

Volume 15

Issue 1

2006 is here

The Women's Travel Club

"designed by women for women"



Dear Members,

Finally we have our new website and readers love it. A little history: back in 1998, we launched a simple website. It all seemed scary and 'out there'. So that little site kept expanding as did The Club. In the past few months we have been working to create something not radically different but much snazzier with new features for you

1. Our blog. Blogs are essentially a way for members to talk to each other. There is a simple registration process, then you post your comment, question, photograph. You can chat about a specific trip, a travel concern, something you read relating to travel. You can post your photos to share with others on your trip. But do use it; we think you will find it a lot of fun.
2. The site is neat and easier to navigate. Each itinerary is print ready.
3. The members' section is re-divided and occasional discount coupons are hidden. There are FREE ads for your business, you are missing out on a no cost way to network with other members if you do not use it.
4. Our 'sites for women travelers' is greatly enhanced and we now post companies that have products we think you will want to know about.
5. All computers should be able to enter the site; before we did get complaints from some women who said they could not see it all. Again it is quite compact and efficient now.
6. On line payments: we can accept your payments via our on-line facility, provided by Wachovia Bank or by Pay Pal. Our Wachovia facility is easy to use and we are notified immediately if you deposit money in it, and as usual we contact you to confirm receipt of you \$\$\$\$.
7. Our booking form has been amended to reflect our new late booking fees: within 60 days of a trip, you will pay 5-8% more of the original trip cost.

So how can you have fun with the site? Send us your trip photos, we will post them! Send us diaries, we love to read them. Use the blog, especially if you want to chat with others on your trip beforehand. For non web-a-philes a blog means a web log!

On another theme, each year we donate to women's and girls' charities. Our funds in 2005 went to The Women's Fund of Miami Dade County, Connect (for homeless women in New York) and for Acadiana Outreach Center, for homeless women in New Orleans. We picked these for two were in hurricane hit areas and one in our new hometown. We also donate during the year if a cause seems particularly appropriate to our coffers. Thank you for making it happen!

Booking and You need to think now!!!

Libya and Malta Feb. 24-March 5 The best Roman ruins in N Africa. Phenomenal desert scenery, Tuareg tribes on camel, UNESCO Heritage Sites. Add Malta if you wish to extend. Men invited. \$2075 + air on British Airways Visas needed. Our President will accompany this group.

Portugal Feb. 23-March 1, note: airfare change

Tuscany with a day in Venice March 31-April 6

The Silk Route April 5-17 and add more if you wish.

Provence April 13-21

Paris April 20-27 (these two coordinate)

Phyllis Stoller

Personal note: if you go to see Fun with Dick and Jane, the new Jim Carrey film, the travel agent is named Phyllis. Why? My son wrote the film!! Nick Stoller...

Ixtapan de la Sal Spa Jan. 29-Feb. 5. meals, 7 nights, amazing 21 treatments, classes daily, FREE trip to Taxco for shopping, golf, tennis, swimming, spa cuisine. FULL BUT WE GO IN SUMMER ALSO. \$1126 twin \$1275 single. Group discount included.

Libya continuing to Malta. Feb. 24- March 5 or add on. Led by our President. Men invited but Club members get preference. High mountains lead to desert that extends deep into Africa, watered by dramatic oases. Villages are scattered in meadows, sand dunes and along a Mediterranean coastline. We travel from Tripoli, founded 1000 years BC all the way to Gaboun, a beautiful deep desert oasis set in a palm grove with a scenic lake nearby. Tripoli today contains both Roman, Byzantine, medieval and Italian architecture. The old medina is the start or end of many trading caravans from the Sahara. Walking is safe, but as women we will dress conservatively as custom requires. Leptis Magna, is the best preserved Roman city in N. Africa. Overlooking the blue Mediterranean, the city was built by Emperor Septimus Severus to rival Rome in 1465 BC. Of course our trip includes more and we still can take a few more with us. Visas are required but we do the work for you

\$2075 plus air on British Airways from many US cities. We will all meet in London and fly onwards together. Malta is an excellent add on. Very knights of old and castle covered.

www.womenstravelclub.com

Local NY 646-723-2188

Fax 360-935-5080

womantrip@aol.com

800-480-4448

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25-30 trips a year...first-class/superior first-class hotels unless noted...group airfares (flights from many cities)...transfers...room shares on first-come, first-served basis for non-smokers...all sightseeing...English-speaking guides...meals as noted...private deluxe buses...complete pre-trip packages...and new: Travel Companion Bulletin Board! Ask about airfare from your hometown-we are a national group with different time zones and hometowns.

