with someone you love – the wind blowing through your hair, the salt air brushing your face. And with the dawn of each day there comes a new adventure.

For lovers, one of the most intimate experiences is cruising aboard a small luxury ship to exotic ports of call in far away places like the Mediterranean, Central America and the South Pacific.

Luxury cruise lines such as Windstar, Paul Gauguin Cruises, Crystal Cruises and Regent Seven Seas can make these dreams come true.

Maybe you've always dreamed about traveling to the tropical shores of French Polynesia. Paul Gauguin Cruises offers a number of itineraries ranging from



*The romance of Crystal Cruises*

7 to 15 nights that feature several islands, including Tahiti and the Society Islands, Tuamotus, Marquesas, Fiji, the Cook Islands and New Zealand.

But even if your budget won't accommodate a vacation of such luxury, you certainly won't be disappointed by the many other choices you have. Princess Cruises' "Love Boats" sail the world over. Royal Caribbean, with its signature onboard activities, promises adventure even before you step foot on land.

## ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS

For couples looking for fun in the sun, an all-inclusive resort is a smart choice. With accommodations, meals, drinks, entertainment and water sports all included in one upfront price, there's no guesswork later on as to what your vacation will cost.

SuperClubs, Palace Resorts, Sandals and Dream Resorts & Spas are among the many resort companies with all-inclusive properties sprinkled throughout Mexico and the Caribbean.

Palace Resorts, for example, features lavish oceanfront accommodations at all 12 of its all-inclusive properties in Cancun, Riviera Maya, Isla Mujeres, Cozumel, Riviera Nayarit, Mexico and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Sandals, "the Luxury Included™ Vacation," takes pride in creating romantic settings with luxurious amenities such as oceanfront gourmet restaurants, spa treatments and Rolls Royce transfers. Look for Sandals properties in Antigua, St. Lucia, Jamaica and The Bahamas.

## GOING HAWAIIAN

There's no doubt about it, the Hawaiian Islands are among the most beautiful and romantic in the world. With its tropical climate, spectacular sunsets and hypnotic Pacific seas, Hawaii seems to be the ultimate seducer.

Honolulu, Oahu has for years drawn newlyweds to its shores with its beaches, exciting nightlife and high-rise hotels. But if it's seclusion you seek, look toward the island of Lanai. This intimate island has a small village and two exceptional resorts.

Located in Lanai's highlands, amid towering Norfolk pines, the 102-room Lodge at Koele sits atop a hillside in the middle of the island. The resort combines the sophistication and ambiance of a traditional English country manor with the charms and peaceful beauty of a Hawaiian island.

The Manele Bay Hotel is a white-marbled, luxurious resort set above a spectacular white sand beach. The hotel has a superb golf course, and the service is suited for those who want to be active or to those who simply wish to be by themselves on an island where quiet surroundings are a way of life.

*If marriage is in your future, talk to your travel counselor today about planning the honeymoon of your dreams.*



## The Ultimate Caribbean

The Travel Channel featured Cap Juluca as one of the "World's Sexiest Beaches." *Bride* magazine has listed it as one of the "50 Sexiest Hotels." So what is it about Anguilla's Cap Juluca that makes it so special?

At the risk of being shallow, its physical beauty...plus luxurious accommodations, privacy and exclusivity. You can even have a private dinner on the beach or your personal butler will serve you a romantic dinner for two in your private pool villa. Spa services include in-room massages and aromatherapy.

Situated on Anguilla's southwest coast overlooking the mountains of St. Maarten, Cap Juluca features 18 Moorish-style beachfront villas, each with no more than six rooms or suites.

Exquisite cuisine, exceptional service and an unimaginably beautiful location make this island retreat absolutely irresistible.



## CRUISING THE RIVERS OF EUROPE

Away from the hustle and bustle of busy highways, the rivers of Europe thread through beautiful landscapes. Experienced travelers agree that a river cruise is one of the most enjoyable and hassle-free ways to explore Europe's castles, cathedrals and picturesque villages.

