



# AllWays Traveller

The AllWays traveller bulletin : December 2012/January 2013

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

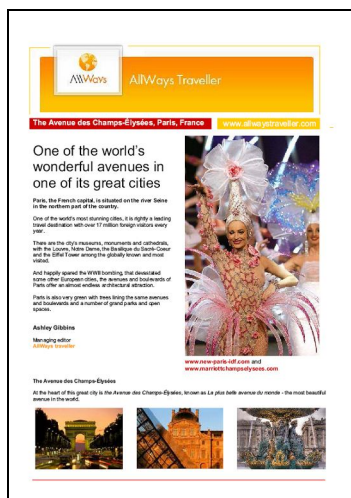
Providing independent travellers with an independent view of the world from the [International Travel Writers Alliance](#)



## One of the world's wonderful avenues

Ashley Gibbins writes :

Paris, the French capital, is situated on the river Seine in the northern part of the country.



One of the world's most stunning cities, it is rightly a leading travel destination with over 17 million foreign visitors every year.

There are the city's museums, monuments and cathedrals, with the Louvre, Notre Dame, the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur and the Eiffel Tower among the most visited.

And happily spared the WWII bombing, that devastated some other European cities, the avenues and boulevards of Paris offer an almost endless architectural attraction.

Paris is also very green with trees lining the same avenues and boulevards and a number of grand parks and open spaces.

### The Avenue des Champs-Élysées

At the heart of this great city is *the Avenue des Champs-Élysées*, known as *La plus belle avenue du monde* - the most beautiful avenue in the world.

Download : <http://www.allwaystraveller.com/newsletter/AllWays%20traveller%20to%20Paris.pdf>

Read online : [http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao\\_eur\\_fr\\_Paris.html](http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao_eur_fr_Paris.html)

## AllWays online

Our correspondents are passionate about travel and not content to go with the flow. They prefer to delve a little deeper to discover what really makes the destination worth a visit.

Hers is just a small selection. Others can be found at : [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

### The Slovinski National Park, Poland – the pearl of the Baltic

**Joanna Szreder writes :**

**Polish people say that Leba is the Pearl of the Baltic. No wonder!**

This small coastal town is one of the most scenic locations in Poland. Hidden between Lake Lebsko and Lake Sarbsko, surrounded by the sea and vast forests, it is undoubtedly a beautiful place.

The air is clear and filled with healing iodine, which can cure asthma or other lung and breathing problems.



**Read more :** [http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao\\_eur\\_pl\\_Baltic.html](http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao_eur_pl_Baltic.html)

### Catching Ketchikan: the Top Twelve Things to See in Ketchikan, Alaska

**Roy Stevenson writes :**

**Determined tourists can find a staggering menu of 250 different tours and activities to do, see, and play in Southeast Alaska's Ketchikan.**



And with cruise ships bringing in 840,000 sea-dazed passengers to this tourist magnet each year, it's just as well.

Ketchikan is one of the world's best-organized tourist destinations because it has to be. On some days it's not unusual for cruise ship passengers to approach the town's population of 8,000 souls (and on peak days, outnumber them by 2,000!).

Imagine five behemoth cruise ships simultaneously disgorging a total of 6,000 passengers onto the docks with nothing to do? This would not be a pretty sight.

But Ketchikan rises to this challenge daily, employing 1,150 locals to service these eager day-guests in this beautiful spot on the Southeast shore of Revillagiedo Island.

One simply has to see Ketchikan's plethora of tourist attractions and activities—far more than can readily be ingested in a month—to believe them.

**Read more :** [http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao\\_an\\_USA\\_Alaska\\_Ketchikan.html](http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao_an_USA_Alaska_Ketchikan.html)



## AllWays online

### Corsican memories - returning to old haunts on the Med's most beautiful island

**Roger St. Pierre writes :**

Probably the most compulsive liar you are ever going to meet is your own memory. They often say you should never return to the places of fondest recall because they will never be quite the same.