MEMBERS' PRICES QUOTED BELOW

Jan 29-Feb 5 Ixtapan Spa. The deal is full! but We go again in August 2006 and the weather is always perfect.

Feb. 24-March 5 Libya Best Roman Ruins and scenery **Add Malta** via Sicily. Men Invited. \$2075 plus air.

Feb. 23-March 1 Portugal Conquered by the Moors, Spaniards and now us. This 7 day trip introduces you to the most unusual country in Europe. Why Portugal? *A short flight from Newark these days but this was always an isolated country with a quasi N. African quasi European history. On Dec. 20 we gave up seats on TAP but we can book you if you still wish to go. Price to be determined. Some secrets about Portugal -Portugal is one of the oldest independent countries in Europe, founded in 1143 -Mardi Gras is our arrival day -City center Lisbon has a 200 year old street plan, one of the best preserved in Europe and a UNESCO world heritage site. -Portuguese empire began in 1415 with the conquest of Ceuta in Africa/ much of what you will see is influenced by the empire days. -Tiles, pottery, leather crafts are a reminder of the Moorish invasion -Spices used in cooking are some of the same ones brought back by Vasco da Gama!

Based on prevailing airfares: \$1595 plus taxes and fuel surcharges. We have a share available/// at writing.

April 5-17 The Silk Route. Tea with Genghis Khan! Begin in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan which you reach via Istanbul or Moscow. We cover Samarkand glorified by Tamerlane + Bukhara, both ancient trading towns. I loved the mosques, desert, gold toothed people, Jewish history. Bukhara is Asia's oldest living city. In walled Khiva, you see wedding parties march past turquoise tiled towers. Check out "1000 Places to See Before You Die" for this area. Finally Turkmenistan: with Ashkabad Market. Go via Istanbul or Moscow.

Accommodations: all with private bathrooms, from high rise hotels to renovated guest houses formerly mansions of the wealthy. Food: simple but hearty, safe.. Shopping: unbelievable from antique carpets, caviar, jewelry, silk, hand embroidered clothes. I have never seen such stuff. Markets: a lifetime experience: camels next to scarves, goats carpets, turquoise inlaid silver. Take film
March 31-April 8 Tuscany/Florence
April 13-21 Provence
April 5-17 Silk Route The Stans add Moscow and Istanbul.

April 20-27 Paris
May 11-15 Red Mountain Spa near Las Vegas, Bryce and Zion parks.
June 16-20 Canyon Ranch AZ discount
July 2006 Oaxaca Mexico, the most indigenous area of Mexico. Canyon Ranch Lenox with Tanglewood. Galapagos/Peru **August 4-13** Yukon to Alaska from Whitehorse. Ixtapan Summer again. **Aug. 8-21 DEAL on Holland America Cruiseline from Copenhagen** to The Netherlands, 2 days in St. Petersburg. August 13-20 **Ixtapan Summer** deal.

Many more Summer trips coming.

Preview of Paris 2006

Never been or been many times? Our Paris week is for all of you. We stay in elegant Concorde Ambassador Hotel, on the right bank near the Opera, and for 6 nights and 7 days we really get to know Paris. **April 20** Depart for Paris. **April 21** Transfer to our 4 star hotel, meet for welcome dinner in a restaurant. **April 22** Full day sightseeing from our private bus: the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and more. Lunch in a local restaurant included. **April 23** Half day Sightseeing in Le Marais, medieval section of Paris with lunch together in a local restaurant. **April 24** Half day tour of The Louvre, followed by a walking tour of the area. **April 25** Today we visit two elegant museums: Marmottan and Jacquemart Andre. The former is in a 19c mansion in the Bois de Bologne Park, full of Monet's works. The latter, is housed in a mansion open only since 1996 with a spectacular collection and original furnishings. Lunch in the lovely tea room. **April 26** Orsay Museum on the Left Bank, with the national collection of modern art, then a walking tour and lunch, Dinner tonight together before we start packing! **April 27** Transfer back to the airport and flights home.

