



**N**ow in my 17th year of travelling and itinerary planning, I continue to be enthralled by the incredible variety of peoples, cultures, landscapes and wildlife each time I travel.

*In February I experienced minus 29°C and the chill of an Arctic winter while dog sledging in Norway. In April I lathered on sun block at 4,000m on a salt flat in Bolivia, and in June I voyaged on the high seas among puffins, humpback whales and polar bears. You can read about my Bolivian adventures in this issue.*

*It all demonstrates the extraordinary breadth of countries and experiences that we cover at Far Frontiers Travel. This, combined with the fact that our clients can consult the same person for advice each holiday, is what I believe appeals time after time.*

*With the recession continuing to bite, we have some exciting offers around the world. There are plenty more opportunities for us to negotiate great prices so do ask if you have a yearning to travel somewhere we haven't mentioned.*

*I have been hugely enjoying summer on Dartmoor and, with the latest Arcturus polar brochure hot off the press and a steady stream of new enquiries for Far Frontiers Travel, it promises to be a busy autumn.*

Fiona Brijnath  
Far Frontiers Travel

telephone & fax

**01837 840640**

email

[fiona@farfrontiers.com](mailto:fiona@farfrontiers.com)

website

[www.farfrontiers.com](http://www.farfrontiers.com)

brochure

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

Far Frontiers Travel Limited  
Ninestone, South Zeal  
Devon EX20 2PZ

CONTACT US

# far frontiers

tailored travel for today's explorer.



## OUTRAGEOUS OFFERS

We have some really excellent value holidays for the last quarter of this year and early 2010. If you are looking for a late escape now is the time to snap one up!

## IMPRESSIONS OF BOLIVIA

Fiona reports on her travels in Bolivia – including a stay in a hotel made of salt overlooking the Tunupa Volcano, her visit to a witch doctor at Lake Titicaca and joining in a fiesta with the local Iruitos people

## IDEAS FOR 2009/10

Introducing some irresistible new activities, accommodation and travel options by which you can explore Morocco, South America, Russia and the Far East



# NEW FOR 2009/10

## CHILEAN PATAGONIA Puyuhuapi Lodge and Spa

Experience the wild beauty of the **Carretera Austral** and **Laguna San Rafael** with an exploration of Chile's 'frontier' region. Your base is the 30 room **Puyuhuapi Lodge and Spa** offering fine food and service on the shores of **Bahia Dorita**. It is a magical lodge, not only in terms of the array of activities on offer, but also the extraordinarily scenic journey to get there. This is a perfect holiday for the outdoor enthusiast – boat trips through fjords, kayaking, hiking trails and cycling. You can visit the national park or relax in the spa or the outdoor hot spring pools. Thalassotherapy, relaxation massages, and facial treatments are also available. Puyuhuapi is a three hour flight from **Santiago**, followed by a couple of hours by road and boat. A true 'get-away-from-it-all' destination.



*"With less inhabitants per square mile than the Atacama Desert, Chile's Aysén region is still little visited, a pristine wilderness of fjords, glaciers, mountains, fast flowing rivers and temperate forests. Providing four to six day itineraries, Puyuhuapi Lodge and Spa is the perfect base for experiencing it. Great comfort, guides and a range of excursions are all included, and the award-winning spa will relax and sooth aching limbs after a day's exploring. On your penultimate day the lodge's catamaran will whisk you to the awe-inspiring Laguna San Rafael and glacier, a Unesco World Biosphere Reserve".*

*Simon Heyes, Puyuhuapi Lodge and Spa*

### » Special early booking discounts «

» option 1 « **20 per cent discount** for reservations at least eight months in advance. Special cancellation fees apply.

» option 2 « **Five per cent discount** for reservations made and fully paid within three months

**A**re you looking for something different? We are brimming with new ideas on how to explore off the beaten track without sacrificing comfort or style. Here are just a few...