Oftimes, it is simply because they have changed over the years but on other occasions it's because they were never in the first place quite what your mind so clearly recalls today.



I was last in the idyllic little Corsican hilltop hamlet of Piedicroce – 'The Foot of the Cross' – during the long, hot summer of 1974, that's 38-years ago, leading 25 wealthy Americans on a three-week cycling tour of the beautiful and mountainous Mediterranean island.

I've dined out ever since on my story of how Piedicroce's war memorial bears the names of 18 soldiers with the surname Casanova, who died during The Great War but does not say whether they were killed by the Germans or by jealous husbands

**Read more :** [http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao\\_eur\\_fr\\_Corsica.html](http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao_eur_fr_Corsica.html)

### Grahamstown: A Safari Tale in South Africa

**Atreyee Gupta writes :**

"Warning," the small yellow sign declares, "do not pass gates. Lions ahead." I smile in anticipation as the taxi drives through. My imagination has come to life here.

The sky melts into a concoction of Titian hues, vast and endless on the horizon. Below, the grassy plains stretch beyond my vision surrounding every side.

This is Africa, a limitless expanse of savanna and firmament, where nature is primordial and an atmosphere of raw power holds sway over the continent.

My African safari begins in Shamwari Reserve, a twenty-five thousand hectare private park in South Africa's Eastern Cape province. Here, the animals remain unfettered and the landscape has returned to the days when Africa was truly wild.

Like any first time safari adventurer, I have come to Shamwari for a glimpse of the famous Big Five: lion, leopard, elephant, Cape buffalo, and rhinoceros.



Apart from sighting these epic creatures, I have also arrived at this particular preserve to witness what may quickly vanish: the tenuously balanced, symbiotic relationship of Africa's virgin ecosystem.

**Read more :** [http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao\\_afr\\_rsa\\_Grahamstown.html](http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao_afr_rsa_Grahamstown.html).

## AllWays online

### Estonia – today's hot destination

**Roger St. Pierre writes :**

The enjoinder used to be: “Go West young man!” but today’s entrepreneurs and holidaying adventurers alike are heading in the opposite direction – to China and the Far East, of course.



But also, somewhat closer to home, they're finding exciting opportunities in Estonia and the other now independent Baltic states of the former Soviet Union.

It's often said that there are lies, damn lies and statistics but behind the often-misleading raw figures astute analysts can usually identify valuable truths.

The Eurozone might seem on the brink of meltdown but while you can still find pockets of Eastern Bloc style grim poverty, unlike most members of the currency union, tiny Estonia has done remarkably well from its Eurozone membership.

There's a boom in construction, and that's a good sign, and the tourism infrastructure is now first-rate and is generating an ever-increasing flow of visitors.

Since the country's 1994 economic blip, caused by the Russian financial crisis, general income and living standards in Estonia have climbed remorselessly – even while neighbouring economies have stagnated or even declined.

The result is that Tallinn – the capital – has become one of Europe's hottest destinations.

**Read more :** [http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao\\_eur\\_est\\_Estonia.html](http://www.allwaystraveller.com/AllWaysOnline/ao_eur_est_Estonia.html)

## AllWays news

### Visit Britain

VisitBritain has launched the next stage of the multi-million pound GREAT campaign that aims to see Britain breaking visitor records.

To capitalise on the Olympics-led increase in global interest in Britain, a major marketing push has gone live with airlines, hotel companies and tour operators offering deals to foreign visitors.

**[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)**

### World tourism

With a record 467 million tourists travelling in the first half of 2012, international tourism remains set to reach one billion tourists by the end of the year says the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

Despite concerns over the global economy, international tourism demand continues to show resilience.

**[www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)**

### Europa-Park, Germany

Europa-Park, which is Germany's biggest theme park, has been voted second "Best Park" worldwide at the Golden Ticket Awards made by US-magazine "Amusement Today".

