

creating ADVENTURES

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Happy 2023 - I'm busy mapping out my year!

If the last quarter of 2022 was anything to go by, 2023 is going to be a cracking year for travel. So much has happened since Spring of 2020 but now we are back, as eager as ever to create memorable trips and experiences.

Almost all the Covid affected holidays have now taken place or are in the pipeline and with the wealth of new enquiries we've had recently it certainly feels good to be creating journeys of a lifetime rather than cancelling them!

In this issue we have a round-up of new experiences and locations in some incredibly diverse areas - **Mongolia to Greenland, Bhutan to Bolivia and Jordan to Japan.**

Turn to the back page for my favourite section - travel journals from happy clients! I'm off on a recce to the **Maldives** in July and **Georgia** in October so will update you all when I return.

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experiences...

» **JAPAN** – Kyoto & Kumanokodo Pilgrimage Hike

With **Japan** at last open for travel after the pandemic, ask to see our new 11 day tour starting in **Kyoto**, city of temples and geishas where you hike the **Philosophers' Path** then head to the holy mountain of **Mt Koya**. Here you'll lodge in a temple with the monks and take a spiritual 2km walk in ancient forest past 200,000 tombstones. The trip highlight, will be the **Nakahechi Pilgrimage Trail** – a three day hike for the committed walker.

» be in the know « Dine with a geisha, visit the Sumo Wrestler stables or ask for tournament tickets, enjoy an exclusive tour of a private Samurai sword collection, visit a tea farm by bicycle or sample Sake with our local expert.

» **BOLIVIA** – Deluxe Airstream Camper

Experience the vast space & solitude of the Salar de Uyuni (Salt Flats) of Bolivia in sublime accommodation!



locations...

Your camper can go anywhere and your personal chef and concierge will meet you at the end of an incredible day of touring. Visit a subaquatic cave, 4WD to **Thunupa Crater** at 4,600m with a fantastic view of the **Salt Pans** or cycle to **Cajchi Island** with its giant cacti. Nights are spent stargazing with a hot toddy to keep out the cold.

» be in the know « Travel during the rainy season (November – March) and you can experience the incredible mirror effect of the Salt Pans with water on them. Combine **Uyuni** with the floating reedbeds of **Lake Titicaca** and mystical markets of **La Paz**.



travel journals...

"It was not my first venture into Scoresby Sund but this time it was different – more flexible with landings made at places where larger vessels don't go. Good displays of the Aurora and we also witnessed (at a distance) a large iceberg roll over silently and without warning. From Snesund with its spectacular hanging glaciers we experience Rembrandt Van Rijn under sail and made a respectable 6/7 knots towards the night anchorage at Sydkap. My favourites – the scenery together with the peace and quiet."

Peter Wright, Sail Scoresby Sund, September 2022

experiences...



» MONGOLIA

Fascinating Cultures of the Altai

Explore **Ulaanbaatar** before departing for a 12-day adventure travelling by jeep through the **Mongol Altai Mountain Range** in the far West of **Mongolia** – a land of stunning mountains and lakes. You'll combine hauntingly beautiful vistas with visits to traditional **Kazakh** and **Uriankhai** nomadic camel-herding minority groups still living their traditional nomadic lifestyle.

» **be in the know** « Travel June – September, a time of celebrations. You may be lucky to witness a **Naadam**, a festival with wrestling, archery and horse racing, a wedding, a child's haircutting ceremony or the erection of a new ger. Hearing local throat singers will be a bonus.

» NEPAL – Moderate trekking for the first time visitor

See **Nepal's Himalayas** in a new light with the **Mardi Himal Trek**, ideal for those wishing to avoid the crowds, yet be rewarded with breath-taking views of **Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, and Machhapuchre**. A ten day holiday.

» **be in the know** « Work on your fitness before you arrive – you'll hike for 5-7 hours per day and reach elevations of up to 4,250m.