## THAILAND AND LAOS New rail link

Thailand and Laos are now linked by rail across the **Mekong River** from the Northern Thai border town of **Nong Khai** so it is possible to journey from Bangkok to the Laos capital **Vientiane** by train. One company taking advantage of this is Eastern and Oriental Express which has added to its service from **Singapore** to Bangkok and **Chiang Mai** with a new journey into Laos. For those who want something more 'grass roots' we can organise a local train journey overnight from Bangkok, then by day train into Laos which is similar in style to the popular Chiang route. Arriving in the morning then crossing the border into Laos to explore the quiet and historic city of **Vientiane** is a must. Do talk to us about incorporating this into a thrilling itinerary around Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam this coming winter.



## BOLIVIA Wilderness camping

New for 2009 is the option to spend a remarkable night or two camping on the shores of the salt lake at **Sala de Uyuni** in southern **Bolivia**. The campsite sits on a glorious stretch of mossy pasture, just steps away from the bright white of the Sala. Although the facilities are simple, they offer all you need including a dining tent and separate shared loo/shower. You sleep in walk-in tents with proper beds and cosy bedding, heated by Mongolian-style chimney stoves. This stunning private location has as its backdrop the 5,400m snow-capped **Tunupa Volcano**. For the ultimate experience you could combine this with a stay in the **Salt Hotel** and, for the more adventurous, we highly recommend a hike in the surrounding hills overlooking the salt lake.



## MOROCCO Trekking and camping

Morocco has been an extraordinarily popular destination for us over the years with many clients experiencing the simplicity of self-drive exploration with night stops in delightful little riads – old Moroccan houses – all over the country. For desert lovers, we can now offer overnights in a new and privately run camp in the Sahara dunes of **Merzouga** where you stay in small, well fitted and colourful tents attended by professional staff. For those keen to trek, we have a great range of new treks in the **High Atlas Mountains**, the **Sahara Desert** and along the **Atlantic coast**. Do call us for details.



## ECUADOR AND THE GALAPAGOS

### Galapagos by expedition vessel

Darwin's **Enchanted Isles** – a volcanic archipelago on the equator 600 miles west of the Ecuadorian coast – are one of our planet's most precious ecosystems, home to an extraordinary profusion of exotic, often endemic flora and fauna.

We are delighted to be working with three superb expedition vessels – Eric, Flamingo and Letty – superior first class 20 passenger motor yachts. Built in 1991-94 and refurbished annually, each features 10 outside-facing cabins over three decks with teak interiors. The vessels are extremely comfortable and spacious with the highest environmental standards; two expert on-board guides per boat ensure a personalised experience, and the crew strive for the highest levels of service and cuisine.

The seven night itineraries depart on Sundays. A fourth vessel, the M/Y Sky Dancer, operates as a dedicated dive boat.

### Birdwatching in comfort

If you are bound for **The Galapagos** why not extend your stay in Ecuador to see the unrivalled birdlife at premier birding sites in the cloud forests surrounding the volcanoes in the high Andes? Ecuador is home to some 1,600 species of birds – more than half of all the species in South America.

The protected forest areas of **Antisana**, **Yanacocha**, **Tandayapa**, **Mindo** and **Papallacta** are home to an amazing variety of avifauna. You can take a private day trip from **Quito** or a one or two-night excursion deep into the heart of the forest. Comfortable accommodation is provided at each site as well as snacks, boxed lunches and delicious dinners. Explore the different habitats of the eastern or western slopes of the Andes, which offer the greatest biodiversity known on the planet, guided by highly experienced bird-watching experts. Hummingbirds are everywhere, as are the most colourful tanagers, mountain toucans and the spectacular Andean condor. The weather allows for year-round birding outings.

## RUSSIAN ALTAI

### Wilderness trekking for private groups

A number of our clients enjoy private treks to places seriously off the beaten track. **The Golden Mountains** are to be found south of **Siberia** where purity, untouched wild nature and communication with local people (many of whom are followers of exotic doctrines) give a unique social experience. Here you will encounter pagans (Shamanists), followers of Roerikh and also the Old Believers (Starovery) who became separated from the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox church in 1666-1667 as a protest against church reforms. The trip takes in a number of archaeological artefacts dating back as far as 1,500,000 BC, including rock paintings and Palaeolithic sites. On this unique journey you will hike through mountain taiga to a beautiful lake, cross a simple pass whilst acclimatising and set up a base camp. From here you make spectacular side trips to glaciers, lakes, shrines and simple trekking peaks of 3,300m. Our suggested itinerary is 19 days. Do call for more details or a quotation.