The park is located in the tri-border region of Germany, France and Switzerland, offers guests more than 100 attractions and international shows in 13 European themed areas, over 90 hectares.

**[www.europapark.com](http://www.europapark.com)**

### Sports tourism in South Africa

South Africa will continue backing sporting codes bidding to host international events and tournaments.

The country held the rugby and soccer world cups in recent years and will look to assist smaller sports to bid for events and to host those events.

**[www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)**

## AllWays news

### Majete Wildlife Reserve, Malawi



Four lions have been relocated to the Majete Wildlife Reserve situated in the lower Shire River valley of Malawi.

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

### Orient-Express, river cruise in Myanmar

Orient-Express Hotels, with a portfolio of 45 hotels, cruises and luxury rail journeys in 22 countries, is to launch a new river cruiser in Myanmar in July 2013.

Currently under construction in Yangon, the 50-guest ship will complement The Governor's Residence which is a 48-key colonial-style hotel in Yangon and the Road To Mandalay river cruiser.

[www.orcaella.net](http://www.orcaella.net) and [www.orient-express.com](http://www.orient-express.com)

### Rail Europe

Pre-Christmas travellers can save up to 65% on train tickets from Paris to a host of French destinations with Rail Europe.

Offers are available on routes from Paris to Reims, Avignon, Montpellier, Bordeaux and Marseille and from Paris to Nice, Cannes and Antibes.

Other destinations featured in the offer include Toulouse, Strasbourg, Perpignan, Grenoble and Luxembourg.

[www.raileurope.co.uk](http://www.raileurope.co.uk)

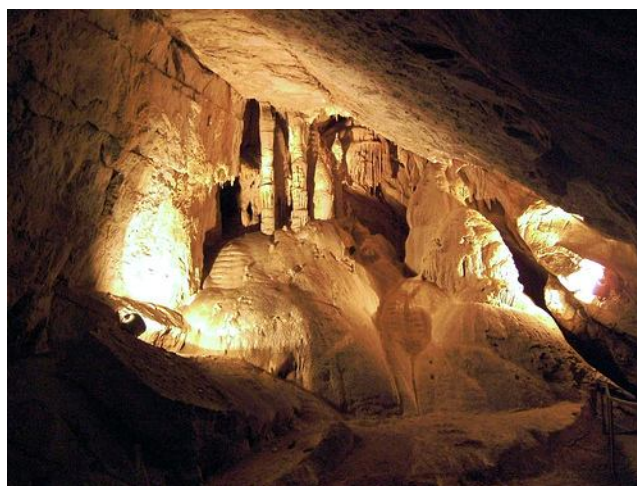
### Switzerland No 1 country brand

FutureBrand's 8th annual Country Brand Index (CBI) ranking of the world's leading country brands sees Switzerland in the number one spot.

The 2012-13 CBI ranks the world's countries – from their cultures, to their industries, to their economic vitality and public policy initiatives – based on global perceptions today. Canada and Japan are at two and three respectively.

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

### Croatia's deepest cave reopens



The Lokvarka Cave, the deepest cave in Croatia, has reopened to visitors.

The cave, which reaches depths of 120 meters, was declared a protected natural monument in 1961 to preserve its diverse and rich decorations.

Croatia comprises 1,244 islands strung along the Adriatic coast, with 16 UNESCO Heritage Sites and eight national parks.

[www.croatia.hr](http://www.croatia.hr)

### Azamara Club Cruises

Luxury cruise line, Azamara Club Cruises, is renovating its two European boutique hotel-style ships, Azamara Journey and Azamara Quest.

Both ships are entering drydock to receive a shipwide facelift and a new profile with a dark-blue hull.

The two, 694-guest ships sail European destinations, including the Baltic and Scandinavia, British Isles, Western Europe, French and Italian Rivas, Greek Isles, Croatia, Holy Land and Black Sea. They also sail Asia, South America and lesser-travelled islands of the West Indies.

