

"Anything that happens, happens. Anything that, in happening, causes something else to happen, causes something else to happen. Anything that, in happening, causes itself to happen again, happens again. It doesn't necessarily do it in chronological order, though." Douglas Adams (1952 - 2001), *Mostly Harmless*

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For those receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome. If you are interested in past copies they are stored on our website <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au> under 'What's New'.

NEW: WALKING THE VIA FRANCIGENA

The Pilgrim's Road to Rome



For centuries pilgrims from across Europe have made their way on foot, horseback or by cart or carriage seeking spiritual solace at the three most holy of Christian cities; Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain, Rome in Italy and Jerusalem. The pilgrim's road to Rome, or *Via Francigena* is not a single road, as it comprises several possible routes that have changed over the centuries. At the end of the 10th century Sigeric, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, travelled the *Via Francigena* to Rome to be blessed by the Pope and, on the return journey to Canterbury, he made a detailed record of his route and his stops. This record helped us form much of the route taken today.

Today, it is possible to experience the same route as the medieval travellers, walking the unspoilt sections of the route on a self-guided 'inn to inn' walk – staying in 1 or 2-star hotels or agriturismo / guest houses - with your baggage transferred each day. Outdoor Travel can now offer weekly easy to moderate walking sections from the alpine meadows, down to the coast, through Tuscany and across the Appenines to Rome.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

As the number of pilgrims to Rome grew abbeys, monasteries, cathedrals, churches and shrines were built to encourage and support them. Hospices, hospitals, shelters or refuges were established to accommodate and cater to the needs of the ever-increasing flow of the devoted.

Share in the sheer scale, the mystery and the history of this great medieval pilgrimage phenomenon. Take a journey where you can imagine the hardships, the pleasures and interests of those early pilgrims. Follow an infinitely varied succession of paths and trails that link cities and villages, great cathedrals, fine churches and ancient monuments. Travel through the alpine meadows, across valley and fertile plains, climb coastal pathways, past vineyards and rustic farmlands, across the Cretan landscape of Tuscany before reaching the magnificent city of Rome and - like millions of others have done through history - the sacred shrine of St Peter.

A CHOICE OR EIGHT 8-DAY WALKS DAILY FROM 1ST MAY TO 30TH OCTOBER 2009 - As with the *Camino de Santiago*, Outdoor Travel have recognised the growing demand not just from pilgrims but for those looking for an interesting walking or cycling holiday on this route through rural Italy to Rome with a spiritual or historical dimension as well as the beauty of the countryside and the joy of an *active* holiday. Working closely with our partners in Italy we offer pre-booked accommodation and daily baggage transfers, which allows you the freedom to really enjoy this ancient trail.

SELF-GUIDED INN-TO-INN WALKING – Outdoor Travel's self-guided itineraries start at the San Bernardo pass and we have divided the itinerary into eight weekly sections all the way to Rome. In each overnight stop, you will be able to have your *credential* (Pilgrims Passport) stamped as a record of your visit. At our starting points we have arranged for a priest's benediction for those following a more spiritual journey.

The complete journey of 950km travels from Bourg St Pierre near Monginevro just across the Swiss border in the Alps into Italy and on to Rome via Ivrea, Pavia, Fidenza, Aulla, San Miniato, San Quirico d'Orcia and Montefiascone. It offers ever-changing landscapes; from steep alpine meadows to the vineyards and 'creten' hills of Tuscany; from traditional villages bypassed by time to large modern towns and urban centres, passing Roman ruins and Etruscan tombs.

Walks can start on any day of the week from 8 easy to reach start points – ask for information now.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

FROM YVETTE AT THE OUTDOOR TRAVEL FARES DESK

Earlybird fare bargains to Europe now available



Early Bird Airfares give you the opportunity to save on your European Holiday. Many airlines have discounted economy airfares to various cities in Europe or the UK to start your holiday. Here are some samples of what we can offer for sale until mid December 2008. You'll need to be prepared to pay in full for your airfare and taxes * shortly after making your reservation but there are some big savings on offer.

SINGAPORE AIRLINES New Released Airfares - for sale from 1 December 2008 for a very limited time:

Economy Airfare from Australia to Europe starting at \$1,465 plus taxes approx \$750. For travel between 17 Jan – 24 Feb 09 – check with us for other dates - maximum stay 3 months. For travel between 25 Feb – 24 Mar 09 \$1683 plus taxes, for travel between 25 Mar – 31 Mar 09 \$1903 plus taxes. Departing from Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney or Perth to various cities within Europe ie London, Barcelona, Paris, Frankfurt, Milan, Istanbul or Zurich

Economy Airfare departing in **May 2009** from Melbourne via Singapore to Paris return including all taxes is from **\$2,465*** - this ticket is valid for 12 months. Singapore Airlines fly to many capital cities in Europe/UK including the main centres such as London, Paris, Rome, Frankfurt & Zurich. This fare is available for the following dates: 01 - 31 May 09 / 20 -23 Sep 09 / 12 -25 Nov 09. For departures between 24 Sep -11 Nov 09 including all taxes the cost is from **\$2,179***.