Travel along the famous rivers of Europe like the Rhine and the Danube and discover fascinating history and authentic experiences with comprehensive sightseeing, plus your own explorations. It's a simple way to travel and you're in the middle of the action, not seeing it from afar. Plus, there's plenty of time to unwind. Think of this as your own personal journey of discovery through Europe.

### EUROPE & RUSSIA

In France, cruise the Seine from Paris through the heart of Normandy, the Marne from Paris to Epervain, or the Gironde from Bordeaux to the lush wine regions of western France. Rhone cruises take visitors through the heart of Provence and Burgundy and into the splendor of southern France. AMA Waterways features a delightful 7-night Amsterdam to Paris cruise that includes a 3-night, post-cruise stay in Paris.

Leisurely float the canals and the Schelde and Lys Rivers of Holland and Belgium, from Amsterdam to Antwerp, enjoying remote country regions with windmills, tulip fields in full bloom and imposing medieval cities.

Rhine and Moselle river cruises take travelers through the Netherlands, Germany, France and Switzerland. Uniworld offers a 9-day "Castles Along the Rhine" cruise that visits Basel, Strasbourg, Redesheim, Cologne and Amsterdam.

In Central and Eastern Europe, boat the Elbe from Hamburg to Prague, through Eastern Germany and the Czech Republic. Here you'll discover spectacularly preserved castles and palaces. Or sail the Danube from Passau to the Black Sea through Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria. Tauck offers a new 12-day river cruise this year along the Danube that visits Prague, Durnstein, Passau, Vienna and Bratislava.

Farther east, the Volga, Svir and Neva rivers from Moscow to St. Petersburg can reveal deep insights into the Russian life and character. One grand view after another is yours on a trip from Kiev in the Ukraine, to Odessa and the Black Sea port of Yalta via the Dnieper River and Black Sea. A "Waterways of the Czars" cruise from Viking River Cruises sails from Moscow to St. Petersburg and features multiple night stays in both cities.

### THE BRITISH ISLES

Watching vistas unfold along the meandering rivers and canals of England, Scotland and Ireland, is like watching the river of time flow in reverse. Along the

River Thames in England stately homes and quaint villages are delineated by the greenery of the countryside.

On the River Avon see William Shakespeare's famous Globe Theatre. In Scotland, the Caledonian Canal passes right through the heart of the country, and too, Loch Ness, the home of the legendary Loch Ness monster. See Ancient castles, incredible landscapes and the abundant wildlife of the Scottish Highlands.

## SAVE UP TO \$470 PER COUPLE in Mexico, The Caribbean and Central America!

Enjoy a world beyond expectation at Occidental Hotels & Resorts. Your every care melts away in the tropical sunshine, beautiful natural locations and the unrivaled Occidental commitment to service.



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<b>Riviera Maya</b>	
Occidental Grand Xcaret.....	<b>\$379</b>
Royal Hideaway Playacar.....	<b>\$929</b>
<b>CARIBBEAN</b>	
<b>Aruba</b>	
Occidental Grand Aruba.....	<b>\$659</b>
<b>Dominican Republic – Punta Cana</b>	
Occidental Grand Punta Cana ...	<b>\$249</b>

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**All-Inclusive packages are per person and include:**

- Roundtrip hotel transfers
- 3-night hotel accommodations
- Hotel tax and service charges
- All meals, drinks and snacks
- Daily activities
- Nightly entertainment
- Non-motorized watersports and more!

<b>CENTRAL AMERICA</b>	
<b>Costa Rica – Liberia</b>	
Occidental Grand Papagayo.....	<b>\$449</b>

**Call your Klingerman Travel agent for more details!**

New London – 860.443.2855  
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American Express Vacations tours operated by Travel Impressions, a subsidiary of American Express. Winter Pocket Sale promotion is valid for travel now-4/30/10. \*Savings per couple is based on a 3-night stay at Occidental Grand Aruba in a Deluxe room category. Rates are land only, per person, based on double occupancy in specific room categories. Rates are valid for travel 4/5/10- 4/30/10 and vary by hotel and departure date. Blackout, weekend, holiday peak season surcharges apply. Rates and promotions are accurate at time of printing and are subject to changes, exceptions, cancellations and restrictions. All advertised savings are reflected in price. Rates subject to change based on currency fluctuations. Not responsible for errors or omissions in the printing of this ad. Additional higher priced packages available. Valid for new bookings only. CST # 2029006-20, IOWA#758. NEVADA#2004-0029. Washington UBI # 602 425 801.