» WEST GREENLAND

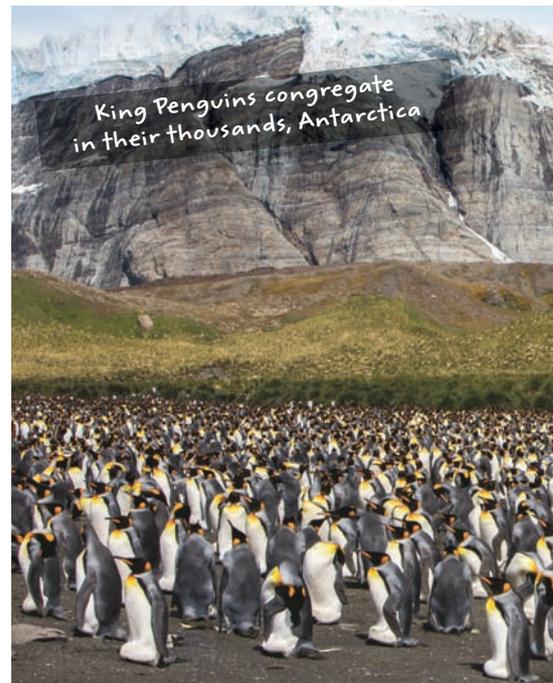
Travel with the locals

Join the delightful **Sarfaq Ittuk** ferry and see **Greenland's** spectacular glaciers, icebergs, colourful Inuit settlements and Arctic wildlife. On this journey along the coast between **Ilulissat** (famed for its icebergs) in the north and **Qaqortoq** in the south you'll call in at ports and towns along the way gaining fascinating insights into the challenges of life in these remote outposts.

» **be in the know** « **Sarfaq Ittuk** usually carries more local passengers than tourists. There's a communal café and great views from the upper decks.

And there's more, I am bursting with ideas for your next holiday – **Egypt, the Faroes, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Canadian Arctic, Australia, Georgia, the Ross Sea** and much more...

Please ask for sample itineraries.



King Penguins congregate in their thousands, Antarctica

» BHUTAN – Landlocked kingdom with closely guarded culture

Every trip is different. Be it trekking, village visits, cycling, day hikes or overland driving. We love to include the lesser known **Tsechus/Festivals** with primeval masked dances in temple courtyards and crowds of locals dressed in their finery.

» **be in the know** « Ask about the **Matsutake Mushroom Festival** in August, the **Rhododendron Festival** in April or the **Black Necked Crane Festival** in November. The **Tour of the Dragon Mountain Bike Race** in early September is a sight to behold.

» ANTARCTICA

South Georgia for Photographers

October 2023 sees 114 passenger **Sea Spirit** spend an incredible 9 days in **South Georgia**. Utilising a flight from **Santiago in Chile** direct to the **Falkland Islands**, you'll have more time to enjoy the incredible wildlife opportunities than on the voyages that traditionally cross the **Drake Passage**.

» **be in the know** « Ask **Fiona** for the detailed itinerary and prices. You'll be looking at under **£9,000** for a berth in a triple cabin and we'll add flights to fit.