Business Class return companion fare – 2 passengers must travel together at all times

Australia to Europe \$8,225 per person (normal fare @ \$9769) **plus taxes approx \$750**

Depart from Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide or Brisbane to various cities within Europe ie London, Barcelona, Paris, Frankfurt, Milan, Istanbul or Zurich. Taxes included are an estimate; these vary due to the departure city and the destination - no child discount available – maximum stay 6 months

CATHAY PACIFIC Economy Airfare departing from **1 May to 12 June 2009** from Melbourne via Hong Kong to Paris return including all taxes comes to **\$2,542*** - this ticket is valid for 12 months. Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London, Paris and Rome are available on this fare and Cathay Pacific departs from many capital cities in Australia. If you depart from Perth, this fare is around \$85 cheaper. Other dates are also available.

EMIRATES AIRLINES Economy Airfare departing **10 - 28 May 2009** from Melbourne via Dubai to Paris return including all taxes is from **\$2,253*** - space is very limited & the trip duration is up to 4-months only. If you depart from Perth this fare would be around \$100 cheaper. Emirates is a popular airline for Australians - with or without a stopover in Dubai to break your journey to Europe – they have connections to many capital cities.

** Taxes are subject to change unless paid in full due to currency fluctuation - Early Bird fares are only for sale for a limited time and are subject to availability. Full payment may be required soon after making your reservations; the airlines stipulate this when the bookings are made, you will be advised upon reservation. After full payment, cancellation, change and amendment fees do apply. Airfares & taxes shown above are correct as at 24 Nov 2008*

Outdoor Travel also have access to a wide range of airlines and airfares - including Premium Economy and Business & First Class and the new A380 Suite to all destinations including eastern Europe, New Zealand, Vietnam, the USA or Canada and more. Please contact the office for all your airfare enquiries - phone Yvette or Lucie on 03 5750 1441 or email fares@outdoortravel.com.au

TRAVEL INSURANCE - Please don't forget travel insurance too, this is very important when paying for your holiday especially a long way in advance. We have fully comprehensive travel insurance available – call us or see the SureSave link on our website

Click-here to buy **SURESAVE TRAVEL INSURANCE** or see <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

BIKE & BARGE & ISLAND HOPPING CRUISES FOR 2009

FRANCE, BELGIUM, HOLLAND, GERMANY, GREECE, CROATIA, TURKEY

Editors note: *Having just completed my 4th Bike & Barge trip, this time along the Moselle aboard the Sailing Home, I must admit that I am hooked. The freedom & flexibility that these trips offer be it in cycling distances, flat or hilly, cycle or cruise & the conviviality of the like-minded fellow travellers make this a very relaxing 'active' holiday. I was joined by my 15-year old daughter on this latest trip – she is in Germany on a 3-month language scholarship – and having time together in an adult environment was a real treat. She also saw*

grown-ups having fun on bikes which was a first for her. The crew went out of their way to make her feel welcome and, when I suggested a day with the chef in the galley to teach her how to cook dinner for 25 people they were more than happy to help. She got time off to visit a wonderful Roman mosaic floor after prepping the vegetables, saw the Moselle vineyards as she worked, dinner was a great success AND she got all the praise from her appreciative fellow passengers:



We now have a wonderful relationship with many of the captains who offer these tours, we know the differences between the cabins, facilities & layout, know the reasons why some boats are more popular than others & the know how much fun they really are. Give us a call to talk about your travel plans – but be quick; there is always more demand than supply with these tours:

These cruises combines two popular ways to explore Europe (cycling & river cruising), allowing partners of different abilities & interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR enthusiasts), unpack once & come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. Cruises are 8-days / 7-nights (except Bruges to Paris or v. v. which are 2- weeks)

Bike & Barge Escorted Cycling	Departure Dates
France	
Loire Valley	18, 25 Apr, 2, 9, 30 May, 6, 13, 20, 27 Jun, 4, 11, 18, 25 Jul, 8, 15, 22 Aug, 5, 12, 19, 26 Sep
The Loire Valley to Paris	21 Mar, 27 Jun
Taste of Burgundy	6,13,20,27Jun, 4,11,18,25Jul, 1,22,29 Aug, 5,12,19,26 Sep
France, Holland & Belgium	
Amsterdam to Brussels or v.v.	30 May, 6,20,27 Jun, 4,11,25 Jul, 1,22,29 Aug, 5, 12 Sep
Amsterdam to Bruges - Deluxe	7, 28 June, 5, 12 Jul, 16 Aug, 27 Sep
Bruges to Paris - low season	21 Mar - 4 April (1 cabin available)
Bruges to Paris - high season	19 Jul - 2 Aug
Paris to Bruges - high season	2 - 16 Aug
Bruges to Paris - high season	30 Aug - 13 Sep
Bruges to Paris - high season	12 - 26 Sep
Paris to Bruges - high season	13 - 27 Sep
Paris to Bruges - high season	26 Sep - 10 Oct
Paris to Bruges - low season	17 - 31 Oct (full)
Holland	
Highlights of Holland: Rembrandt's Trail	27 Jun, 4 Jul, 1, 22 Aug
Holland in The Springtime	11 Apr

