

# THE WAYFARER TRAVELER

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## Get All That Is Yours



### OWNER'S COLUMN

Many travel agents, as well as our clients, are remarking more often how complicated the travel market has become. Offers too numerous to count. Advertisements bombard mailboxes and email accounts. Internet searches overflow with results. What is important is what these offers actually are. Is the consumer actually getting “what they deserve.”

For this reason, I'd like to share a given and remind you to get all that is, or could be yours. We've written many times about the extra amenities we offer when sailing on our preferred cruise lines. Just take a few minutes to look at the sampling of offers from Seabourn, Holland America, Princess, Uniworld, Regent, and Oceania

within this edition. These range from complimentary shore tours or credits for pre- or post-cruise hotel stays, to cocktail parties, to host services.

There are even more for Wayfarer travelers. Our association with the internationally acclaimed Ensemble Travel Group makes it possible for our clients to receive extra amenities at well over 500 four- and five-star hotel and resort properties that offer premier accommodations around the world. All of the amenities are designed to distinguish our clients as special guests and create an extraordinary vacation experience.

Extra perks vary with each hotel. Wayfarer clients may receive complimentary breakfasts or lunches, afternoon teas, bottles of wine, or credits that can be used for spa treatments, food



and beverages, resort activities, free Wi-Fi, and more. Our travelers receive a complimentary upgraded room at check-in, if available, and early check-in/late check-out without charge, when available. Each of these properties offers an exclusive extra that distinguishes them as a client of ours.

You may be wondering at this point about the proverbial question...is my rate higher because of these extras? The answer is no. With increased buying power that has been negotiated with these premier hotels and resorts, rates are most often lower. Wayfarer is able to distinguish itself by offering perks that are not available elsewhere. It does not compromise the way we work for our clients in negotiating for the best available rates.

We are always striving to do the best for our travelers, both in pricing and quality of services offered. Consider these perks to be icing on the cake!

## What Our Clients Are Saying...

*Our clients are talking about us and to us about the trips we plan for them.*

“Our trip was wonderful.”

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“Everything was perfect! We thank you for all your planning – we could not of had a better time!”

“Once again you did a terrific job for our group.”

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“You are amazing. Thank you so much! I am so impressed with these tickets.”

“... on our last evening in Rome. We want to tell you what a wonderful time we have had and how incredible your plans have been. The guides have been wonderful in all three cities. It's as if history came to life for us! Again, you have put together a superb itinerary!”

*Happy traveling,*

*Laura*

# TRAVEL TRENDS



## A NEW PRINCESS SHIP DEBUTS

Princess Cruises' \$769 million megaship, the *Royal Princess*, finally debuts this summer after five years in the making.

Among the many defining features found aboard the ship is a greatly expanding atrium, the onboard social hub; an over-water SeaWalk, a top-deck glass-bottomed walkway; plush private poolside cabanas; and the new Princess Live! television studio.

The *Royal Princess* will make Grand Mediterranean sailings throughout the summer, followed by Eastern Caribbean cruises beginning in the autumn.



## UNIVERSAL ORLANDO PLANS HARRY POTTER THEME PARK EXPANSION

Universal Orlando announced in May the expansion of the popular Wizarding World of Harry Potter with a new area based on the books' fictional scenes in Diagon Alley.

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter - Diagon Alley, as it's officially named, which will include a new marquee ride, new restaurant and shops, and an iconic train trip, will mirror the journey that a young Harry Potter took to become a wizard.

Universal Orlando is also building its fourth hotel within its compound, the Cabana Bay Beach Resort, which is intended to evoke the classic, retro feel of iconic beach resorts from the 1950s and '60s. The hotel is scheduled to open in early 2014.

## RCI ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL SEASON FOR *QUANTUM OF THE SEAS*

Royal Caribbean International's new *Quantum of the Seas* will undoubtedly WOW passengers when it debuts with Caribbean sailings in late 2014.

The Quantum-class ship will introduce an entirely new set of first-at-sea innovations, including RipCord by iFly, a simulated skydiving experience; a glass observation pod at the end of a giant, swiveling mechanical arm; and SeaPlex, the largest indoor sports and entertainment complex at sea with bumper cars, roller skating and a circus school with trapeze.

The *Quantum* will cruise the Bahamas and the Caribbean round-trip from Cape Liberty Cruise Port in Bayonne, N.J., through April 2015.



## WINDSTAR CRUISES EXPANDS HORIZONS WITH *SIGNATURE SAILINGS*

Windstar Cruises is enhancing the luxury small-ship experience by offering two new packages to its *Signature Sailings*, the company's unique collection of theme cruise and land experiences.

*Tastes & Traditions of the Mediterranean* and *Enchanting Castles & Gardens*, like all of Windstar's *Signature Sailings*, are a blend of intimate shore excursions, exclusive onboard experiences, and hotel nights at beautiful properties, pre- and post cruise, all centered around one idea.