Thimphu Festival, Bhutan



» ARCTIC: NORTH & EAST SPITSBERGEN

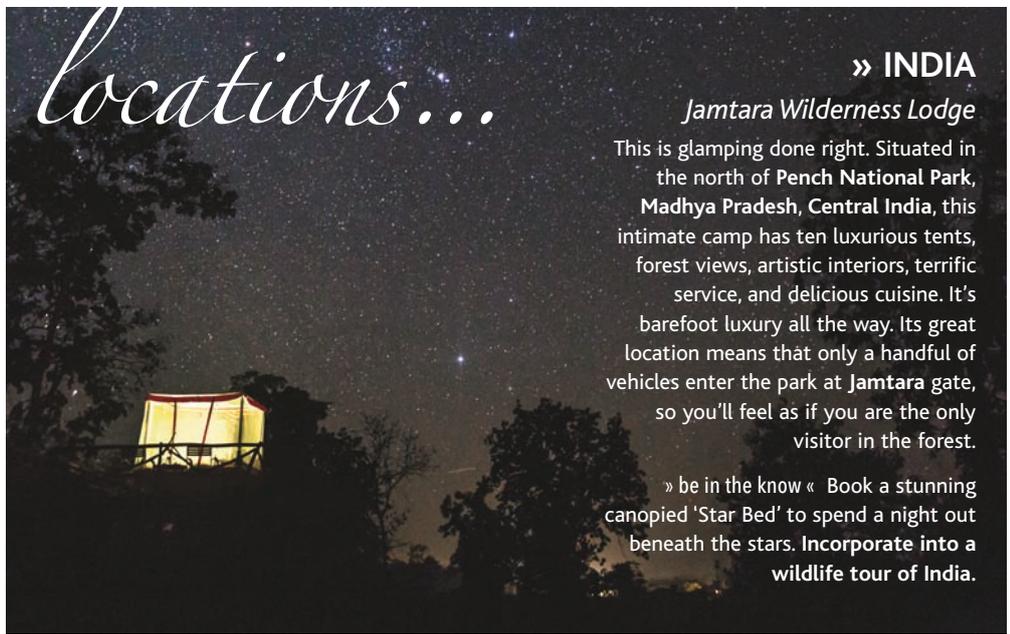
Summer Solstice

Shhh! Advanced notice of this unusual Arctic sojourn – two Spitsbergen voyages combined into one ice-packed summer solstice adventure in the world's top polar bear habitat. **Plancius** (108 passengers) has linked two of her most exploratory **Spitsbergen** trips, one of which cruises the island's northern shores for pack ice and polar bears, and the other that ventures into the scenic eastern shorelines during the summer solstice. The result is this Arctic extravaganza of wildlife and immersive outdoor excursions.

» be in the know «
Trip dates
 12-27 June 2024.
 Prices start at
 £6,400 per person
 in a quadruple cabin.
 Ask for twin cabin
 prices. **This really
 is great value!**
**Looking for a 2023
 Arctic voyage?**
 Please ask.



Locations...



» INDIA

Jamtara Wilderness Lodge

This is glamping done right. Situated in the north of **Pench National Park, Madhya Pradesh, Central India**, this intimate camp has ten luxurious tents, forest views, artistic interiors, terrific service, and delicious cuisine. It's barefoot luxury all the way. Its great location means that only a handful of vehicles enter the park at **Jamtara gate**, so you'll feel as if you are the only visitor in the forest.

» be in the know « Book a stunning canopied 'Star Bed' to spend a night out beneath the stars. **Incorporate into a wildlife tour of India.**

» LAOS – the RV Sabaidee

This former steam ship dating back to the 1880s used to ply the **Chindwin and Upper Irrawaddy Rivers**. She's a double-decked 14 cabin vessel traditionally handcrafted in teak and brass with ultra-shallow draft which meets the navigational challenges of travel in remote areas. Whilst luxury and comfort are ever-present, it is the colonial-era character and friendly atmosphere that dominate. She has quality mountain bikes for independent exploration.



» be in the know « No single supplement on selected voyages. Join her 11-day **Laos Mekong Expedition** sailing from **Vientiane to Thailand's Golden Triangle**. There is good availability **January – March 2023** and from **October 2023 – March 2024**. Price from **£4,350 per person ship only**. Flights added to fit.



» OMAN

Alila Hinu Bay

Making waves on **Oman's** sweeping southwest coast, is the new **Alila Hinu Bay**, set over 45 hectares of untouched

beachfront opening onto the **Arabian Sea**. Guest rooms and villas are situated along the natural contours of the resort, framing sublime views of desert, lagoon or the **Arabian Sea**.

» be in the know « Savour the fresh fish offered daily, visit beautiful **Wadi Darbat** or 17th century trading post of **Mirbat**. For a fantastic two tone trip, combine with **Alila Jebel Akhdar** for incredible mountain hiking and far reaching views.



» JORDAN

Wadi Rum Glamping

Located in the heart of the desert in southern **Jordan**, this small private tented camp ticks all the boxes for an unforgettable stay. Arriving by 4WD you'll find just a handful of en-suite tents, a gorgeous Bedouin dining tent and comfy sit-out area for star gazing or chill-out time.

» be in the know « Combine this with an unforgettable ten day tour of **Jordan** – hike the Monastery at **Petra**, float and spa at the **Dead Sea**, see **Little Petra** by candlelight, trek in the natural beauty of **Dana Reserve**. Ask about hiking a section of the **Jordan Trail** a 675km journey that connects the length of the country visiting 75 villages/towns enroute.

» CANADIAN ARCTIC

Arctic Watch Lodge

» your base « the most northerly fly-in lodge on earth.
 » experience « adventures of a lifetime in the company of world-class polar guides and wildlife photographers seeking musk ox and polar bears.
 » enjoy « wildlife hiking, fat biking, exploring by ATV, sea kayaking alongside beluga whales and more besides. The food's not bad too!

