

update | April 2007



**E**aster is already upon us and our news is that Far Frontiers Travel is on the move. On 18 May we are heading south to our brand new offices on Dartmoor. Our email address and website will remain the same but please make a note of our new telephone and postal address in the panel below.

The first quarter of 2007 has been incredibly busy with many of you looking ahead and already planning holidays for the second half of the year. For many destinations, aircraft seat availability is increasingly a problem, so booking ahead really does help you to get what you want. I'm personally just back from a superb riding trip in Argentina, staying on a fabulous estancia in the Cordoba region – see my report inside.

Don't forget we are always ready to chat, without obligation, if you are thinking about a holiday and need help or advice.

*Fiona Brijnath*

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brochure

Call us for a copy of our 'show-case' brochure

Far Frontiers Travel Limited

The Pound  
Ampney Crucis  
Gloucestershire GL7 5SA

from 18 May 2007

new telephone & fax

**01837 840640**

Far Frontiers Travel Limited

Nine Stone, South Zeal  
Devon EX20 2PZ

email and web address remain the same

CONTACT US



# far frontiers

tailored travel for today's explorer.

*"Memorable and wonderful, outstanding and breathtaking".*

*"Genuinely the holiday of a lifetime".*

*"I loved every minute".*

*"It exceeded my expectations – a truly amazing and memorable experience".*

*"An excellent time, one we would not have missed".*

Members of the 2006 Tour of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs Trek and Ride to Western Mongolia



## REMARKABLE RAILWAYS

Discover the romance of rail travel – on historic and new trains in spectacular destinations

## CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

Ideas for seasonal celebrations or getting completely away from it all this Christmas

## COASTS, RIVERS AND WATERWAYS

Memorable boat cruises – from the lush backwaters of Kerala to the glacial wilderness of the Patagonian coast

# INDIAN MUTINY YEAR

2007 is the 150th anniversary of the great armed uprising against British Imperialism.



To the British it was **The Indian Mutiny**, but to the Indians themselves it was the **First War of Independence** that shook northern India a century and a half ago. Today few sites remain, but the story of this extraordinary episode in Imperial history is as vivid as ever – the initial uprising by the sepoys at **Meerut** on 10 May 1857, the feverish battles in **Old Delhi**, the betrayal and massacre of women and children at **Cawnpore (Kanpur)**, the heroic defence of **Lucknow** and the romantic life and death of the **Rani of Jhansi**.

After the final surrender on 20 June 1858, the British ended both the East India Company and the Mughal Empire, sending the deposed Emperor Bahadur Shah to exile in Burma. With the coming of the British Raj, India was ruled by a British governor general until partition in 1947.

Our 12-day itinerary visits the key sites of **Delhi, Meerut, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi Gwalior, Lucknow and Kanpur**.



» Indian history «

» when to go « Dates to suit individuals

» prices from « **£1985** per person based on two people travelling

# coasts, rivers and WATERWAYS



Mongolia – adventure and culture in this remote and fascinating destination

## the great OUTDOORS

» Mongolia «

» when to go « May to September

» prices from « **£2390** per person for 15 days

### MONGOLIA

Renowned for the legendary warrior Ghengis Khan, whose Golden Horde swept across Asia in the 12th century, **Mongolia** has many traditions that live on in the nomads of today – and horses still play an important part in an essentially timeless lifestyle. Our own travels here have taken us from desert and steppe to the mountains, travelling by jeep, horse and train. Who better, then, to hand-craft an itinerary for you that is exhilarating but within your limits?

We can offer treks and rides in the **Altai Mountains** in the far west, the lush green forests of the northern **Hovsgol** region and the starkly beautiful **Gobi Desert**, and will give you sound



Make the most of Bhutan's festival seasons

» Bhutan «

» when to go « Spring and Autumn

» prices from « **£2840** per person for 16 days

### BHUTAN

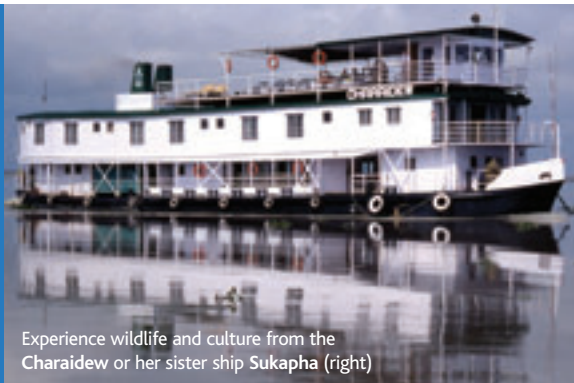
Spring and autumn herald the arrival of the *Tsechu* season in the mountain **Kingdom of Bhutan**. Held throughout the year at each dzong or monastic fortress, *Tsechu* are important celebrations, where a carnival atmosphere prevails. Families dressed in their finery picnic amongst stalls, monks attired in colourful robes and hideous masks act out plays and masked dancers whirl to the accompaniment of horns, drums and cymbals.