"These packages are tailored for guests who want a more enriched vacation experience from start to finish," says Hans Birkholz, chief executive officer for Windstar Cruises.



## GENERAL TOURS DEBUTS A NEW SOUTHERN AFRICA SAFARI

With the continued popularity of its trip to Southern Africa and increasing demand for active and authentic experiences deep in the natural world, General Tours World Traveler has introduced a new Small Group Adventure to Botswana, Victoria Falls and Zimbabwe.

The nine-day adventure explores two of Africa's most diverse and game-rich regions, the Okavango Delta and Hwange National Park, as well as Victoria Falls.

## CUNARD'S *QUEEN VICTORIA* TO CELEBRATE AQUITANIA CENTENARY

A highlight of Cunard Line's 2014 Voyage Program will be the overnight stay of the intimately luxurious *Queen Victoria* in Liverpool, England – the first two-day call in Cunard's spiritual home made by a Cunard ship in almost 50 years.

Taking place during her 13-day Around the British Isles cruise, departing from Southampton on May 23, 2014, *Queen Victoria* will arrive in Liverpool on May 30. That day she will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the maiden voyage of *Aquitania* – a Cunard legend that became known as the "Ship Beautiful."

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# GO EAST, EUROPEAN TRAVELER

By Dorothy Crouch

**A** tumultuous 20th century history, depressed political cultures and a seemingly unsafe reputation kept Eastern Europe in the dark corner of European tourism for many years. Over the past 10 years, Prague, Budapest and Bratislava have evolved to become not only stopover points on tours of Eastern Europe, but are now standing on their own as the primary destination for travelers. Prague, Budapest and Bratislava are open for business – for all the right reasons.



*Buda Castle, Trinity Square*



*Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic*

Exploring Prague is comparable to stepping into a childhood fairytale. A UNESCO World Heritage site since 1992, the buildings of the city center harken back to Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance eras. Deep red roofs and aged, green spires sitting atop 15th century buildings are a common sight in this fantastic city. Built in 1364, the Old Town Hall, which is set in Old Town Square, displays a marvel that continues to impress visitors every hour. This dark, yet fascinating, display showcases a mechanical parade of an hourglass-wielding skeleton and the 12 apostles: an hourly event that reminds us how quickly time passes. Witness this spectacle while enjoying a meal at one of the outdoor cafes that surround the square.

The collection of Prague's architectural history expands well beyond the structures of Old Town Square. A walk along the Charles Bridge is a journey that visitors to the city should take. Completed in

1402, the bridge includes one tower at each end: the Lesser Town Bridge Tower and the Old Town Bridge Tower. Atop the walls of the bridge, Prague's oldest, sit 30 sculptures of saints that were added from 1683 to 1928. The 515-meter-long bridge affords views of the city and Vltava River, which winds sinuously through the city.

Budapest's history is a true tale of two cities. Once separated into two distinct cities, the Hungarian capital was, for the majority of the last millennium, Buda and Pest. A city that sits on the Danube River, there is no greater experience in Budapest than embarking upon a cruise, preferably one which sails through this city in the evening. Sail by the Parliament building at night as bright lights from the structure illuminate the river below. Most evening cruises will serve Hungarian specialties such as marinated fish, Palóc (a local soup), beef stew and stuffed cabbage with sour cream.

A signature of Budapest culture is visiting one of the many public bathhouses in the area. The city offers 11 spas that are fed from quality underground springs at temperatures to suit every comfort level, ranging from 21-76 degrees Celsius. Bathers who seek a more opulent thermal bath experience will want to try

Lukács Thermal Bath. These former monastery baths, which were built in the 12th century, offers spa services including massage, mud treatments, salt chamber treatments and spa therapy.

Slovakia's capital of Bratislava has become quite a hot holiday destination over the last few years.

Easily accessible from Prague and Budapest, Slovakia affords a smaller, quainter Eastern European getaway than its neighbors to the west. As Budapest is a Danube River town, so is Bratislava. Bratislava Castle sits atop a hill above the Staré Mesto, or Old Town, and was built during the 15th century. The Gothic-style building now serves as a museum and presents exhibitions that showcase textiles, glass, ceramics, crafts and fine arts pieces.

The city's Old Town provides the respite from tourists that an independent traveler craves. Less crowded than Budapest or Prague, and safe, the city promotes a young nightlife and attractive Gothic buildings, though there is still more to see in Bratislava. The Slovenskej filharmónie, or Slovak Philharmonic, offers impressive programs that include the works of Strauss, von Zemlinsky, Gershwin and Bernstein. Holding onto the past while embracing the future of music is the goal of this organization.

Many tour companies have recognized the value in an open Eastern Europe and now offer a variety of tours to this region. Insight Vacations' "The Bohemian" tour leads travelers from Vienna, through Prague, Bratislava and Budapest for a thorough introduction to this region.