Tulip Tour	11, 14, 18, 21, 25, 28 Apr, 2, 5 May
Tulip Tour - Deluxe	4, 7 May
Tulip Tour - Deluxe	5, 12, 19 Apr
North Holland	21 Jun, 12 Jul, 2, 9 Aug
Holland Groningen to Arnhem	13 Jun

Germany Luxemburg Holland

Moselle: Cochem to Metz	15 Aug
Minden to Groningen	6 Jun
Arnhem to Mainz	20 Jun
Koblenz to Merzig	1 Aug
Koblenz to Amsterdam	24 Oct

Germany

Moselle: Saarbrücken to Koblenz	17 Oct
Main & Rhine: Mainz to Bamberg	27 Jun
Moselle, Rhine & Main: Trier to Frankfurt	22 Aug
Main & Rhine: Bamberg to Main	19 Sep

Italy

Venice Lagoon & River Po	Every Saturday from 28 Mar to 24 Oct
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Croatia:	11,18 Apr, 9, 16, 23, 30 May, 6, 13, 20 Jun,
Pearls of Southern Dalmatia	22, 29 Aug, 5, 12, 19, 26 Sep, 3, 10, 17 Oct
Pearls of Southern Dalmatia - Premium	25 Apr, 2 May, 13, 27 June, 4, 18 July, 1, 15, 22 Aug
Croatian National Parks	25 Apr, 2 May, 13, 27 Jun, 15, 22 Aug
Croatian National Parks - Premium	9,30 May, 6,20 Jun, 11,25 Jul, 8,29 Aug, 5,12,19,26 Sep, 3,10 Oct
Islands of Kvarner Bay	Every Sunday from early April to mid Oct
Istria & the Croatian Coast	24, 31 May, 14, 21 Jun, 20, 27 Sep, 4, 11, 18 Oct
Dalmatia to Dubrovnik	26 Apr, 10, 31 May, 6 Sep

Montenegro

Dubrovnik to Montenegro & back	3, 17, 24 May, 13, 20, 27 Sep, 4 Oct
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Greece

The Central Aegean	18, 24 Apr, 2 May, 19, 26 Sep
The Southern Aegean	9, 16, 23, 30 May, 3, 10, 17 Oct
Cyclades Islands	16, 23, 30 May, 5, 12, 19, 26 Sep
The Ionian Islands	18, 25 Apr, 2 May, 7, 14 Jun, 10, 17 Oct

Turkey:

Southern Coast of Turkey	9, 16, 23, 30 May, 3, 10, 17 Oct
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Canada

Spring Tour	16, 23 May
The Lockkeepers Tour	30 May, 6,13,20,27 Jun, 11,18 Jul, 8,15,22,29 Aug, 12, 19 Sep
Chemin du Roy - Champlain Tour	4 Jul, 5 Sep, 3 Oct

Tour of Two Canadas	25 Jul, 1 Aug
The Kings Tour	28 Jun, 29 Aug, 26 Sep

Vietnam

Vietnam Bike & Boat	5 April, 11 October, 25 October
Vietnam inn-to-inn cycling Only	8 January, 27 October, 16 November

Bike & Ship Self-guided Cycling	Departure Dates
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Austria, Germany

Danube Impressions	2, 16, 23 May, 29 August, 12, 19 September, 3 October
Danube Impressions - High	6, 13, 27 June, 18 July, 1, 8, 22 August
Danube Waltz	18, 25 April, 10 October
Danube Waltz - Mid	9 May, 5, 26 September
Danube Waltz - High	30 May, 20 June, 4, 25 July, 15 August

Demand is very high with these barges and early bookings are essential. Call us today for 2009 prices, route information & availability

Please note some barges – particularly those cruising in the French canals in areas such as the Loire valley or Burgundy - have a limited depth of water to deal with & accordingly cabins & bathrooms are generally smaller, often with bunk beds & storage space is limited. Of course on cycling holidays time spent in cabins is limited but if cabin size is important to you please talk to us about the other boats that we work with as most offer side-by-side twin beds, good storage areas & of course their own bathrooms.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

CYCLING IN VIETNAM

A report from Sue our 'hot & sticky' Reservations Manager



“Vietnam is an amazing, chaotic, vibrant & friendly place, not to mention hot & sticky...” That was the first thing I wrote in my trip diary. As I was to discover, a cycling trip in Vietnam has more facets than a diamond & I was to discover many of them over the next 2-weeks or so.

The scenery was glorious, food was fantastic, drinks were usually cold and the accommodation delightful, from 4-star beachside resorts to quality, centrally located hotels. The cycling was varied & as challenging as required (Hooray! for the air-conditioned Mercedes mini-coach...), the bikes good quality & excellently maintained, the group really fun & the guides quite fabulous, if occasionally misinterpreted. A smile always got one by, when words failed. The guide’s service level was exceptional & they are always on hand with a cool towelette, cold bottled water, peanut brittle, bananas & other snacks.