Festival dates for 2007 are: Thimphu Festival 21-23 September, Bumthang Festival 25-29 October and the Mongar Festival 16-19 November. Call us to find out how you can weave these into a memorable visit.

**M**ongolia's harsh windswept plains are a revelation to intrepid travellers, whilst Bhutan's festivals are unforgettable.

advice as to the best areas for you. New for this year is a traditional riverside Mongolian camp surrounded by green rolling hills yet situated within an hour's drive of the bustling capital, **Ulaanbaatar**. A warm and peaceful welcome awaits and you will stay in beautifully decorated traditional dwellings, known locally as gers, with en-suite facilities. A wide range of adventure and cultural activities will enable you to fully experience and learn about Mongolia. Relax around a roaring campfire and marvel at the Milky Way overhead. Enjoy the solitude and freedom that is Mongolia, and let your worries fade away.

**W**hy not tailor-make your holiday around a memorable boat trip? Here are some of our favourites.



Experience wildlife and culture from the Charaidew or her sister ship Sukapha (right)



» Assam and Kolkata, Northern India «

- » accommodation « 12 air-conditioned en-suite cabins
- » operates « Year round – call us for departure dates
- » prices from « £1895 per person for 12 days

The **Charaidew** cruises on the River **Brahmaputra** in Assam and is now joined on the river by her near-identical sister ship **Sukapha**. In summer Sukapha will run on the River **Hugli** between Kolkata and the Ganges.

Wildlife and wilderness are the main features of a Brahmaputra cruise – the river bed is often 20 or 30km across, an empty world of sand spits and water with marvellous birdlife and the occasional Gangetic Dolphin. The cruises here also give access to a number of India's national parks, including **Kaziranga**, perhaps the finest of all, and **Manas**, a Project Tiger Reserve on the **Bhutan** border. Explore the area and its wildlife by jeep or on the back of an elephant, take a village walk, visit tea gardens, explore country towns in cycle rickshaws, enjoy a barbecue on a deserted river island, a dance performance, and visits to craft workshops.

Sights not to be missed from the River Hugli include temples, towns and villages, which you can explore by bus, cycle rickshaw or on foot. On this more intimate waterway the emphasis is on monuments and culture – Hindu, Muslim and colonial.



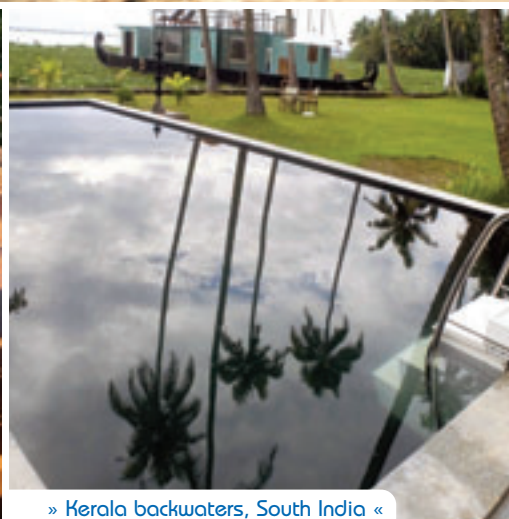
Discover the backwaters of Kerala on a unique 'boutique' rice barge



» Amazon river cruise, Peru «

- » accommodation « 14 guests in seven double cabins with en-suite shower
- » operates « Weekly on Fridays (three and seven day cruises), Sundays (five day cruise)
- » prices from « £2395 per person for nine days

The **Delfin riverboat** operates out of **Iquitos** in the Peruvian Amazon. This classic 65-foot Amazon riverboat with its wood-panelled décor was built in 1986 and given a major refurbishment in 2006. There is a covered observation deck and extensive library of books on the Amazon. Two eight-seater excursion boats equipped with life jackets, rain ponchos, rubber boots, torches and fishing canes are available throughout the trip. Visit the **Pacaya Samiria Reserve**, the largest and most pristine flooded forest in the world, walk through native villages and learn about life in the rainforest from the all-Peruvian crew of 15 who are fluent in English and rainforest-savvy.