*Bratislava Castle, Old Town*



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# CHRISTKINDLMARKET TRADITIONS

By Kimberly Thomson



Tivoli Gardens



Dresden

**Every city in Europe has its own unique Christkindlmarket tradition. Of course, the major players are always there. Lights dressing the peaks of wooden stands selling hand-crafted goods, mulled wine flowing and fanciful treats such as iced donuts slathered in black currant jam are all signs that the season of open-air markets has begun.**

The Christkindlmarket tradition has existed, in some places, for thousands of years. The name originates from the mythical tale Christkind or Chistkindl (Christ child), the bearer of gifts. Depicted as a child riding a mule, the Christkindl was believed to enter homes through keyholes. When English-speaking colonists settled in German communities in Pennsylvania, Christkindl was transformed into Kris Kringle.

Nuremberg's celebration may be the biggest and most famous. Since 1545, visitors from all over the world flock to the city's center. Crowds mull about flanks of stalls – 180 stands in total – as smoke from a bratwurst grill permeates the air comingling with sweet hints of gingerbread.

The Friday before Advent, Nuremberg's Christkind appears on the balcony of the Church of Our Lady to open the holiday season. Throughout the market, look for "Nuremberg Plum People," tiny puppets made of prune limbs, fig torsos and walnut heads with painted-on faces. Stall owners compete to win the coveted "Gold Plum Person" prize for their displays.

In Copenhagen, Denmark, lights glitter in the biting cold. Known for their elaborate light display, designs are dreamt up by Tiffany's head designer and hung in



delicate patterns, strands draped on lakeside willows. Tivoli Gardens, the city's famed historic amusement park, becomes a twinkling wonderland with hundreds of trussed Christmas trees bearing half a million lights.

Colorfully painted stalls sell locally made wooden dolls and arts and crafts. Look for nissers, tiny household elves clad in clogs, red shirts and pointed red caps that come out in droves during Christmastime. Legend has it, if children leave porridge in the attic, nissers may bring presents; don't and they'll wreak havoc.

Dresden holds Germany's oldest continuously running Christmas market, which began in 1434. Dresden celebrates its heritage as the first place for *stollen* by parading a four-ton fruitcake through the city streets in early December, plunking the massive cake in the center of the market near the 46-foot "Christmas pyramid." There they cut it up and offer it to market-goers, harkening back to the 16th century when *stollen* bakers would present their handmade cakes to the local prince, who would cut them into slices and distribute them to the poor. With about 250 stalls, there are plenty of traditional German Christmas wares to browse, including blown glass from Lauscha and Dresden's own famous hand-fired blue-and-white ceramics.



## CHRISTMAS IN 'CHI TOWN'

Chicago's own Christkindlmarket was conceptualized in 1995 based on the traditional celebration in Nuremberg, Germany. Food vendors set up along the Chicago Loop in Daley Plaza, selling German delights like spätzle with cheese and onion and fruit-filled strudel. Craftsmen line up competing to sell glass-blown ornaments and porcelain figurines.

Stroll about the open-air market with a mini boot of Glühwein in hand. Beware: The German mulled wine is extremely popular and tends to sell out, so make that a priority stop. Also keep in mind that many of the vendors only accept cash.

Despite the thick crowd, the Christmas spirit is intoxicating. Santa's House is located in the middle of the plaza, along with a lighted tree. This year is the 100th annual tree lighting (specific date and time TBD). The festival runs from November 26 to December 24. Book a hotel nearby – the Hilton, Renaissance and Marriott are all half a mile or less from the market.

Tour the area via the Segway Holiday Lights Tour, which also visits the market and the Christmas tree at Daley Center. Or skirt the edge of the market and experience a taste sensation of the Chicago Chocolate Tour, a guided walking and tasting tour of select chocolate shops and cafes around the market. Sample different forms of chocolate, including truffles, cupcakes, gelato and hot chocolate, or even chocolate tea. Nothing says the holidays like sweets and treats.

**THIS YEAR  
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By Kimberly Thomson

Kiwi spirit speaks particularly to the latter. As the birthplace of bungee jumping and black-water rafting, it’s only natural that New Zealand would lend itself to the mother of all bungee jumps. Nevis, New Zealand’s highest jump, dangles 134m over the valley floor with 8.5 seconds of free fall. It’s the most extreme adventure Queenstown has to offer. While a much shorter height of 40m, the Auckland Bridge Bungee provides jumpers the sensation of diving into Waitemata Harbour. The water-touch option makes that visual a reality with an ocean dunk at the bottom.

In keeping with adrenaline-inducing activities, Surf Highway 45 promises 180 degrees of ocean swells. The highway wraps around the thumb of the North Island from New Plymouth down to Hawera. Taranaki coast, named for Mount Taranaki, is the what’s what of surfing destinations and regularly hosts elite competitions.