The group comprised of 15 Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders & Americans. The common factors were a desire to cycle, a convivial temperament & a desire to celebrate at the end of each day. Those with a 'Tour de France' cycling mentality were well balanced by the photo-taking, recreational members of the party. There was a definite need to be fit enough to cycle – I had prepared with weekend rides of 45km over undulating terrain and perhaps should have done a few longer distances, if only to enjoy the scenery more. The total daily distances varied from 68km to over 100km, usually done in two or three sections. However, there was always the support vehicle sweeping past, so while the desire to complete each leg was strong, one only had to make a simple 'hand on helmet' gesture, and quickly, there was a cool drink in hand and you were on an informative & entertaining coach ride to the next stop.

Half the fun of cycling in Vietnam was swerving around the plethora of cows, dogs, water buffalo, motorbikes (by the thousand - they have largely replaced pushbikes), carts, chickens & wandering children - all with big smiles & waving 'Hello's. Each little village (and there were many!) was a chaotic mix of market stalls, shacks, concrete pastel houses, school kids on bikes, old ladies in conical straw hats & outrageously overloaded scooters carrying everything from a family of four to steel pipes to pigs in baskets!

The landscapes changed regularly, from flat rice paddy country, to sweeping, roller coaster, coastal dunes & seascapes, to jungle & plantation covered hills & mountains. The roads were usually good, asphalt or concrete. Although due to our desire to discover the secrets of rural Vietnam, there were sections of quiet, back country roads that required skilful negotiating of potholes or were unsealed. Cycling these was optional, of course, but most of us were excited by the challenge. The same could be said for the quite breathtaking climbs & awesome descents.

November is cycling season in Vietnam, but of course the only thing we can't control is the weather.... As luck would have it, we were met by the most unexpected floods of the season, which meant it rained often & there was a fair bit of mud. This made for some good cycling temperatures & we soon got used to speedy donning of rain jackets & carried on, regardless. It also made for some fascinating experiences, including having our bikes & selves loaded onto wooden canoes to be poled across flooded causeways.

The weather returned to sunshine for our extension to Halong Bay. This was a huge highlight of the tour & I would urge anyone doing this tour to take it – it was an exceptional reward. Our junk was as funky & oriental as could be hoped for, complete with dragons on every corner & loads of dark timber & bamboo thatch. As well as comfy beds & doonas, ensuite cabins, pressed table linen, fine crystal glassware, good wine & multi-course meals to die for. Halong Bay is the most extraordinary place I have ever been to & the vista from the deck was absolutely awe-inspiring.

Would I cycle again in Vietnam? Absolutely. In fact, our operator is putting in place another tour, in Northern Vietnam this time. All I need to do is find a way to score some extra holiday time.....

2009/10 departure dates for our 14-day Vietnam inn-to-inn cycling tours are 8th Jan, 27th Oct, 16th Nov 2009 & 11th & 30th Jan, 22 Feb 2010 – early bookings are essential – call Sue to talk about her trip on (03) 57501441. We also offer 2-week Bike & Boat cycling tours in Vietnam departing 5th Apr, 11th & 25th 2009.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

CROWN BLUE LINE / LE BOAT

Self-skipped motor cruisers - save up to 15% on early bookings for 2009

With our extensive fleet of over 600 self-drive boats in over 40 bases we are able to offer a host of special holiday ideas in destinations in France, Holland, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Scotland & England.

For early bookings for 2009 we are now offering a 10% discount for all **new** reservations confirmed before 31st December 2008 (except Royal Mystique). You can also save on extended cruises: Receive 5% off all cruises lasting 14-20 days or receive 10% off all cruises lasting 21 days or more. All our discounts can be combined up to a **maximum of 15%** per booking.

New full colour brochures – with comprehensive boat & route details are available now – order your free copy now:

GO BARGING IN EUROPE

New hotel barge brochure available shortly.

Special Offer for New 2009 Bookings - confirm your new 2009 booking by **31st December 2008** and receive **10% discount** on the cruise price. This offer applies to new reservations received from November 3rd, 2008. (Offer applies to selected barges: La Belle Epoque, L'Impressionniste, Renaissance, Enchanté, L'Art de Vivre, Nymphaea, Magna Carta, Scottish Highlander and La Dolce Vita. Offer **excludes**: Athos, Napoleon, Alouette, Hironnelle, Anjodi, Shannon Princess, Savoir Faire).

SAVOIR FAIRE'S HOLLAND TULIP CRUISE 2009 – the 19th April 2009 Holland Tulip Cruise is now available for individual cabin bookings for 1-2 people on board 12-passenger Savoir Faire. Savoir Faire has 6 staterooms, each with a choice of double bed or 2 single beds and ensuite bathroom.

Highlights include Zaanse Schans windmill village, Amsterdam and the river Amstel, Aalsmeer the world's biggest flower auction, Gouda and Haarlem, Delft and its famous potteries, the Keukenhof Gardens. Charters still available on this route departing 29th March 12th & 26th April and 3rd May 2009 – ask for details.

GENERAL TRAVEL NEWS

A look at what's influencing travel plans & useful information for travellers

GERMANY: Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz won a special award as the longest German word of the year. The word consisted of 63 letters, 20 syllables, and ten individual words—all to express a law having to do with British beef (Rindfleisch) and "mad cow disease." Although it is a word to strike terror in any German student, it is a good example of how German can form new words by combining existing ones.