» Kerala backwaters, South India «

- » accommodation « Air-conditioned double bedroom, bathroom and dressing room
- » operates « Dates to suit the individual
- » prices from « £1195 per person for a three night cruise including all meals, activities, transfers and flights

The ultimate way to explore the **Keralan backwaters** is on the 65-foot **Discovery 1** – the only 'boutique' boat on the backwaters. Whilst retaining the traditional feel of a typical Keralan rice barge, it is narrow enough to travel up and down the myriad canals and waterways. The large sitting area on deck is half covered – ideal for eating or reading in the shade – with the other half perfect for sunbathing and bird-watching. **Discovery 1** has been impeccably decorated and is leagues ahead of other barges in the backwaters. Catering is to the highest standard. Two to three nights are recommended to gain a 'true' backwater experience and get away from the day cruises in the area.

## Fiona's trip report:



# ARGENTINA

As we drove up into the rolling green hills of the Sierras Chicas, the sandy track, flanked by pampas grass, dipped and rose, crossing tumbling streams until we reached **Los Potreros**. Its shady lawn gave way to an L-shaped whitewashed homestead and an inviting verandah where three snoozing labradors set the scene for the relaxed atmosphere of the days to come.

**Los Potreros** is special. It is owned and run by the Beggs family, fourth-generation Anglo

Cruise from Saigon to the World Heritage Sites at Angkor on a Pandaw boat



» Mekong Delta «

- » accommodation « 32 double en-suite cabins
- » operates « Eight-day tours between Saigon, Vietnam and Angkor, Cambodia
- » prices from « £2485 per person for 15 days

Take a cruise on the exotic and vast Mekong Delta waterways from Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), former capital of South Vietnam, to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's quaint capital, and on to the stupendous World Heritage monuments at Angkor. Pandaw operates hand-crafted vessels with ultra-shallow drafts, enabling them to reach areas that cannot be accessed by other vessels. Each is hand-finished in brass and teak by traditional craftsmen and a colonial but very friendly atmosphere predominates. Service is impeccable, the state-rooms are comfortable and roomy, and there are promenade decks and a large observation deck above. Become entranced by the great panoramas and waterworlds as they unfold about you and explore the shore with local guides.



Explore the most southern and pristine region on earth – Patagonia and the Tierra del Fuego on board the expedition ships **Mare** or **Via Australis**. You will be able to sail through the Strait of Magellan and the Beagle Channel observing fjords, bays, glaciers and islands, between the Chilean city of Punta Arena and the Argentine city of Ushuaia in Tierra Del Fuego. You can also travel as far as mythical Cape Horn, the last headland before crossing into Antarctica and where the Pacific and Atlantic oceans meet. Learn more about the wildlife and this very special region from the lectures and take shore excursions to observe the Magellan Penguins, Elephant Seals and many other species.

» Patagonia coast «

- » accommodation « 64 en-suite cabins (most with outside windows)
- » operates « Three, four and seven night cruises from October to April
- » prices from « £2875 per person for 10 days



Explore Patagonia's fjords, bays, glaciers and islands

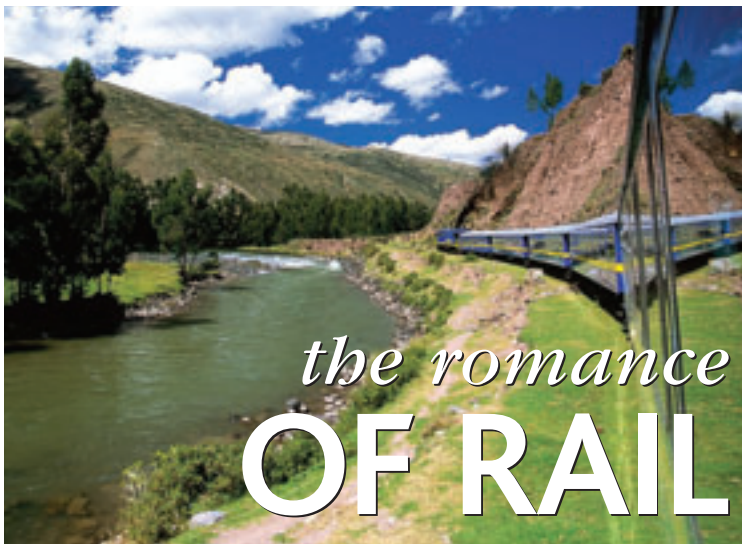


Argentines, who have created a magical way to experience life on a traditional Argentine working cattle ranch – blending truly spectacular riding, delicious home-cooked food and comfortable accommodation.