## ROME & THE AMALFI COAST

Escorted by Gene & Alice Klingerman Stickney



Visit Rome, Ravello, Villa Rufolo, Vietri-sul-Mare, Sorrento, Amalfi Coast, Paestum, Island of Capri, Pompeii and Naples

This carefully designed itinerary leads you through the changing Italian landscapes – from the rich history and glory of Rome to the scenic Amalfi Coast – while also visiting the ruins of Pompeii and the grand palaces of Naples.

**Call your Klingerman Travel agent for more details!**

New London – 860.443.2855  
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A deposit of \$300 per person is required at the time of booking. Final payment is due by June 15, 2010.

**Sept. 9-18, 2010**

**\$2,974** per person double plus \$314.20 taxes\*  
 \*single supplement \$450

**What's included:**

- Round trip motorcoach from New London & Old Saybrook
- Gratuity to above driver and skycaps at U.S. airports
- Round trip air to Rome
- 8 nights hotels — 2-Rome / 5-Amalfi Coast / 1-Rome
- 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 4 dinners including local wines
- Tour manager in Italy
- Sightseeing per itinerary
- Services of Klingerman Travel escorts

## CHINA TOUR

May 12, 2010 to May 22, 2010

Escorted by Gene & Alice Klingerman Stickney

**\$2,995** per person double plus \$380 taxes\*  
 \*single or triple room rates on request



**BRENDAN**  
 Taking You Personally

Experience the culture and history of China on this extraordinary tour. Visit the site of the 2008 Olympics, the Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and the Museum of Qin Terra Cotta Warriors.

**What's included:**

- Round trip motorcoach from New London & Saybrook • Driver gratuity and skycaps at U.S. airport • 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, and 7 dinners
- Services of two Klingerman escorts • Tour manager in China
- All air transportation, rail and bus in China • First class hotels
- Sightseeing as described in itinerary

**What's not included:**

- Cost of mandatory valid U.S. passport • Cost of visa for China • Meals not listed in Itinerary • Gratuities to tour manager and motorcoach drivers in China
- Cost of insurance (highly recommended)

**Call your Klingerman Travel agent for more details!**

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- Hotel tax and service charges

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One night Le Meridien Tahiti – Reduced rates

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Three nights Sofitel Moorea la Ora Beach Resort

**4 NIGHTS from \$2,095**

One night Sofitel Tahiti Maeva Beach Resort

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**4 NIGHTS from \$2,309**

One night InterContinental Tahiti Resort – Reduced rates, complimentary American breakfast

Three nights InterContinental Bora Bora Le Moana Resort – 3rd night free, complimentary American breakfast

**4 NIGHTS from \$2,899**

One night InterContinental Tahiti Resort – Reduced rates, complimentary American breakfast

Three nights InterContinental Bora Bora Resort & Thalasso Spa - Reduced rates and complimentary dinner and breakfast daily

**4 NIGHTS from \$3,379**

One Night Le Meridien Tahiti – Reduced rates

Three nights St. Regis Bora Bora Resort

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# THE AMERICAN SOUTH

BY GRETCHEN ZAUNER

## WHERE THE PAST AWAKENS



Bourbon St., New Orleans

**T**HE ROADS TO AMERICA'S SOUTH ARE PAVED WITH HISTORY. IN GRAND CITIES SUCH AS CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, WHERE HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES PASS CENTURIES-OLD MANSIONS, YOU CAN AT TIMES FEEL AS THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN TRANSPORTED IN TIME. IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, OVER HALF OF THE 2,500 BUILDINGS HAVE ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE. STROLL THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS' FRENCH QUARTER AND YOU'LL DISCOVER A UNIQUE NEIGHBORHOOD OF A BYGONE ERA. THE TIMELESS BEAUTY OF THESE CITIES IS LEGENDARY.

