



HUMOUR, HAPPINESS AND HARMONY

COLOURFUL BHUTAN

A recent article in the Waikato Times profiled Bhutan as a country that holds many surprises. The top ten highlights in the article are all included in our Walking Bhutan tour!

30 Oct – 17 Nov 2017 | 17 nights | \$11,935pp twin share

- A country where you can observe traditional Buddhist culture blending with global developments.
- A chance to walk in the amazing landscapes of one of the last pristine pockets in the Himalayas. Environmental protection goes hand in hand with cultural preservation in Bhutan so at least 60% of the country must remain forested.
- Unique architecture – we will visit Punakha Dzong which is one of the most dramatic examples of Bhutanese architecture.
- Spectacular tsechus – annual festivals featuring mesmerising dancers dressed in colourful costumes and painted masks. Attend a tsechu in Bumthang.
- Taktshang Goemba – Bhutan's most famous monastery. Walk to this beautiful building lodged into a cliff face 900 metres above the Paro Valley.
- Stay in Paro and visit the excellent National Museum.
- Many chances to see the handwoven textiles which are recognised as Bhutan's premier handicraft. Woven from silk, cotton, wool and even yak hair, centuries of tradition have honed the techniques of dyeing, weaving and stitching.
- A visit to the Bumthang valley which is the cultural heartland of Bhutan.
- A chance to try archery – Bhutan's national sport which is accompanied by dancing and singing and hoots of delight as the competition heats up. Entertaining to watch and fun to try!
- Mountain treks – meeting traditionally dressed locals tending their crops and animals according to old traditions will be a highlight of the tour. Our tour includes a two day trek in the Bumthang Valley – expertly guided and with your pack carried by a pony. Our guide tells us that if the walking is too difficult, there is always the option of riding a horse or taking an alternative option of exploring the valley by car, visiting schools and villages and interacting with the locals.

If you would like to read the whole article, please [click here](#).

Walking & Cycling

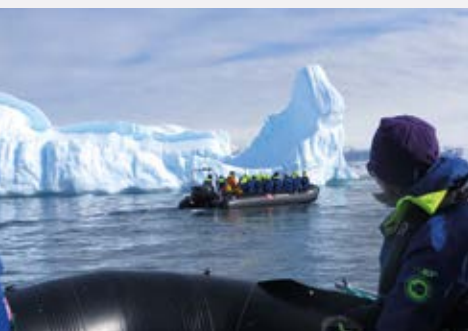


ANTARCTICA: ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE

John and I have just returned from Antarctica. Travelling with a lovely group of 11, we thoroughly loved our journey to the 'seventh continent'. This is the last great wilderness on earth: one moment ethereally calm and beautiful, the next lethally harsh and unforgiving. We had fine and calm weather around the Antarctic Peninsula and islands and were able to land five



times. Each landing was distinctly different with its own landscape and wildlife. One visit took us to a Chilean base, a fairly basic building and it was hard to imagine 'wintering over' there. I never tired of watching penguins who were as curious as we were, waddling over to take a closer look at us and peck at our gumboots. The red-beaked Gentoos tobogganing up and down their penguin 'highways' were hilarious to watch. The grey fluffy chicks were nearly as big as their parents and chased them relentlessly for their next feed.



Cruising by Zodiac was equally rewarding. Seals lolled on the luminous blue icebergs. The icebergs are sculptures of extraordinary beauty. A leopard seal almost as long as the Zodiac cruised past us one day and a dolphin played beside us on another. We made a special trip to Wihelmina Bay late one afternoon to see the southern humpback whales feeding on krill. Although not able to land on Cape Horn when the 'Drake Lake' turned into the 'Drake Shake' with ten metre waves and swells, we spotted many albatross – superb flying machines, skimming the surface of the waves. On board lectures every day covered topics ranging from seabirds and penguins, to glaciers, current Antarctic research and the Yaghan indigenous people of Tierra de Fuego. The heroism of Antarctic exploration is particularly vivid when you are there and can fully appreciate the courage and resourcefulness of Shackleton's Endurance expedition through the roughest, coldest seas in the world in a 20 foot open boat, to seek help.

This truly deserves to be called a trip of a lifetime and because we loved it so much, we will offer this expedition again in February 2019. Contact us if you would like to know more or you could view our photos on the C&L Tours website.

Rosanne

WALKING IN CENTRAL EUROPE

POLAND, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, CZECH REPUBLIC

10 Sep – 02 Oct 2017 | 22 nights | \$11,880pp

An intensely touching lesson in history

Step back into the grace and grandeur of old world Europe where you will find impeccably preserved medieval gems and learn about the rich folklore and turbulent history of these countries. Walk through a 'cultural landscape' which has been used by people for more than two millennia and where traditional rural life continues much as it always has.



This is the fifth time we have taken this tour as it is an ideal introduction to walking tours. Most day walks are between 7-12 kilometres. Each day has a particular focus – lunch with a farming family in Poland or visit a church in Slovakia with a history going back to the 13th century where frescoes are being restored. A highlight is walking in the alpine meadows and glacial lakes of the High Tatras; another is visiting the Iron curtain, a forbidding-looking barbed wire fence, stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic. The towns and cities are also of great appeal: historically important Krakow, elegant Budapest, fairytale Cesky Krumlov, and hauntingly beautiful Prague. Previous feedback tells us that this is a superb holiday with excellent walks, architectural gems, unexpected concerts and very knowledgeable guides.



STOP PRESS

A cabin has become available on our **Bike & Barge – Venice & Provence** tour led by Leen and Diane Van Duin. There is still time to get your biking up to speed (or ask for an electric bike) and climb on board from 23 May – 14 June 2017.

LOOKING TO SHARE

We have women looking to share on our tours to Iran and Bhutan.

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