## BHUTAN Possible opening up of new areas

An exciting development in Bhutan is the potential opening in the next year or so of a third land border at **Gelephu**, south of **Bumthang**. This will allow clients to travel as far as central **Bhutan** and then drop down to cross the border into **Manas National Park**. We highly recommend combining Bhutan with a stay at **Bansbari Lodge** at **Manas**. It has simple but comfortable accommodation with tea gardens to one side and views of the Himalayan foothills to the other.

Further news is that 2010 should see the opening of two new valleys in eastern Bhutan – the people of Merak and Saktien live a life that is in harmony with nature moving seamlessly with the wind from one pasture to another with the changing seasons. We are monitoring the government's announcements on this – so for now please register with us if you might be interested in a visit for 2010.

# Fiona's trip report:

## TRAVELS IN BOLIVIA – April 2009

"The patchwork of fields in various shades of yellow, green and brown, rolling hills dotted with tall thin trees and tiny picturesque homesteads were more reminiscent of Tuscany, I thought to myself, than the dramatic highlands of Potosi. Only the stout, trilby-topped figures in colourful shawls with thick black plaits down their backs, herding their sheep on the roadside, gave me any clue that this was actually Bolivia."

"I was excited to be here. Whilst the development of tourism in many parts of South America has been quite rapid, Bolivia has found it harder to promote its charms. The country has lived somewhat in the shadow of its better-known and more frequently visited neighbours, Chile, Argentina, Peru and Brazil whose assets have been highlighted the world over. As a result, much of Bolivia is delightfully unspoilt, and such is the extent of its natural beauty it rather left me wondering why it doesn't have more visitors.

If I had to choose the most memorable days of my trip it would be those spent around the extraordinary salt flats of **Sala de Uyuni**. This area is the size of Hong Kong, comprising some 12,000 square kilometres of unbroken, blinding white salt against a backdrop of snow-capped volcanic peaks and extinct volcanic craters adorned with giant cacti.

I stayed at the **Salt Hotel**, constructed entirely out of salt bricks – even the bed! – with a floor of salt crystals scattered with colourful local rugs. Sunset over the 'sala' with a powerful thunderstorm playing out over **Tunupa Volcano** in the gathering gloom made this unique setting seem all the more special.

The next day I embarked on a 650km round trip by four wheel drive into the depths of southern

immensely brooding hills and 5,000m snow-topped peaks.

An epic drive back to **Uyuni** saw us fording torrents, braving a sudden and unexpected snow shower and running the gauntlet of a powerful electric storm. This is the stuff of adventure travel!

But Bolivia is not all about natural beauty and colonial cities. Here you also come close to real poverty. What moved me most? It might have been a visit to the silver mines at **Potosi** where I encountered first-hand the miners who work 14 hour days in cramped, damp and dangerous conditions for 80 Boliviano (roughly £8)

per day. Or it was the mother who, with three small children at her skirts, sat in a dark shack and bagged salt for 12 hours at a time for 20 Bolivian cents a kilo. Despite feeling desperately sad, at the same time it is important to see some of the real Bolivia and I am hopeful that I can play a small part in bringing our two cultures closer together and thereby help to improve some tough lives.



Top: salt flats at Sala de Uyuni; Centre: a picnic with the Iruitos people; Bottom: Lake Titicaca

Titicaca, to lunch on a floating reed-bed island with the ethnic Iruitos people. In glorious sunshine I sat cross-legged with the families in their colourful attire and picnicked on delicious locally made cheese, beans, sweet-corn, potatoes and fried fish. In the afternoon, floating away in a reed boat reminiscent of a Thor Heyerdahl Expedition, I continued my journey across the lake, alighting on a number of tiny islands each with its own character and surprises. There were

Inca ruins and tumbledown temples, sheep roaming on pebble beaches and gardens of wild flowers and herbs.