SPAIN: What is Flamenco (*baile*) expresses the emotions found in the songs (*cantes*), through movement, gestures which in traditional flamenco are not symbolic or storytelling but seek to reveal an architecture of feeling. The *baile flamenco* differs from many other forms of dance in Europe as, with its majestic foot placements, it seeks to secure the dancer's connection to the earth; the most expressive movements of the arms and legs always return to the centre of the body.

In the 19th century, there were differences between men and women dancers. The male tended to emphasize complex footwork and rapid rhythmic patterns created with heel and toe taps called *zapateado* while the female worked to achieve grace of line and fluidity of motion in arm and hand movements. These distinctions no longer exist to such a great degree, as women now incorporate the *zapateado*.

The dance is also punctuated with *pitos* (finger-snaps) and *palmas* (clapping). Castanets are used in popular flamenco dances but are not used traditionally as they restrict the ability of the hands to gesture. The movements used in any given dance are not prescribed, allowing freedom of form to the dancer, something not offered to the singer or the guitarist. More information see <http://www.spain.info>

ITALY: EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY CANALETTO – VENEZIA E I SUOI SPLENDORI

Casa dei Carraresi – Treviso 23 October 2008 - 5 April 2009 – see <http://www.artematica.tv>

One hundred works by the Venetian master from the greatest museums in the world - from both public and private institutions - will be on show together with paintings by Luca Carlevarja, Bernardo Bellotto, Francesco Guardi and Michele Marieschi, exponents of the Venetian Vedutismo from the 1700s. The exhibition is one of the most important artistic events of the year and will include pieces on loan from the National Gallery of London

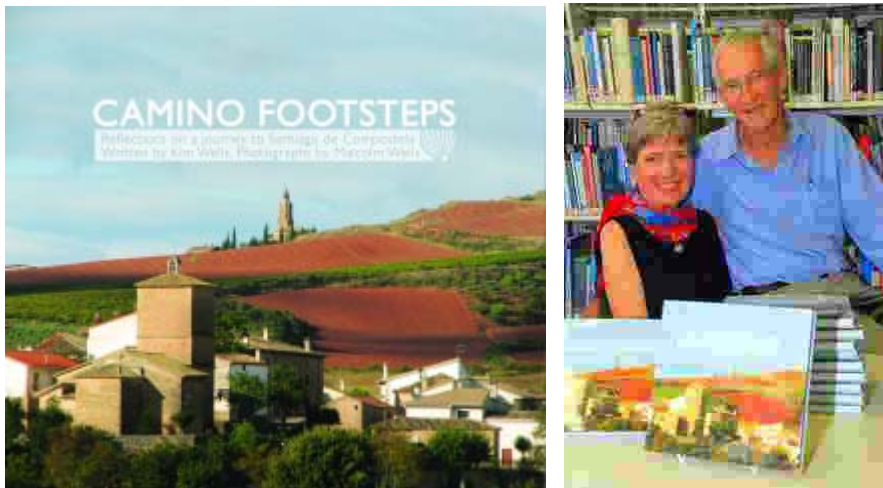
Venice Christmas Market will be held in Campo Santo Stefano from November 29th to December 23rd 2008. Along with Christmas gifts it will sell homemade wooden toys, clothes for adults and children, natural beauty products, Murano glass, furniture and fantastic Italian food.

NEW ZEALAND: Whatungarongaro te tangata toitū te whenua - a proverb which means "People pass on, but land remains"

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO – FRANCE & SPAIN

New book available

The increasing popularity of this spiritual pilgrimage has resulted in a number of books reflecting on the journey appearing in recent years. What sets **Camino Footsteps** apart from these other books is Kim Wells' skilful travel narrative, which accompanies Malcolm Wells' many colour photographs throughout. The text ambles along the trail almost like a meditation so that as a reader you almost feel as though you are walking beside the book's creators.



Each year tens of thousands of pilgrims walk the ancient Way of St James in Spain. Whether an experienced walker or an armchair traveller, this warmly written and beautifully illustrated journey takes readers into the heart and soul of this historic walk. Written and photographed by experienced walkers the book offers notes on 'Planning and Photography' & hints for anyone who wants to undertake their own journey. For details contact Fremantle Press PO Box 158 North Fremantle, WA 6159 Ph: (08) 9430 6331 or cmiller@fremantlepress.com.au or see <http://www.fremantlepress.com.au>

For details of Outdoor Travel's self-guided walking holiday program along the Camino route from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain see <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>

WALKS IN AUSTRALIA

Places still available on these small group guided walks in Victoria this summer:



GREAT OCEAN WALK - 9 DAYS

The ultimate small group (maximum 10) gourmet walking tour with a relaxed pace, award-winning luxury accommodation, fabulous food and wine. Immerse yourself in nature savoring the dramatic, ever-changing views of the stunning coastline of the Great Otway and Port Campbell National Parks. The 91km trail takes you through a variety of coastal environments with a diverse array of flora and fauna - towering gum trees,

deserted beaches and fertile farmland. Let us bring alive the history of the Shipwreck Coast and experience a sense of wilderness on this iconic walk.

What's included?

- **Experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life.
- **Luxury accommodation.**
- **All meals including wine with Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- Dinner in a variety of **superb restaurants.**
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as little or as much of the trail as you please
- **Transport** to/from Melbourne in air-conditioned minibus
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information.**
- **Luggage transported for you** so all you need to carry is a small backpack with water etc.