» be in the know « Starting in 2023, all guests will be able to help support conservation efforts on **Somerset Island**.



Shackleton's Legacy



I so enjoyed my visit to the **Shackleton Legacy Exhibition** at the aptly named Shipwreck Museum in Charlestown, St Austell. It was a wild and stormy day and the sea was crashing over the harbour wall as I sought refuge among Frank Hurley's incredible photographs of Shackleton's heroic 1914 attempted expedition to the South Pole. I loved this superb mock-up of the interior of Endurance.



"Thank you. I had a wonderful visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The programme and the arrangements in support of it went like clockwork. The combination was perfect – the historical context, breath-taking scenery and distinctive ways of life of the people. Travelling solo has its challenges but you have always found me brilliant -so good to be with- guides who add immeasurably to my understanding and enjoyment. Their attention to my preferences (so well relayed by you) was first class."

David Carter, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, June 2022

"Fiona's patience and help was amazing given the number of changes to my Arctic trip, following the arrival of Covid in the world. I was ready to give up and throw in the towel, but she said, 'you're going to the Arctic' and go I did, and had the most amazing time."

Ealasaid Mackay, North Spitsbergen on Plancius, June 2022



Travel with confidence:

All the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this newsletter are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see the booking conditions on our websites for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate.

Clients wishing to book their own international flights are financially protected by the TOPP (Total Payment Protection) scheme. Full details are given on both Arcturus and Far Frontiers Travel websites under 'Your financial protection'.



Client comments

There is no dearth of trip feedback and comments in this issue – so much so there is simply not room to include it all. Have a look at the client comments on our website for more detailed information.

"Holiday and experience of the Arctic and Polar regions were well beyond expectations and I was especially impressed with the knowledge and expertise of the ship's expedition leaders. The whole experience was definitely value for money, with varied zodiac excursions, walks and excellent cuisine. Although the SAS pilots' strike caused chaos on my return, Fiona was there to help and keep me informed about developments and flights home. I felt I was in safe and competent hands!"

Stephen Mott, North Spitsbergen on Plancius, June/July 2022



"You listened to the brief, were very proactive in developing the itinerary and responded patiently and positively to requests and tweaks. We enjoyed the hot springs, the emptiness of the Westfjords and were lucky with the Northern Lights. We loved the Icelandic horses so much we are going to meet one of the few UK breeders!"

Toby and Jane Gaddum, Iceland, September 2022



"A wonderful experience, and the four elements of Ilulissat, Ferry, Qaqortoq and Narsarsuaq were very different so I feel I experienced the full diversity of Greenland's West coast. Moving ice is mesmerising."

Anne Robinson, West Greenland by Ferry, August 2022



"Well that was a wonderful trip. I have achieved a lifelong ambition to visit Gallipoli and literally walked in my great uncle's footsteps."

Andrew and Judy Given, Turkey, October 2022



"Thank you so much, Fiona, for organising such an amazing holiday. The hotel was wonderful: service, welcome, food, wine, organisation, staff – all were top quality. On arrival we were met by the host and charming staff and a delicious 3 course dinner of marinated shoulder of lamb – so light and well prepared despite the late hour (11pm)! Our favourite day was the Granada/Alhambra trip."

Mr and Mrs Anthony Newsome and family, Hacienda de San Rafael, Andalusia, Spain October 2022

"Fiona was always friendly, cheerful and helpful and made a great effort to find the best flights to Oslo. Patience and persistence paid off. I really enjoyed the trip. Boat comfortable, guides excellent, always felt safe."

Maggie Guiry, Around Spitsbergen, Kvitoya on Plancius, August 2022



Joan: "I had a wonderful time. Never did anyone make me feel a nuisance and often gave me easier trips in a quad bike with a guide. The scenery and light is lovely. The cabins are comfortable and sufficient although no hot water. The food was amazing, so much and good and very varied. The company was great and interesting. Some of the visitors were back for two, three and four times."



Hugh: "Fiona provided a wealth of information pre booking and departure and kept us informed of all the updates from the lodge. Guides were very good and keen. Weber family were perfect both with information before via WhatsApp and during the holiday from briefings, trip options each day, and unbelievable food in such a remote area. Favourite: Wolves close up, scenery, no one else there."

Joan and Hugh Dampney, Arctic Watch Lodge, July 2022