My last night in Bolivia was spent in a glorious lodge, perched high on a terraced plateau with pretty rooms and lovely cottage gardens. From there I walked to the top of the island to watch



Bolivia. Here I stopped at **Laguna Colorada**, so named because of its rust red waters created by the combination of minerals in the lagoon, and a truly glorious spot! I picnicked on the shoreline, sun on my back, listening to the twittering of the flamingos and

watching a pair of Andean geese guide their young brood through the spiky reeds. All this under the gaze of



Bolivia has no coastline, but it does have **Lake Titicaca** – 5,000 square kilometres of tidal freshwater lake. Here I visited the Kallawaya, a witch doctor who can read your future in coca leaves. Sitting cross-legged in a darkened room, surrounded by his numerous jars of potions and remedies, he chanted a blessing on my travels and, throwing a tumbler of the magic leaves onto his fire, sent flames shooting out into the room, thereby securing the protection of 'Pacha Mama', the Mother Earth, over the remainder of my trip.

The next morning, I took a thrilling hydrofoil trip, skimming the dazzling blue waves of Lake



the sun set over the Andes before joining the locals in a colourful fiesta. The women danced and whirled to the frantic tempo of a laced band and fireworks lit the sky in a colourful tribute to a perfect stay."

If you would like to discover what Bolivia has to offer, please do call me.

Our 14 day suggested itinerary covers La Paz, Lake Titicaca, Sala de Uyuni, Laguna Colorada, Potosi and Sucre and prices start at £2,895 per person including flights.



# SPECIAL OFFERS

Here are a few examples of the excellent value trips we can put together for you at the moment. Many of them have a booking deadline or date by which you must travel so we advise you to be quick off the mark if you are interested. If these don't appeal, we will be happy to let you know of offers at other destinations.

## OMAN

### Late summer deals – hurry!

A five day holiday, including flights with Oman Air and accommodation at the stunning five star **Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa** in Muscat is a better bargain than anything you will find in the souk! The luxurious resort village and signature spa nestles alongside the sparkling bay of Al Jissah in a dramatic desert setting.

- » price « £460 per person to include flights and accommodation with breakfast
- » valid until « 14 September

Up until 20 September guests staying at the gorgeous **Six Senses Hideaway at Zighy Bay** on Oman's **Mussandam Peninsula** will enjoy one free night for every paid night – i.e. you can stay six nights and pay for only three and have a daily complimentary lunch. From 1 October to 20 December the offer is to stay four nights and pay for three or seven and pay for five, and a free spa treatment replaces the complimentary lunches. This beautiful resort comprises 82 luxury private pool villas and pool villa suites. Hidden by the Hajar Mountains, it allows true escapism in barefoot luxury.

- » prices from « £1,580 per person for a seven day holiday

The spectacular five star **Al Bustan Palace** was originally built for the Sultan of Oman, and is the epitome of luxurious elegance – a perfect blend of Islamic architecture and contemporary technology set in 200 acres of lush vegetation right on the beach. Exclusively for bookings from 1 – 19 December 2009: Stay five nights and pay for four nights only, seven nights and pay for five or ten and pay for seven.

- » price « £1,695 per person to include flights, transfers and accommodation with breakfast for a nine day holiday.

## PATAGONIAN COAST

### Wildlife cruise

Visit **Cape Horn**, the southernmost point of South America, on a three or four night wildlife cruise between **Punta Arenas** and **Ushuaia** before 17 October 2009 and enjoy **two free nights** in a Patagonian hotel. Call us to find out how you can include this in your tour of **Chile**.



## RUSSIA

### First winter special offers

Book now for a really memorable winter holiday. The four star **Ambassador Hotel**, a 15 minute walk from central **Nevsky Prospekt**, is offering one free night on stays of three nights or more from 16 October to 31 March 2010 – including Christmas and New Year!

- » prices from « £995 per person for four nights in a double room, flights, transfers and two full days of sightseeing. Special New Year packages are also available for groups of five rooms or more at £795 per person including flights, three nights accommodation, New Year programme and seven course dinner.



## ANTARCTIC

### Classic Antarctic Peninsula voyages

#### Save up to £1,075 per person

See as much as possible of the wildlife and scenery of the **Antarctic Peninsula** and the **South Shetland Islands**. Four or five days are spent in Antarctica, with landings planned at an abandoned whaling station, an Argentine research station and a chinstrap penguin colony. Enjoy spectacular scenery and the prospect of seeing large whales, adie penguins, elephant seals, leopard seals and blue-eyed shags. Your base is the small but luxurious ship **Plancius**.