Suggested itinerary: Tour starts and ends in Melbourne, Victoria.

Day 1: Melbourne to Apollo Bay (3½ hour drive)

- Meet 2pm for transfer from Airport/CBD
- Time to unwind in Apollo Bay & dinner at award-winning restaurant

Day 2: Marengo to Blanket Bay (17.7km)

- Easy coastal walking track a perfect way to warm up
- Shelley Beach - chance for a refreshing swim
- Uncoil mountain ash forest, home to black wallabies

Day 3: Blanket Bay to Cape Otway (11.6km)

- Picturesque Parker Inlet with stunning views
- Cliff top path through manna gums
- Possibility to see echidnas, king parrots and koalas
- Free time to explore Historic Lighthouse at Cape Otway

Day 4: Cape Otway to Castle Cove (15.5km)

- Rainbow Falls
- Fascinating geology and wind-sculpted landscape
- Remote Station Beach
- Castle Cove

Day 5: Castle Cove to Milanesia Beach (12.2km)

- Heathland with abundant wildflowers in Springtime
- Feel the soft sand between your toes on Johanna Beach
- Chance to spot hooded plovers and peregrine falcons
- Unsurpassed open views

Day 6: Milanesia Beach to Moonlight Head (16.2km)

- Hidden gem of Milanesia beach, only accessible by foot
- High sea cliffs
- Sensational views of our entire route

Day 7: Moonlight Head to Princetown (12.3km)

- Blue gum forest, casuarinas trees and lush farmland
- Evocative Wreck Beach
- 12 Apostles Marine National Park
- Friendly village of Princetown overlooking Gellibrand River

Day 8: Princetown to Twelve Apostles (5.5km)

- Majestic limestone stacks of world famous 12 Apostles
- Loch Ard gorge - hear the story of this tragic shipwreck
- Look back in awe at the walk you've just completed

Day 9: Port Campbell to Melbourne (4 hours)

- Return to Melbourne for 1pm

Accommodation: We have selected luxury accommodation close to the trail to guarantee your comfort and to minimise driving times at the start and end of each day. At Johanna Seaside Cottages some accommodation shares a bathroom with one other bedroom (a 2-bedroom cottage with one bathroom)

Walking: Moderate Walking - some mountainous terrain, Significant (up to 1000m) ascents/descents, 6+ days of walking, Shortest day 5.5km - Longest day 17.7km. Paths vary from wide farm and forestry tracks to narrow paths through coastal scrub and along cliff tops. Hilly in places. Some beach walking, depending on tides.

Dates: 7th -15th March 2009 & 6th - 14th March 2010

Cost: AUD\$3385 per person twin share

GOURMET GUIDED WALKING HOLIDAY ACROSS THE VICTORIAN ALPS – 7-DAYS

Walk along the classic trails of the legendary Victorian High Country: the **Razorback**, **Mount Feathertop**, **Mount Buffalo** and the **Australian Alpine Walking Track**. Follow in the footsteps of some of the early visitors to this area - the explorers, the gold diggers and the first European settlers.

In the past, travellers stayed in huts - we stay in fabulous hotels and mountain lodges in Falls Creek, Dinner Plain and the Buckland Valley. Dine on the delicious cuisine and sample the wonderful **wines of the Alpine Valleys** of northeast Victoria.

What is included:

- Services of **experienced and knowledgeable guides**.
- **All meals including wine with gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route.
- Dinner in a variety of **superb restaurants**.
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as little or as much of the trail as you please.
- **Transport** to/from Albury in air-conditioned minibus.
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**.
- **Luggage transported for you** - you only need to carry a small backpack with water etc.

Suggested itinerary: Trip starts and ends in Albury

Day 1: Meet Albury (airport or train station) at 2pm. From here we drive (2hours) to the Alpine Resort of **Falls Creek** (1495m) and stay in a comfortable Alpine lodge for two nights. The lodge has its own indoor swimming pool, spa and sauna. Time to relax before dinner.

Day 2: After a leisurely breakfast we head out onto the **Bogong High Plains**. Stretch your legs with an introductory walk past some of the historic alpine huts and be entertained by the legends of former cattlemen that once roamed these hills. See beautiful flora and maybe glimpse the wild brumby horses. Dine out in one of the Resort's fine restaurants. (11km)

Day 3: We leave Falls Creek and follow a section of the **Australian Alps Walking Track**; a magnificent 650km walk from Walhalla (near Melbourne) to Canberra. Our walk crosses the High Plains before descending through snow gums to the former cattle-grazing lands of the Cobungra River. In the afternoon we climb up to **Mount Hotham**. We stay in the heart of **Dinner Plain Village** for 2 nights. (21km)

Day 4: Time to unwind in the pretty alpine village of **Dinner Plain**. The village is situated in the Alpine National Park, on the highest freehold land in Australia. The architecture of the buildings has been inspired by the characteristics of cattlemen's huts. Guided walk through the snowgums. In the afternoon there will be time to treat yourself to a relaxing massage or spa treatment. (10km)

Day 5: We leave Dinner Plain and walk the breathtaking **Razorback Ridge** to Mount Feathertop, the second highest mountain in Victoria at 1922m. Enjoy fabulous unbroken views across the High Country. Shortly beyond the summit we are met by 4-wheel drive vehicle and we descend to the Buckland valley. Stay for two

nights in luxury accommodation with views to **Mount Buffalo**. Dinner tonight is at one of the region's top restaurants - Simone's of Bright - awarded 2 Hats by The Age Good Food Guide.