### COLORFUL CHARLESTON

The city of Charleston exudes Southern charm and hospitality. In fact, it's been called the most mannerly city in the country. Folks are friendly. Gardens are meticulously tended to. And in a city that has over the years weathered so many natural disasters, including hurricanes, earthquakes and fires, it seems amazing that its vast historic district has endured.

One of the best ways to acquaint yourself with Charleston is to walk the streets of the downtown area. Many of the historic district's pastel-painted homes, B&Bs, restaurants and shops are located here. The historic district encompasses more than 2,000



Magnolia Plantation in Charleston, South Carolina

buildings: 73 predate the Revolutionary War. The spires and steeples of more than 180 churches punctuate the skyline.

The Battery, the waterfront along the edge of the historic district, offers scenic views of the harbor, where some of the settlement's earliest fortifications were. Planted with palmettos and live oaks, the park contains cannons, war relics and a monument to the defenders of Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumpter.

Visitors can also tour homes of some of the city's early settlers. The Edmondston-Alston House on Charleston's High Battery, built in 1825, offers a glimpse of early 19th century elegance, style and comfort. The house contains Alston family furniture, silver, books and paintings.

### SAVANNAH, SOUTHERN BELLE

Savannah has received wonderful accolades from numerous consumer magazines, including *Condé Nast Traveler*, which featured the city in its "Top 10 American Travel Destinations."

Cosmopolitan and laid-back, the city manages to gracefully blend trendy downtown boutiques and microbreweries with a backdrop of centuries-old, dramatic architecture. The many neighborhood garden squares, with their shady trees, flowers, fountains and monuments make walking city streets



Savannah, Georgia

an absolute pleasure.

Soak up the romantic atmosphere of Savannah in the restaurants and cafés it's famous for. Stay in a historic inn or B&B to complete the experience. When you feel like sightseeing, head for the historic district where architecture tells the story of one of the South's most intriguing cities. Strolling through the district you'll see the influence of Europe in its many mansions, storefronts and museums.

If you feel like escaping to the beach for a while, head for Tybee Island, 18 miles east of Savannah. The island is known to be kitschy, but ever so much fun.

### SULTRY NEW ORLEANS

Some cities are merely collections of skyscrapers and concrete, while others dazzle us with their distinctive style, physical beauty and soul. Yet few cities rival the seductive charm of New Orleans.

The heart of New Orleans is, of course, the French Quarter, divided into Upper and Lower sections, with Jackson Square at the midpoint. At Jackson Square, you'll find historic buildings and a beautifully landscaped park. Be sure to also visit the City Park, filled with art Deco-styled benches and fountains, artificial lagoons and ancient moss-draped oaks. Stroll down bawdy Bourbon Street and pop into some of the many oyster bars, restaurants and novelty shops, then visit the New Orleans Museum of Art, which has one of the largest glass collections in the country.

A trip to New Orleans would not be complete, of course, without partaking in two of its most famous attractions – food and music. At the French Market you can satisfy your taste buds with Creole tomatoes, jambalaya and gumbo, pralines and *muffulettas* (sandwiches stuffed with ham, salami, mozzarella and green olives), as well as Cajun specialties.

The best of traditional New Orleans jazz can be enjoyed at Palm Court Jazz Café and the Preservation Hall. Not only can you hear music from some of the best jazz musicians in the world, you also have the chance to rub elbows with them in-between sets.