- » when « 24 Jan – 6 Feb 2010, 21 Feb – 8 March 2010 and 5 – 18 March 2010
- » prices from « £4,580 per person based in triple cabin. Supplements for higher grades of cabin available



## INDIA

### Birding in luxury in Rajasthan

**Bharatpur** is one of India's most eminent bird sanctuaries. Ideally located between **Agra** and **Delhi**, the wildlife park contains over 350 species of birds, a third of which are migrants from as far afield as **Siberia** and **Central Asia**. Our seven day itinerary includes five nights at the sumptuous **Udaivilas Palace**, a day in the park as well as visits to the **Taj Mahal**, **Fatehpur Sikri** and **Jaipur**.

- » price « £895 per person including flights if you travel before the end of September 2009

### Brahmaputra River travel

Enjoy 14 nights on the **Brahmaputra River** cruise between **Guwahati** and **Dibrugarh** and pay for ten nights only. There are seven departures between October 2009 and March 2010. An added bonus is a complimentary **Kaziranga** jeep safari on the middle day of the cruise.

- » prices from « £3,255 per person including all flights, cruise and arrangements en route for a 17 day holiday



## PERU

### Classic cultures

Visit the fabled lost city of **Machu Picchu** at unbeatable prices. Our eight day journey includes **Lima**, **Cusco**, the **Sacred Valley** and **Machu Picchu**. These non-private departures are daily and operate with a minimum of two clients.

- » prices from « £1,595 per person for travel before December 2009

## Your feedback

Here is a selection of comments we have received recently from clients about their trips.

*"I had three priorities – to see Namche Bazaar, to visit the Hillary School and to get views of Everest. Three out of three. Mission accomplished! The best decision I made was to travel alone."*

**Marilyn Crosby**, Nepal, February 2009

*"Fiona really listens to your request and fulfils all your wishes with exemplary professionalism. We have had an outstanding holiday, thank you."*

**Mr and Mrs John Veats**, Oman, March 2009

*"When I book a holiday through you, Fiona, you do a fabulous job on the itinerary and pre-departure information. My holiday was spectacular in every way. My trip in April turned into a once-in-a-lifetime experience (as usual!). I now dream of helping children in Africa meet the wildlife and environment in the same way that I did."*

**Charlotte Langley**, Zambia, Victoria Falls, Botswana, April 2009

*"A fascinating historical and cultural insight and a wonderful trip all round."*

**Mr and Mrs Stephen Scott-Smith**, Cambodia/Vietnam, April 2009

*"We are back. It was really a fabulous trip and New Zealand was the highlight, all the places you organised for us were great. Thank you so much for all your help with the organisation."*

**Mr and Mrs Gareth Keene**, New Zealand, January 2009

*"It was a thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating experience. Thanks for organising a great trip for us – it was very memorable."*

**Mr and Mrs John Theakston**, Nepal/Bhutan and India, April 2009

*"It is a testament to Far Frontiers Travel that as soon as we got home, we went to look for your brochure to see where else we could go with you!"*