Evenings kicked off with an informal wine-tasting in the sitting room or sundowners on the verandah, followed by a candle-lit dinner. Lunch was generally outside – often traditional asado or barbecue with great hunks of melt-in-the-mouth beef or marinated chicken cooked on an open fire.

On our first day we rode down through a picturesque gorge, tethering our horses and climbing down a steep ravine to a stunning cascading waterfall where we swam in the cool waters, the falls pummeling our shoulders in a unique massage. On our second day we swapped the gentle exertions of the trail for the thrill of the polo field. After 15 minutes of stick and ball we were deemed ready to commence this 'sport of kings' and enjoyed a thrilling few chukkas before turning for home, a glass of wine and a delicious

lunch. The following day we packed our saddlebags and headed off for a three-day trail ride. Our days on the trail passed in a glorious succession of picturesque valleys, tumbling streams, forests of silver birch and eucalyptus, rocky hillsides strewn with pink granite and wild flowers and condors wheeling above. Picnic lunches of cheese, bread and tomatoes bursting with flavour preceded our overnight stays. The first was in a basic lodge with bunk beds, no hot water but a delightful family who spoke no English. The second was in a gorgeous stone cottage set in its own valley, with a traditional range for cooking and candles for light. After tea and scones, a hot shower and a welcome glass of wine, we settled down to a tasty supper. Returning to the estancia for the last couple of nights, I resumed my early morning walks on the farm and enjoyed bird-watching and studying the beautiful meadow flowers. I would recommend a minimum of five nights at Los Potreros which can be combined with a couple of nights in Buenos Aires. Prices start from £1730 per person for 11 days.



# the romance OF RAIL

The Hiram Bingham – named after the explorer who discovered Machu Picchu in 1911



» Victoria Express «

» passengers « 48 in two sleeping carriages  
» operates « Six times a week

## Vietnam

Take the luxurious **Victoria Express** to the hill town of **Sapa** in North West Vietnam, passing through the exotic landscapes of North Vietnam between **Hanoi** and **Lao Cai**. The ten-hour journey offers a wonderfully romantic experience of a bygone era. Watch the beautiful scenery unfold and indulge yourself in the delights of traditional Vietnamese and Western cuisine.



» Chiva Express «

» passengers « 34  
» operates « Several times a week

## Ecuador

The new **Chiva Express** offers a great way to experience the best of mainland **Ecuador** – from the **Andean** patchwork countryside to its lush, tropical coastal lowlands. A 'chiva' is a typical old-fashioned, colourful tropical bus with open sides and room on the roof for bags, fruit and animals. The Chiva Express combines the best of a chiva with a train – a bus on tracks – which runs between **Quito** and **Guayaquil** along the **Avenue of Volcanoes**. Along the way you can combine parts of the journey with adventure trekking and riding to make it truly special.



» Beijing to Lhasa Railway «

» passengers « 800  
» operates « Daily

## China to Tibet

The new **Beijing to Lhasa Railway** is the highest in the world, climbing from an altitude of 2,829 metres at **Golmut** to 3,650 metres at **Lhasa**, much of it built on permafrost. Its highest point is just over 5,000m at the **Tanggula Pass**. All cabins are pressurised and air-conditioned and, because of the altitude, oxygen is also available. The two-night train journey is best combined with an overland journey across the **Tibetan Plateau** to take in the country's stunning picturesque scenery of rural villages and snow-capped mountains.



» Palace On Wheels «

» passengers « 112  
» operates « Once a week departing from Delhi

## Rajasthan, India

Though times have long changed, Rajasthan's **Palace On Wheels** evokes the royal style to which the Maharajas of yesteryear were accustomed. This splendid and exquisite train offers luxurious cabins, wall-to-wall carpeting, a well-stocked bar, two dining cars and a highly personalised service.