[www.azamarclubcruises.co.uk](http://www.azamarclubcruises.co.uk)



## AllWays events and celebrations

It is always worth considering visiting a destination during a festival, event or celebration. There is invariably a special atmosphere, entertainment and memorable photo opportunities.

Here is a selection of annual events worth considering.

### Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Scotland

2 to 26 August 2013



The largest arts festival in the world, originally launched in 1947 (alongside the Edinburgh International Festival) as a post-War initiative to re-unite Europe through culture.

[www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com) and  
[www.edinburgh-festivals.com](http://www.edinburgh-festivals.com)

### European Bat Weekend

August annually



This weekend highlights the impact loss of habitat and roosting sites has on the bat population.

A range of activities take place including bat walks, lectures and educational evenings.

[www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk) and  
[www.eurobats.org](http://www.eurobats.org)

### Tomatina Festival, Plaza del Pueblo, Buñol, Spain

August annually



Participants pelt each other with 125,000 kilos of ripe tomatoes in a tourist-friendly giant food fight, part of a week-long festival and celebration.

The event is based around a 1945 restaurant food fight.

[www.latomatina.org](http://www.latomatina.org) and [www.tourspain.es](http://www.tourspain.es)

### New York International Fringe Festival

August annually

The biggest multi-arts festival in North America., featuring more than 1300 international performances in over 20 venues.

[www.fringenyc.org](http://www.fringenyc.org)



## A place to stay

### Tongabezi Lodge, Zambia



Tongabezi Lodge, upstream from Victoria Falls, and the new eco-friendly Sindabezi Island are located on the Zambezi River in Zambia.

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

### The St. Regis Mauritius

The St. Regis opens in May on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. It is on the beachfront at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Le Morne.

[www.stregis-mauritius.com](http://www.stregis-mauritius.com) and  
[www.tourism-mauritius.mu](http://www.tourism-mauritius.mu)

### Princesa Yaiza, Lanzarote.

Princesa Yaiza is a five-star hotel in Playa Blanca, a tranquil spot on the Canary Island of Lanzarote with sea views looking on to Fuerteventura and Isla de Lobos.

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

### Movenpick Hotels & Resorts

Movenpick Hotels & Resorts is an international upscale hotel management company with 69 properties in operation in 24 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

[www.moevenpick-hotels.com](http://www.moevenpick-hotels.com)

### Nira Alpina, St Moritz

The Nira Alpina resort is located in the eastern Swiss region of Graubünden above Lake Silvaplana, a 10 minute drive from St Moritz.

The resort is linked via the Corvatsch cable car to the highest station in the region providing access to the most challenging ski runs.

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

### The Hotel Fort Canning, Singapore



The Hotel Fort Canning, was once used as a base for the British Far East Command pre/post World War II in Singapore.

The Hotel Fort Canning has been restored as a chic boutique hotel with 86 rooms and suites, two restaurants and a THANN Spa.

Many original features of its colonial past have been retained including a multi-columned façade and grand staircase.

The hotel forms part of Fort Canning Park, an historical landmark in the heart of Singapore located between Orchard Road, the Clarke Quay entertainment hub and the Central Business District (CBD).

The 'Battle Box' where General Percival surrendered Singapore to the Japanese in 1942 is a meetings or events venue.

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

### The Taskonaklar Boutique Hotel, Turkey



The Taskonaklar Boutique Hotel is located in Uçhisar, the highest town in the Turkish region of Cappadocia.

The Taskonaklar Boutique Hotel, a member of Great Hotels of the World, has rooms and suites carved into volcanic formations.

The accommodations combines subterranean spaces, rough-hewn walls and stone archways with fresh air in the form of terraces and balconies, with stunning views.

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



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

### Park Hyatt Ningbo Resort and Spa, China



The Park Hyatt Ningbo Resort and Spa is located in the eastern coastal city of Ningbo, China.