Details available now- we already have bookings. You can do Provence first- these two trips coordinate with a savings of \$100 if you do both!!!

Price: \$1999. Single \$490. 60 days prior to April 20, price increases 5%. Deposit \$500. Airfare and portorage at the airport not included. A local host will be in attendance each am and a guide will be with you on sightseeing trips. .

The Silk Route: April 5-17 from Tashkent to Trans Oxiana to legendary Samarkand, Bukhara, walled Khiva and across the Amu Darya River to Turkmenistan. A trip of a lifetime! Price: \$2945 land + air via Moscow or Istanbul. I LOVED THIS TRIP when I went recently. Phyllis

The detailed itinerary is lengthy; we are summarizing here: **4/5:** Arrive Tashkent at the base of the Tien Shen Mts., Welcome dinner **4/6** Tour of Tashkent to include mosques and madrassahs, Independence Square, elegant Opera House, Museum of Applied Arts, and colorful bazaar & the studio of a ceramics master. Our hotel is across from the Opera house where events are available to tourists. **4/7** Off to Samarkand, famous Silk Rte Stop. Samarkand was conquered by Tamerlane, Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan! Our sightseeing includes The Registan the most majestic public square in the world, surrounded by blue tiled towers, mosques, fountains. **4/8** Today we continue in Samarkand, which Tamerlane decorated with superb tile work. We visit the observatory of Ulug Beg, the best in the medieval world, visit the excavation where a 7th c. Sogdian city sat, and stroll the colorful bazaar, dwarfed by a massive mosque. We see the mausoleum where Tamerlane is buried and wander the lane of tombs nearby. Tonight a cultural performance at a private home. **4/9** Depart for Shakrisabze, where we see the 14c White Palace ruins, we visit the local market and continue to Bukhara, on the trail of traders 100's of years ago. Arrive in Bukhara where we stay in a mansion of a Jewish Trader turned into a quaint B&B. **4/10** We begin our exploration of central Asia's oldest living city. Much is preserved; we visit the highlights: Lyab I Khaux Plaza, Kukeldash Madrassah, Kalon Mosque and Minaret. We stroll through the cap makers and spice bazaars, visit the citadel home of the Emirs of Bukhara who ruled for centuries. You will want to walk from our hotel to the street sellers who sell wonderful goods, some in ancient caravan inns. **4/11** Today is for the National Crafts Museum, palace of the last emir, and free time to wander the neighborhood in safety. People are friendly and mystified at tourists, Tonight a costume show and dinner in the tea-house of a local school **4/12** Off to Khiva a walled desert citadel, after a long drive thru the desert. **4/13** Khiva we visit it on foot- a preserved walled city with palaces of former khans and much more, **4/14** We cross into Turkmenistan and fly to Ashkabad, even the border crossing is exotic and unlike anything you have ever seen. **4/15** Ashkabad, capital of the strangest country on your list. We visit the various monuments but a highlight is the national museum and excellent carpet museum. Farewell dinner tonight. **4/16** Early start to Tolkuchka Oriental Bazaar, one of the most vibrant markets in Central Asia, bustling with tribes people and photo ops. The market meets weekly for those selling carpets, jewelry, silk, fabrics and animals. After lunch we visit the ruins of the Parthian kingdom of Nisa, at the foothills of the Kopetg Dag Mountains. Tonight free for packing/ and do bring an extra empty suitcase. **4/17** Depart for flights home.

This area is remote mysterious, formerly Soviet, today independent. Inclusive but for a few meals. Airfare via Moscow or Istanbul \$1600 + taxes. There are visas which our operator secures. Extensive orientation and a tour manager & local experts.