The Palace on Wheels is the perfect way to do some serious sightseeing in Rajasthan without repacking your suitcase! Explore **Jaipur**, **Jaisalmer**, **Jodhpur**, **Ranthambhor National Park**, **Chittaurgarh**, **Udaipur**, **Bharatpur** and **Agra** during your week-long journey.

**T** ravel in style on one of the great railways of the world.



» Trans-Siberian/Mongolian «

» passengers « Variable  
» operates « Several times a week

## Siberia, Mongolia, China

The **Trans-Siberian/Mongolian** is one of the world's great train journeys, an epic 8,045km ride spanning three countries and 11 time zones. Starting in **Moscow**, you cross the vast forest tundra to **Irkutsk**, the capital of **Siberia** and set-off point for **Baikal**, the world's deepest inland freshwater lake. Re-join the train for the journey to **Ulaanbaatar**, capital of **Mongolia**, where you can break your journey or continue the last 31 hours to **Beijing**, a complete contrast to the vast open spaces of the preceding days. Sightseeing is arranged in each city and you can tailor the length of each stay as you like.

» Hiram Bingham «

» passengers « 84  
» operates « Monday to Saturdays

## Machu Picchu, Peru

Purchased in Singapore, the **Hiram Bingham's** carriages have been luxuriously refurbished in Peru. Brunch is served shortly after departure from **Cusco**, while you enjoy the spectacular scenery from its ample windows. On arrival in Machu Picchu a bus takes you to the citadel while the majority of visitors are departing for their journey back to Cusco, enabling you to experience the ruins in relative solitude and at leisure. You return to the train as the sun goes down, when pre-dinner cocktails are served accompanied by live entertainment and followed by a three course, à la carte dinner.



### Bhutan's king to abdicate

The remote **Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan**, also known as the Land of the Thunder Dragon, receives around 12,000 visitors a year. King Jigme Singye Wangchuck has announced that he will abdicate in 2008, when the country is due to hold elections for the first time.

The King took the throne in 1972 at the age of 17 and next year the monarchy will be 100 years old. However, its absolute power in the largely Buddhist nation of almost 600,000 people will be curtailed as the country moves to adopt a constitution and elect its first prime minister in 2008, making 2007/8 a good time to visit.

Over the years King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who has four wives and lives in a log cabin on the edge of the capital, has opened up the country to limited tourism. Bhutan has strict environmental and logging laws that have preserved the majority of its woodlands and mountain climbing is banned in order to protect its more remote regions.

## Your feedback

There is nothing better than personal recommendation when you are considering something new. Here is some of the feedback we have received from clients over the past year.

**Trekking in the Indian Himalayas** – "A great experience. The trekking guide was really super. Overall I was very impressed. It was a wonderful trip".

**Charles de Bartolome**, USA

"Great holiday and many thanks for your efforts".

**Charles Arthur**, London, UK

**Ethiopia Cultural Tour** – "It was a truly fantastic trip – way beyond expectations. Thank you for all your care and trouble".

**Sir David and Lady Scholey**, London, UK

**Southern India Cultural Tour** –

"It was brilliant, we had a truly wonderful time. Thank you very much".

**Mark and Josephine Acton**, Dorset, UK

**Palaces of Rajasthan, North India** –

"A wonderful introduction to India. Thanks for a great trip!"

**Tim and Nicola Dumbreck**, Surrey, UK

**Forts, Wadis and Souks of Oman** –

"A revelation. The mountains were stunning and the people we met were delightful. Our guide gave us a marvellous insight into the country's way of life".

**Robert and Claire Watson**, Gloucestershire, UK

## ideas for the FESTIVE SEASON

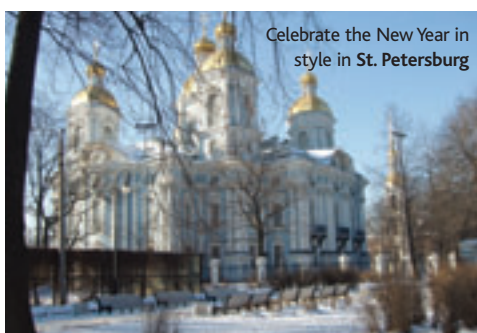
How about celebrating Christmas or the New Year away?