Ningbo, a prosperous city with a history of foreign trade dating back to the 7th century, is a two-and-a-half hour drive from Shanghai.

It is located on the banks of Dong Qian Lake, one of the most scenic areas in the region.

The Park Hyatt Ningbo Resort and Spa is surrounded by tea plantations, ancient Buddhist temples, caves and stone carvings, and working fishing villages—a landscape that is reminiscent of a classical Chinese painting.

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

### W Paris - Opéra

W Paris - Opéra has opened in an 1870s Haussmann building near the Galeries Lafayette and Place Vendôme in the 9th Arrondissement.

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

### Kempinski Hotel Dukes' Palace, Bruges, Belgium



Bruges is one of Western Europe's most loved medieval cities with market squares, canals and old whitewashed almshouses and cobbled streets.

At the heart of this UNESCO World Heritage City is the Kempinski Hotel Dukes' Palace.

The Kempinski is Europe's oldest luxury hotel group and now runs hotels and resorts in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Kempinski is a member of the Global Hotel Alliance, which is the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands with 180 upscale and luxury hotels in 43 different countries.

[www.kempinski.com/bruges](http://www.kempinski.com/bruges)

### Hotel Ilio, Elba



The 200th anniversary of Napoleon's exile to the island of Elba will be celebrated in 2014.

Hotel Ilio is a boutique property on the Tuscan island of Elba in the Mediterranean.

The hotel is located among gardens and private terraces laden with citrus fruit trees in Capo Sant'Andrea, a seaside hamlet on the north-west coast of the island

The hotel organises weekly outings that make the most of Elba's natural environment, such as snorkelling in the clear sea waters, mountain hikes along gentle and well-maintained paths, sailing trips to nearby islands and wine tours to local vineyards.

Hotel Ilio, which was founded by Guiseppe Testa in 1959 and is still family run, re-opens for the start of the season on 20 April 2012 and closes on 14 October 2012.

[www.hotelilio.com](http://www.hotelilio.com)  
and [www.visitelba.com](http://www.visitelba.com)



## AllWays worth considering

The International Travel Writers Alliance works with travel, transport and tourism partners worldwide. Here are just a section.

### Utah

Utah has five national parks, 43 state parks, seven national monuments, and two national recreation areas.

The state is now looking to highlight it's offerings of freshly produced cheeses, sweet treats and locally crafted beers.

[www.utahsown.com](http://www.utahsown.com)  
and [www.goutah.com](http://www.goutah.com)

### Inca Rail

Inca Rail, is a 100% Peruvian owned-Company offering authentic rail journeys between the Sacred Valley of the Incas and Machu Picchu, The Lost City of the Incas.

The Incan Fortress town of Ollantaytambo, gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Machu Picchu, is the Inca Rail base.

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

### The Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania



The Pocono Mountains region is 2,400 square miles of mountains, lakes, rivers, waterfalls and woodlands in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The four-county region offers year round outdoor recreation, festivals and fairs, lavish spas and fine dining.

The Pocono Mountains are two hours from Philadelphia and New York City.

[www.800poconos.com](http://www.800poconos.com)

### Historic Highlights of Germany



Thirteen historic German cities have teamed up to create itineraries for travellers who wish to go beyond casual sightseeing.

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

### Aurora Expeditions (Australia)



Aurora Expeditions is an Australian owned adventure company specialising in Expedition cruises to wild and remote places.

Each voyage is led by a team of expert naturalists, geologists, historians, staff and crew who help to unlock the wonders of these special places with the use of flexible, innovative itineraries.

Deeply committed to education and preservation of the environment, Aurora Expeditions' philosophy is to respectfully visit wilderness areas in turn creating ambassadors for their protection.

[www.auroraexpeditions.com.au](http://www.auroraexpeditions.com.au)

## AllWays worth considering

### Electric bikes with Discover France

French touring company, Discover France is offering cycle tours using hybrid electric bicycles with easy-to-charge battery motors.