Note: from Phyllis, I tested this trip and consider it one of the best I have ever done, with surprises daily. Hotels were fine, food hearty, airplanes modern Boeings and our bus a Mercedes with a toilet. Meals were often in old palaces, old crypts or Turkish baths, some times in fascinating private homes. The guide kept us riveted all day by the strangeness and unusual make up of these areas. I did shop: caviar, 3 carpets from the museum, silk scarves 6 ft. wide, jewelry, and a fully embroidered robe. If ancient Jewish history is your thing, you need to go. If adventure is , you need to go. And if you want to learn about the lands where the Mongols once ruled and now King Oil does, you need to go.

All trips subject to the terms and conditions of The Women's Travel Club. Penalties for cancellations, changes, deviations apply. A deposit indicates agreement with terms and conditions on our website or sent with your written confirmation. You may book a trip by phone, fax, or online. If by phone, we will read our policies to you if you require. Fewer than 20 women a surcharge can, but does not usually apply 30 days pre departure. Travel insurance protects if you need to cancel for specific reasons! Membership Non Refundable.

2006

What's coming up! Each year we add new trips and repeat favorites.



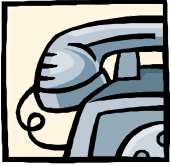
For the cruise folks, we have added a deal on Holland America from Copenhagen to Rotterdam, including 2 days in Russia. We get a group discount , help you find a room mate and book a dinner table for our members. We loved this itinerary: Copenhagen, Tallinn in Estonia, 2 full days in St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Stockholm, German ports, Arhus Denmark, Oslo, scenic fjord sailing and Rotterdam. **From : \$2561 inside and \$3309 outside. 13 days total plus travel time. EVERY DEAL HAS A GLITCH: We cannot hold cabins at this price after April 9.**

Red Mt. Spa Our Second Group May 11-15 or stay on. PEAK SEASON IN UTAH WITH COOL WEATHER AND BLUE SKIES. Last year the group agreed: the spa is a treat, the food and ambiance perfectly Western but the national parks nearby and the Utah scenery unforgettable. Highlights are Zion, Bryce, Four Corners and Snow Mt. National Park where Red Mt. Is located. The resort offers side trips to them all and you might add time in Las Vegas, 1 1/2 hours away.

Red Mt. offers a slew of classes, walks, adventure hikes, talks, and other activities. **Our package is a group discount based on 10 going: \$1028.57 twin and \$1235.11 single which includes taxes and an \$85 resort credit to use as you wish. Bring your camera for the glorious mountains.**

Use the whirlpool, swimming pool, walking trails, bikes. Go to classes. But definitely take a side trip to one of the national parks. Last year we loved Zion with its enormous red striated mountains and high pines.

BOOKING NOW. AIRFARE EXTRA TO ST. GEORGE UTAH OR LAS VEGAS. Deposit is 50% of the trip cost.



COMMENTS FROM A FEW TRIPS: Linda who went to Hong Kong: I had a most wonderful time on the trip, utterly fabulous. I wanted to come home for a day, and start again. (I admit I missed my husband). It was all wonderful: the hotel, the meals, and of course, this was a shopping trip and shopping was great, but it was the mix of people that made it wonderful. Sandy who went to S. Africa Audrey the guide did a good job of arranging so that we saw everything. I truly enjoyed the trip and thought everything was beautiful ;and my digital pix turned out well also. In Botswana there was less game than I saw in Kenya, but the game and boat drives were lovely and a lot of fun. Joan who went to Greece for Thanksgiving: Thank you Women's Travel Club. Keep them coming! PS more shopping trips to come with Suzy Gershman of Born to Shop Books.

Here and there on our new website we are putting comments you send to us. So again, talk to! Your photos also. We love to post them. Your business cards as well. And do sign our blog and chat with us.



Club in the Press We were just in The Montreal Gazette, Botton Line Newsletter, and a few others. The Post Office is coming to film us for a bit about entrepreneurs who use their services..

The Women's Travel Club®
Suite 301
36 West 20 Street
New York NY 10011-4212

The Club was founded in 1992 by Phyllis Stoller, a then banker with a non-traveling husband. We are nationally known. Berkeley Insurance protects your funds. We donate to women's charities. **To keep prices fair quality high, we do not maintain a mailing list for non-members. Dues are \$35 1-year/\$65 2-years. Members of less than 3 months pay a surcharge. Membership non refundable. Need help with email specials or a password? Email us// do not call our office for email help**

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