Day 6: Visit beautiful **Mount Buffalo**, the mountain named by the 19th-century explorers Hume and Hovell. Guided walk over the beautiful granite plateau with stunning views to the Buckland and Buffalo valleys. Enjoy your final gastronomic picnic whilst on top of the world. Return to the Buckland Valley and celebrate the end of the trip with a fabulous gala dinner at Villa Gusto.

Day 7: After breakfast we transport you back to Albury for 12 o'clock.

Walking: Moderate - Hard Walking - Shortest day 11km - Longest day 25km

5-days of walking on well-graded tracks on mountainous terrain. Significant ascents/descents. Optional easy boulder hopping on Mount Buffalo. The tougher days are balanced with easier days. The walking is fairly rugged in sections so sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are recommended. Walking poles would be an advantage, especially on steeper sections.

Dates: 30th Jan 2009 - 5th Feb 2009, 26th Dec 2009- 1st Jan 2010 & 29th Jan 2010 – 4th Feb 2010

Cost: 26th Dec 2009 departures (including New Year's Eve 'dégustation' dinner): AUD \$2995. 30th Jan 2009 & 29th Jan 2010 departure: AUD \$2885

The price represents the fully inclusive cost of your holiday. No hidden extras

SAVINGS ON WALKING IN TASMANIA

Save \$100 per person walking the Freycinet Experience

Planning a walking holiday in Australia this summer then Outdoor Travel is offering an exclusive \$100 discount * for all bookings for Freycinet Experience walks departing between November 2008 – May 2009. This four-day guided wilderness walk covers the entire length of the Freycinet Peninsula on Tasmania's east coast. Rise to the sights, sounds and smells of the Australian 'bush' and the sea, enjoy the spectacular vistas of the clear waters of the Tasman Sea, see the contrast of bright orange lichen on granite against pristine white beaches, hear the song of the birds and waves collapsing on the shore, relish the warm honey smell of Kunzea in flower. This walk allows you to experience the challenge of a good days walk with the indulgence of having to carry no more than your lunch as you return each evening to our lodge for candlelit dinners, a hot bath and a comfortable bed. The highlight for many is the stunning accommodation at the award winning Friendly Beaches Lodge. Every aspect of the lodge and surrounds is purpose designed to have maximum comfort for the guests and a minimal impact on the environment.

Departure Dates: 2008 7, 13, 21, 28 Nov, 5, 12, 21, 27, 31 Dec 2008

Departure Dates: 2009 4, 8, 12, 16, 23, 30 Jan, 6, 13, 20, 27 Feb 2009, 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar, 3, 10, 17, 24 Apr 2009

Cost per person: \$2075 includes 3-nights Friendly Beaches Lodge accommodation with shared bathroom / toilet facilities, all transport from Hobart, meals (including wine with dinner), experienced and knowledgeable walk guides, park fees, rain jacket and daypack hire. Maximum group size is ten participants (with two experienced guides & two Lodge Co-ordinators)

You might also like to consider what we regard as a similar walking experience (in fact the people who set-up Freycinet based their walking holiday model on this) the Abel Tasman guided walk in New Zealand. Fares to NZ are very reasonable & this coastal rainforest area near Nelson is one of the most beautiful and sunniest regions – call 03 57551743 for details.

CYCLING IN NEW ZEALAND

Places still available - book before Christmas and receive 10% off

North Island Highlights - Coromandel Peninsula – 8-Day Inn guided cycling tour

Cost: \$2540 per person twin share

Departs 19th –26th Jan, 10th – 17th Feb 09 & 15th – 22nd Mar 2010

The Coromandel Peninsula is a cycling gem lying east of Auckland in one of New Zealand's most diverse and breathtaking locations. Luxuriant forest and mountain backdrops set the scene. See a giant kauri tree and ride a bush railway. A farm stay will give you the opportunity to meet some real "Kiwis". Finish at the geothermal spa town of Rotorua with the opportunity to experience the local Maori culture.

Coromandel Peninsula & Volcanoes – 15-Day inn-to-inn guided cycling tour

Cost: \$4710 per person twin share

Departs: 10th - 24th Feb 2009

The North Island Highlights Tour is comprised of two short tours: The Coromandel Peninsula is a cycling gem lying east of Auckland in one of New Zealand's most diverse and breathtaking locations. See a giant kauri tree and ride a bush railway. A farm stay will give you the opportunity to meet some real "Kiwis". The first part of the tour finishes at the geothermal spa town of Rotorua with the opportunity to experience the local Maori culture.