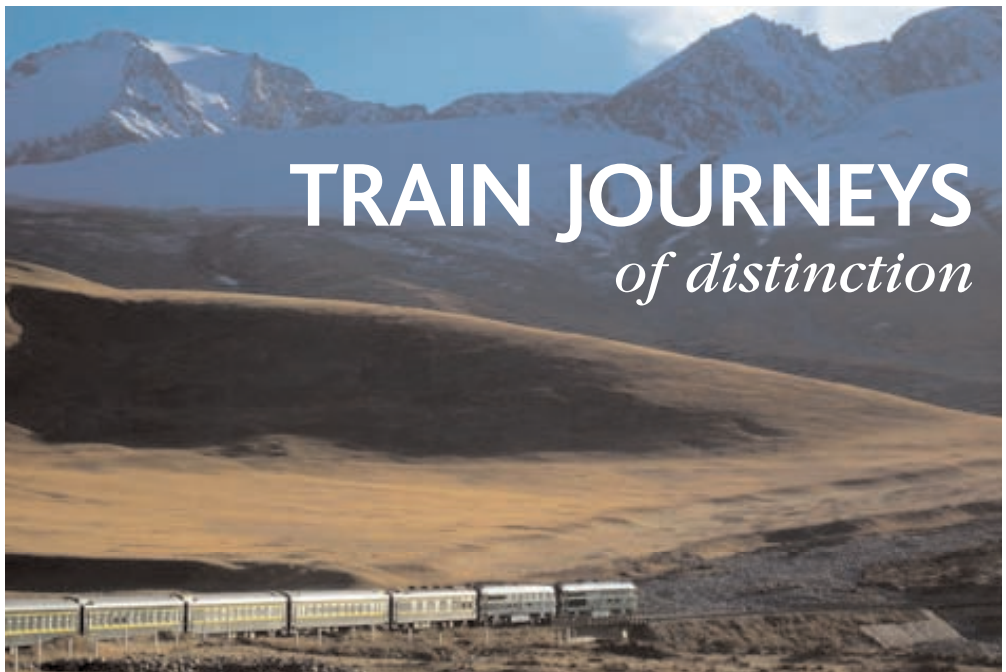
**Gaskell and Jennifer Jacobs**, India, June 2009

*"The trip was awesome. I think the best I can say for our group is that we did not want it to end. We are still talking about how wonderful it was."*

**Mrs Kate Huey and family**, Indochina, June 2009

*"Most helpful, informative, and friendly service at all stages. Absolutely spectacular trip which exceeded my already high expectations. Brilliant value for money, notwithstanding the high cost. It says it all that I was looking at your brochure for a future trip as soon as I got back!"*

**Judith Philip**, Antarctic Peninsula, December 2008



# TRAIN JOURNEYS of distinction

We are delighted to announce that we are working with the world's leading operator of exclusive long-distance rail tours. Join a voyage of a lifetime by private train through **Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, China, Tibet, Canada, India or Africa**. These are private rail tours for the adventurous traveller who is drawn by the excitement of visiting fabulous and often remote destinations but wants to appreciate them in style, comfort and safety. It is top of the range rail travel (with a price tag to match) but you really won't forget this trip in a hurry. The trains have some of

the finest accommodation and staff service available in luxury train travel today.

On board the Trans Siberian Winter Wonderland (Moscow to Vladivostok) voyage in February 2010 will be the BBC's World Affairs Editor John Simpson CBE as guest speaker.

» when « Travel eastbound 7 Feb – 20 Feb 2010  
or westbound 18 Feb – 3 March 2010  
» prices from « £4,995 per person (voyage only)



## We go one mile more... Fiona's epic luggage itinerary

On the way out to Bolivia, I had the unfortunate experience of losing my baggage in transit and spent the first three days of my trip with little more than I stood up in. My partners in Bolivia were superb – not only did they lend me warm clothing and ensure that there was toothpaste and toothbrush awaiting me, but they also masterminded a heroic rescue of the aforementioned lost bag. They tracked it every step of the way on its epic journey – Madrid, Lima, Santa Cruz, La Paz – on four separate flights, cleared it through customs, drove it three hours to Oruro, put it on a seven hour train journey and drove it a further hour to my hotel in the middle of the famous Sala de Uyuni – delivering it to my door at 11.30pm that night!

**Their idea of personal service certainly matches my own and I think that this tale just highlights the lengths we can and will go to for our clients!**

## The new Arcturus brochure

Our 2010/11 polar brochure is now out. It features a variety of small group expeditions to Arctic Norway and the Lofoten Islands, the Solovetski Islands of Arctic Russia, Greenland and Kamchatka.

Also included are Arctic and Antarctic voyages by sailing ship, ice-strengthened vessel and icebreaker, and some extraordinary tailor-made itineraries to intriguing locations. Activities include dog sledging, cross-country skiing, boating, kayaking, hiking and wildlife trips. Unforgettable highlights include visiting the Sami people in Northern Norway, meeting local Russian reindeer herders and experiencing the way of life of the Inuit in Greenland.



**We also have a selection of really generous discounts on upcoming Antarctic voyages this winter.**

**Please ask for a copy of the latest brochure and our special offers leaflet.**

The air holiday packages in this brochure are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 9270. Please see our booking conditions for more information.