*The cities of America's South provide great historical lessons for the kids, plus plenty of fun things to do. So take the family! And when you're ready to go, call your travel professional to make the planning easy and affordable.*

# IBERIAN ESCAPE

BY RAY CHATELIN

## SPAIN & PORTUGAL OFFER A DELIGHTFUL BLEND OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND ROMANCE.



Lisbon, Portugal



Madrid, Spain

**I**N A WAY, IBERIA IS A TIME CAPSULE, A PLACE WHERE THE PAST HAS BEEN METICULOUSLY PRESERVED. ITS GREATEST SIGHTS CAN BE SEEN FIRSTHAND AND WALKED UPON – FROM ANCIENT CASTLES AND BATTLEFIELDS TO STUNNING CHURCHES AND BAROQUE THEATRES. THE GRAND CITIES OF SPAIN AND PORTUGAL – BARCELONA, MADRID, LISBON AND GRANADA – ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF IBERIA. THESE ARE ROMANTIC AND HISTORIC CITIES – PLACES OF AUDIBLE AND VISIBLE PLEASURES – OF GENTLE MUSIC, ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE AND CONTEMPORARY LIFESTYLES.

### BARCELONA

Resting between the sea and the mountains, Barcelona is the most cosmopolitan, modern and avant-garde city in Spain. Yet, it's the oldest part of the city – the Barri Gotic (The Gothic Quarter) – with its winding, narrow streets and where Roman walls are still visible, that will immediately capture your heart.

Pass through Arab arches and around Romanesque colonnades over which towers the imposing Cathedral of Santa Eulalia (13th-15th century) and its cloisters that house a museum of sculptures, paintings and rare tapestry.

Las Ramblas – the Spanish equivalent to Paris' Left Bank – is a colorful promenade leading from the port to Placa de Catalunya, the center of Barcelona. Lined with shops, wine bars, flower stalls, street performers, and a wonderful food market called Boqueria, it's one of the city's most popular places.

The Picasso Museum is the "must-see" museum to visit in Barcelona, for the work of the Barcelona-born artist and for the building itself. It is five



The Picasso Museum

medieval palaces linked together to make a single museum. It's indispensable for understanding Picasso's formative years, and his genius is reflected through the more than 3,500 works that make up the permanent collection.

### MADRID

The heart of Spain begins here, at the Puerta del Sol (the center of downtown Madrid), the point from which all distances in the country are calculated.

This is a romantic city, different than Paris in its character, but with the same sense of mystery that you find in Istanbul. The downtown area of Madrid is a web of narrow streets that, especially after 8:00 p.m. every night, is a mass of joyous humanity with filled cafés, musicians on corners and lovers walking arm in arm.

Tapas bars permeate the city. These cozy restaurants serve a variety of Spanish appetizers, most cooked in olive oil and garlic and impossible to resist.

The Prado Museum and the Reina Sofia (where you'll find Picasso's Guernica) cannot be missed. Stop at the Plaza de Santa Anna across from the National Theatre and people-watch from one of the several outdoor cafés that ring the picturesque plaza; shop at the nearby flea market. One could also spend an entire day looking through streets that surround the 17th century Plaza Mayor, the original city palace.

### LISBON

Lisbon, the capital of Portugal since its conquest from the Moors in 1147, has its historical character is still intact. It was the city's position on seven low hills beside a river

that originally attracted traders and settlers, and it's still a stunning sight.

Wide, tree-lined avenues are accented by art nouveau buildings, mosaic pavement and an endless stream of chic shops and restaurants. Its housing looks as though it suddenly leapt from an impressionist's painting with its low-rise, pastel and ochre brown buildings and with church towers and domes rising in the distance.

Like Spain, Portugal is really a nation of different parts. In the north is the town of Porto, classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, and it is where the country's world famous port wine originated. A visit to the port lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia will get you a free tasting of the famous product.



Detail from the Nasrid Palace

### GRANADA

The heart of the city – indeed the entire region – is the Alhambra, the 13th century Moorish castle that sits upon the city's highest point. It is one of the most imposing castles ever built, the ultimate in Spanish Muslim architecture with successive monarchs

creating spectacular architecture and decorations.

The Nasrid Palace is the centerpiece, with a richness of decoration that stuns the viewer with its bold colors and intricate mosaic designs on ceilings, walls and floors. The "Sacromonte" area consists of caves dug out of the soft rock behind modern house fronts, and during the tourist season (April-October) some are open to the public. Gypsies once lived in hundreds of small caves in the surrounding hills and today you can walk through refurbished caves to illustrate how these people once lived and practiced their traditional crafts.

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