This adventurous spirit is key to understanding New Zealand’s Maori culture. Isolated in the middle of the southwestern Pacific Ocean, their remoteness bred a resourceful and ingenuous quality. Though New Zealand was colonized by the British in 1840, Maori culture is still quite prominent, especially in the region of Rotorua. Here on the North Island visitors can enjoy the Maori’s warm, welcoming spirit as well as *kappa haka*, traditional performances of song and dance.

Appreciate the island’s pure beauty through the eyes of “Lord of the Rings” director Peter Jackson. His cinematic rendering of Middle Earth dipped heavily into New Zealand’s landscape offering plate. The limestone rock formations in Piopio and alpine austere of Twizel created a believable “otherworld.” (Even the location names have a Middle Earth flair to them.) Lake Pukaki was the backdrop of the “Warg Chase,” and “Bilbo and The Company” trekked through Queenstown. Those itching to channel their inner hobbit can duplicate the quest with the Earnslaw Burn Track, a four-hour hike over the Earnslaw Burn glacier and beyond. For the fanfare minus the exertion, Hobbiton movie set tours feature a guided viewing of all 44 Hobbit Holes or visit the Weta Cave in Wellington with its mini-museum of special effects.

Auckland, where Hobbiton is located, is a fusion between this natural beauty and metropolitan offerings. Get a lay of the land from Sky Tower’s spectacular 610-foot-high, 360-degree viewing platform. This is one city where it’s just as easy to enjoy a night on the

town in the Britomart Precinct as it is to explore its unmanipulated treasures. Mount Eden, Auckland’s highest natural point, provides sweeping views of the city and Waitemata Harbour. This dormant volcano has three craters, all covered in lush greenery. Trip over to the Auckland Museum and muse over pre-colonization exhibits depicting the culture by way of monumental carvings, buildings and canoes.

To deliver on its promise of pure paradise, a plethora of relaxing and rejuvenating experiences can be had on these islands. Luxuriate in natural hot springs: Kerosene Creek in Waiotapu is one of the best-kept local secrets. Or travel the path of a grape-lover’s paradise from Hawke’s Bay across Cook Strait to Marlborough on the South Island. Sample the region’s varietals in the sunshine, and shop at more than 120 cellar doors. Along The Classic New Zealand Wine Trail, taste robust Merlot in Hawke’s Bay, Wairarapa’s Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc in Marlborough back country.

Besides Hawke’s Bay, The Bay of Plenty is another of New Zealand’s sunniest destinations, receiving 2,350 hours of sunshine a year. And what better way to enjoy all this brilliant light than seaside. It’s called the Bay of Plenty for a reason. Plenty of sunshine, yes, but also plenty of world-class cuisine. Stop in at the award-winning fresh fish market on Dive Crescent or indulge in the kiwi fruit that grows in abundance in the surrounding orchards.

A journey to New Zealand offers all the beauty and culture of a land isolated from the rest of the world for thousands of years. Absorb as much of it as possible – even if it means giving zorbing a try (rolling down a hill in an inflatable bubble). Tour companies such as Trafalgar and Tauck make travel simple with guided and independent tours. Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, Princess Cruises and many other cruise lines also offer New Zealand itineraries, which also include Australia.



Bungee jumping, Sky Tower

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**Complimentary Shore Event: Syracuse - Ortygia, Marzamemi - The Sicilian Baroque Treasures**

#### EXCLUSIVE AMENITIES:

- Bonus Opportunity: In lieu of Ensemble Experience you may select a \$150 per person shipboard credit (maximum \$300 per stateroom) OR work with your travel agent to create a customized event or hotel stay valued at up to \$175 per person (maximum \$350 per stateroom). Selection must be submitted at least 75 days prior to your cruise departure.
- Complimentary cocktail party • Host services available

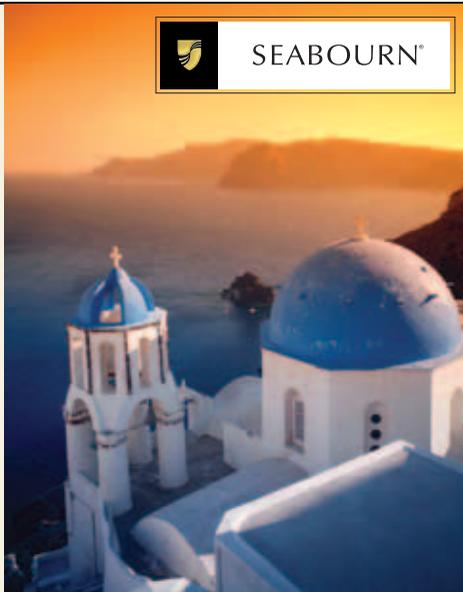


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