Controlled shore excursions ensure you see as much as possible with minimum disturbance to the environment

Emily Stone/National Science Foundation



- » when to go « November to February
- » prices from « £5565 per person for 23 days, shorter trips available

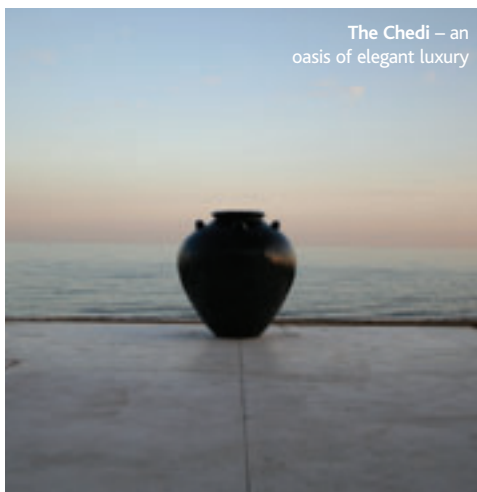


Celebrate the New Year in style in St. Petersburg

- » when to go « 29 Dec 2007 to 3 Jan 2008
- » prices from « £1145 per person

## WINTER IN RUSSIA

The Winter 'Arts Square' Festival is the cultural highlight of **St. Petersburg's** winter season. Its magnificent and famed Arts Square is home to the St. Petersburg Philharmonia, the Russian State and Ethnographic museums, the Mussorgsky Theatre and the Grand Hotel Europe. Over ten days the festival offers concerts, exhibitions, lavish gala receptions and opportunities for festival-goers to mingle and to meet the artists. One of the highlights is the opulent **New Year's Eve Ball** which lasts from dusk until dawn. See in 2008 with a concert, gourmet candlelit dinner, dancing and entertainment through the night and spectacular fireworks!



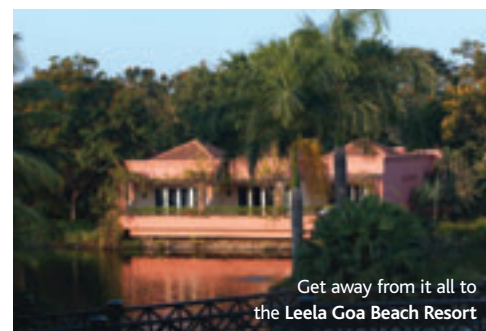
The Chedi – an oasis of elegant luxury

- » when to go « November to February
- » prices from « £1995 per person for 14 days

## INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR (IPY)

International Polar Year actually covers the two year period from March 2007 to March 2009. Thousands of scientists from more than 60 nations are taking part in an internationally-coordinated campaign of research that will involve and educate the public and to help train the next generation of engineers, scientists and leaders.

The harsh and challenging environment of **The Antarctic** is one of the most fascinating wildlife experiences you will ever have. We offer itineraries on a variety of boats, each staffed by experienced naturalists, ranging from 10 days to three weeks. Include some or all of **Cape Horn**, **The Falklands**, **South Georgia**, the **South Orkney Islands** and the **Antarctic Peninsular**. Call us for details as berths for Christmas 2007 are already filling.



Get away from it all to the Leela Goa Beach Resort

- » when to go « November to February
- » prices from « £2695 per person

## CHRISTMAS IN GOA

The five-star **Leela Goa Beach Resort** is a contemporary celebration of **South India's** Vijayanagara Empire temple and palace architecture and **Goa's** Portuguese heritage. Tucked away in South Goa on the **Arabian Sea**, the resort is bordered by the secluded **Mobor** beach and an active fishing village along the **River Sal**. Its spacious villa-style rooms and suites are set among 75 acres of landscaped tropical gardens and sparkling lagoons. Water sports, golf, tennis, yoga and massage are all available. You can even take a direct charter flight to Goa, enabling you to make the most of the holiday period.

## OMAN, LAND OF CULTURE AND CONTRASTS

With more than 1,000 km of pristine coastline, **Oman** offers superb marine life, ancient forts, fertile wadis and craggy mountain scenery. A 14-day itinerary provides the ideal combination of beach relaxation with a tour of the interior. Flying time is only seven hours and the hotels are superb. For the adventurous we suggest you take a journey up to the **Mussandam Peninsula** or south to the **Empty Quarter** where you can camp under the skies and enjoy stories of Bedouin life.

Muscat's **Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa**, which nestles in the bay against the dramatic backdrop of the rugged interior mountains offers a lavish 'stay-put' experience. Or, for a more 'boutique' environment, we recommend **The Chedi**, situated on the stunning **Boushar Beachfront**.