Discover France Adventures has been organizing bicycle tours and hiking tours in France since 1994 and is one of only four licensed tour operators to the Tour de France.

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

### New walking route in the Algarve

The Algarve, Portugal, will be launching the Vicentina Route along the rugged western coast of the region in spring 2012.

The route will run from Santiago do Cacém in the Alentejo to Sagres in the Algarve and is to be integrated into the extensive European GR11 route part of the GR footpath network of paths, tracks and trails.

[www.casasbrancas.pt](http://www.casasbrancas.pt)  
and [www.visitalgarve.pt](http://www.visitalgarve.pt)

### Puglia, Italy

Puglia comprises the very heel of the 'boot' of Italy, being a long thin region that spans two seas, the Adriatic and the Ionian.

The area specialises in fresh seafood, with a still thriving fishing tradition, and is the home of orecchiette pasta, Primitivo with recipes passed down from generation to generation.

There are also 50 million olive trees in the region making it the largest supplier of olive oil in the world.

Southern Visions Travel provides vacations to this region of "undiscovered Italy."

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

### Sea turtles on Dominica



Dominica's annual sea turtle hatch takes place between March and August under the watch of the Dominica Sea Turtle Conservation Organisation.

Visitors to the island can be added to the 'turtle alert' list to stay updated on the night-time arrival of turtles on the Caribbean island's Rosalie Bay Beach, Londonderry Beach and Bout Sabe Beach in La Plaine.

Sea turtle watching is done only under strict standards to ensure preservation of the species.

A representative of the Nature Enhancement Team (NET) ensures that spectators follow the rules for interacting with and watching the turtles and that their eggs are protected. The team also records turtle activity, nests and hatchings.

Dominica is an island in the Eastern Caribbean, lying south of Guadeloupe and north of Martinique.

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

### A Northwest Passage Cruise



The Northwest Passage, which links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, aboard the Akademik Ioffe provides travellers with a wide variety of wildlife during a voyage through the Canadian High Arctic.

Travelling along one of the most legendary shipping routes in the world also provides a opportunity to follow in the footsteps of polar explorers, including Sir John Franklin and Roald Amundsen.

The 14-night trip, which travels between Kangerlussuaq in Greenland and Coppermine in Canada includes the sight of steep-sided fjords and tabular icebergs.

There's also the chance to visit remote Inuit communities and meet traditional Greenlandic kayakers and participate in hiking, kayaking, photographic and birding expeditions in the company of expert guides.

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



## AllWays worth considering

### Jackson Hole Wildlife Safaris (USA)

Jackson Hole Wildlife Safaris operates guided wildlife and photography safaris within Grand Teton and Yellowstone national Parks.

Their guides will lead your safari with years of experience and first hand knowledge that can only come from living and breathing Jackson Hole, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks.

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

### Hiking in Hell's Gorge, Tenerife

Barranco del Infierno, one of Tenerife's natural hiking trails reopens this year. Known as "Hell's Gorge", the trail is located in the inland area of Adeje, and includes the deepest gorge in the Canary Islands, together with steep walls covered in lush greenery, a number of historic burial caves, and waterfalls.

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

### The Isle of Jura, Scotland

The Isle of Jura, off the west coast of Scotland has a community of less than 200 known as Diurachs (the Gaelic name for the people of Jura).

It produces an award-winning range of single malt whiskies, from the four classic bottlings in the Jura Collection: Origin 10 Superstition Diurach's Own, and Prophecy.

Many of the Jura whiskies have their own distinctive drinking rituals, but one cuts across the range - islanders believe that it brings good fortune to knock on wood before they drink a dram.

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

### Family vacations to Missouri



The Midwestern US state is very family friendly with many free activities.

In Kansas City, there is the chance to explore the interactive Science City in Union Station, observe animals in their natural setting at the City Zoo, learn all about money at the Money Museum or enjoy a production at the Coterie Theatre.

St Louis is a city with many free activities, including major attractions including the St Louis Zoo, the Science Centre and the Art Museum.

Branson has The Butterfly Palace and Rainforest Adventure where over 1,000 butterflies surround, plus a Mirror Maze and insect zoo.

The Talking Rocks Cavern allows children to play at being explorers as they walk through the caves that contain beautiful, natural living formations of many different kinds and colours.

[www.visitMo.co.uk](http://www.visitMo.co.uk)

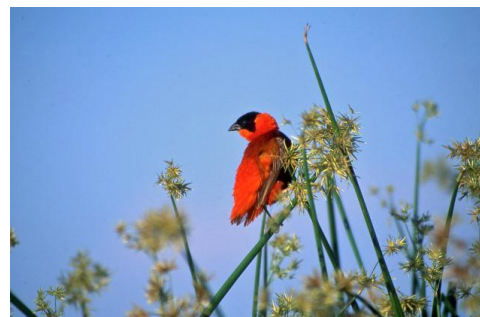
### Birdwatching in Kenya

More than 1,100 different species of birds are found in Kenya, which is 12% of the world's total bird population.

There are also 60 'Important Bird Areas' in Kenya, set in habitats ranging from forests to wetlands and arid plains to rich grasslands.

The Kakamaga Forest Reserve is situated at the north-east edge of Lake Victoria, is an area of virgin tropical rainforest contains a number of threatened species not found elsewhere in Kenya.

The rolling grasslands that make up the Maasai Mara, have a host of birds species including the Secretary Bird, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and Giant Kingfisher.



The Samburu National Reserve, Meru National Park and Tsavo East and West National Parks all have rivers running through them, and the stands of tall acacias along the banks attract many species such as Martial Eagle (*Polemaetus bellicosus*), Buff-crested Bustard (*Eupodotis gindiana*).

Close to Nairobi, Lake Nakuru National Park is home to one million resident lesser and greater flamingos.

[www.kenyabirding.org](http://www.kenyabirding.org), [www.magicalkenya.com](http://www.magicalkenya.com) and [www.aberdaresafarihotels.com](http://www.aberdaresafarihotels.com)

## From our correspondents

The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists. Here are some postings from our journalists :

### Bird-watching in Gujarat

Seeing the winged wonders of Gandhi's lands through a lens

**Mark Nicholls writes :**

As the boatmen loitered on the shoreline of Nal Sarovar lake, their breath steamed in the unseasonably chilly air.

It was a little colder than expected in the half hour before sunrise in this bird-watching paradise of Gujarat in western India. The January dawn had been cooled by heavy snowfalls hundreds of miles to the north over the Hindu Kush.

#### Regal beauty

Gujarat is awash with beautiful birds including this blue-vested kingfisher.



We had arrived at the inlet a few minutes earlier, huddled aboard black and yellow three-wheeled auto rickshaws which had coughed and spluttered their way from our bus at the Bird Reserve entrance to where the punts were moored.

Warmed with a glass of sweet Indian chai tea, we slipped away from the shore a few moments later - six or more of us on planked seats - propelled by boatmen armed with long poles and across the mirror-still waters in search of bird life.

#### In the pink

A group of flamingos, the flamboyant bird is the state image of Gujarat

There was a heightened sense of expectation as the deep orange sun that had taken an age to emerge from behind distant trees suddenly raced into the sky. Long lenses focused on the slightest movement as the improving light offered a clearer view.

#### Dream shoot

The wetlands of Nal Sarovar provide fertile territory for photographers

As we drifted, with the only sound coming from the occasional splash of a punt pole or the cry of harrying gulls, we saw cormorant, an eagle perched on a rock, egrets, bulbuls and lapwings while in the distance a flock of cranes hundreds strong caused an airborne commotion.

**Read more:** <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-2228739/Birdwatching-Gujarat-The-winged-wonders-Gandhis-lands.html#ixzz2D3zV4BMS>.

### In Flanders Fields

Travel writer Brendan Harding, on a short visit through the killing fields of Flanders learns a little of the Irish connection in man's great inhumanity.

The Great War of 1914-1918 claimed the lives of many hundreds of thousands of men and women.

Paul Mc Cartney was the last person who should have crossed my mind, but he did.

In the furthest recesses of my brain a tune was stirring to life like the stretching limbs of a long-dormant Rip Van Winkle.

I could hear a piano playing a simplified reggae style stabbing rhythm.

A bass drum kicked in, keeping time, setting the tone, and then, like a bombshell bursting in my brain, the lyrics came with a sudden crash. 'All 'round the world, little children born to the world, got to give 'em all that we can, 'til the war is won...'

**Read more :** <http://www.brendanharding.blogspot.ie/2012/06/in-flanders-fields.html>



## From our correspondents

### Facing the Killing Fields of Cambodia

There are some places in the world that seem too horrific to visit. But as Sandra Scott learned, facing the atrocities of the past is the only way to move forward.

To go or not to go. That was my dilemma.

The most visited tourist destinations in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, are the notorious Tuol Sleng Museum and the Killing Fields.



It's estimated that, during the reign of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, more than two million Cambodians died as a result of executions and forced labor—the Cambodian Holocaust.

While anguishing over the decision of whether I should go, I remembered the wise words of philosopher George Santayana: "Those who can not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Read more : [http://www.travelandscape.ca/2012/11/facing-the-killing-fields-of-cambodia/?goback=.gmp\\_2978414.gde\\_2978414\\_member\\_188944479](http://www.travelandscape.ca/2012/11/facing-the-killing-fields-of-cambodia/?goback=.gmp_2978414.gde_2978414_member_188944479)

### Foreign food in Portugal

Julie Dawn Fox writes :

For me, one of the joys of travelling and living in different countries is the opportunity to try foreign food.

However, I have limits; whilst a friend of mine was prepared to cook and eat goat udder in Vietnam, I usually steer well clear of brains, offal and other icky bits.

But what could I do when a very kind associate of Mike's offered to make a local speciality dish for us?

It would have been rude to refuse, but thankfully he was to bring it home so we could try arroz de bucho (pig's stomach stuffed with rice and meat) together, in private.

Read more : [http://juliedawnfox.com/2012/10/28/weekly-photo-challenge-foreign-food-in-portugal/?goback=.gmp\\_2978414.gde\\_2978414\\_member\\_179917060](http://juliedawnfox.com/2012/10/28/weekly-photo-challenge-foreign-food-in-portugal/?goback=.gmp_2978414.gde_2978414_member_179917060)

Yes, it was a horrible event, but learning about it would not be as horrific as what the people experienced. So I decided to pay my respects and remember the past.

The Tuol Sleng Museum, in the center of Phnom Penh, is housed in a high school that was taken over by Pol Pot's security forces and, in 1975, became Prison 21.

It was the largest detention and torture centre in Cambodia. With other visitors, I walked in numbed silence from cell to cell, from photo to photo, trying to comprehend the horror.

Thousands of victims were imprisoned, tortured and executed—some alongside their families.

Especially poignant are the walls with photos of those, including children, who were exterminated at Prison 21.

Little is left to the imagination. Nothing has been spruced up to ease the impact on visitors.

One display lists instructions for prisoners to follow, including one that states, "While getting electrification and lashes you must not cry out."

I was not looking forward to it, even less so when I opened the foil packaging to find this decidedly foreign object: cooked pig stomach stuffed with rice

Mmm, tasty! Luckily, the inside is more appetising as it is stuffed with rice and meat.

Slightly more appealing once you slice it open.

I'm deeply grateful to the woman who went to the time, trouble and expense of cooking it for us and I have to admit that it was a lot tastier than I expected but I'm afraid I'm not in a hurry to try it again.

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