The Volcanoes and Glow-worms tour covers a great diversity of scenery from farmland to lakes, forests and the magnificent volcanoes of Tongariro National Park. Stay on a sheep farm (meet some of New Zealand's 45 million sheep) and visit

South Island - Southern Scenic - 8-Day inn-to-inn guided cycling tour

Cost: \$2460 per person twin share

Departs: 19th – 26th Jan & 12th – 19th Mar 09 & 21st – 28th Jan 2010

The Grand Tour can be extended to a wonderful 23-day holiday by combining it with the Southern Scenic route, or the Southern Scenic can be taken as a magnificent weeklong holiday by itself. We follow the road to Milford Sound, cycling through towering mountains, beside lakes and innumerable waterfalls. Much of our route is on very quiet sealed roads with little or no traffic. We finish at Larnach's Castle on beautiful Otago Peninsula, close to the city of Dunedin.

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT OUR HOLIDAYS

Walking in Italy – small group guided hedonistic hiking: *I just wanted to let everyone at Outdoor Travel know that our hike with Jackie from Parma to the Ligurian Coast in September was sensational. Jackie is a wonderful guide, and her organisational skills, attention to detail; knowledge, professionalism and friendliness made it the best-organised holiday we have ever been on.*

The whole thing was great from start to finish, and it really was all-inclusive. The food and wines were wonderful. Everything was made better by her extensive knowledge of the region and its history. We can't recommend HH enough, and wanted you to know that you can recommend them to other clients knowing they will have a great experience, as we did. David and Aileen

Walking in England – Coast to Coast: *Just letting you know that we survived the Coast to Coast walk. I don't think we appreciated how hard it was going to be, but it was a great experience and we felt a real sense of achievement when we walked down the hill to Robin Hood's Bay and dipped our walking shoes into the North Sea, after 195 miles of trekking.*

What made the trip really worthwhile was the camaraderie of the group and all the terrific nights in the pubs, swapping blister remedies over a pint (or in our case, glass of wine). It is not a trip I would want to do self-guided. Sherpa were really good and I would recommend them highly to anyone contemplating doing the Coast to Coast Walk. The accommodation was mixed but always good and our guide, Martin, was knowledgeable and dependable. It has whetted my appetite for Offa's Dyke Path and the Cornish Coast Walks, also south west Ireland. Thanks again, Andrea

Canal cruising & walking in France: *Just some feedback on our holiday in France. The Libellule trip was fantastic, the food wonderful, and our guide Michael so helpfuland could not have been more informed or entertaining.*

We loved our Sherpa walk in France, but found the walk notes a bit of a challenge! The food was again wonderful but the accommodation a bit tired. I would have preferred B & Bs I think. Jill & David

Canal cruising in Burgundy, France: *Just a quick note to say thanks for all your help and assistance on our recent Libellule (dragonfly) barge adventure. (13Sep.08)*

The holiday, the barge crew and other travellers was beyond our expectations. We travelled by hire car to northern Burgundy and then onto the UK via Paris. We have been to France before, but have never experienced such a beautiful place as Burgundy. Great food and wine, plus friendly people.

Thanks again, we already singing the praises of Outdoor Travel. Barry and Judy

Cruising in Scotland - Scottish Highlander: *Barge trip was wonderful - we were lucky to be on board with four excellent Canadian companions and formed a great team. Max was ill on one day and they took him to a doctor and really looked after him. He recovered quickly so got to enjoy the rest of the trip. Thankyou once again for all your organisation.*

We hope to do it again in 2010 to Ireland - to meet up with the Canadians on the Shannon Barge trip. Lesley

Bike & Barge in France: *We enjoyed the trip – the concept is a good one. Positives were: Anina and Albert our Dutch captain and crew, Marcel, our affable and patient Dutch guide, basic but plentiful food. Jim & Ginny*

Bike & Barge & WW1 Battlefields – France & Belgium: *Having just completed the “Fleur” cruise from Paris to Bruges, we would like to say how much we enjoyed the experience. The barge was well-appointed and comfortable, the food first class and the staff were efficient, friendly and helpful. Although we did not participate in the cycling, those that did seemed to really enjoy it, even if, towards the end with temperatures of 3 to 4°C, the enthusiasm did wane a little!*

For us non-cyclists, there was good information from the guides, Roelie and Thomas, on side trips by train especially in Belgium. A trip to Antwerp and the Plantin-Moretus Museum of printing was a highlight as were Ghent, Oudenaarde and Bruges. One thing is certain, Belgium is not boring!

Following the barge trip, our Battlefields Tour with Annette and Christian was excellent. Camalou Guesthouse, like our hosts, was charming. We were especially impressed and appreciative of Annette’s research into the possible final resting place of a relative who had no officially listed gravesite. They knew all the places of interest, many of which the independent traveller would be unaware of. We cannot praise them highly enough and would unhesitatingly recommend their services to anyone thinking of touring the battlefields. Wonderful! Elisabeth, Jodie & Neil

Bike & Barge in Burgundy: *We all had a great time and enjoyed the tour, but there was one exception which detracted from the whole thing and that was the standard of accommodation on the “Steile Bank”. The cabins fitted out as they were with two double bunks in each were uncomfortable, cramped and inconvenient, with barely space for two adult people to dress/change clothes/ perform normal personal preparation etc.*

On the positive side, the bike touring was very enjoyable, with a conscientious guide who gave us a briefing about the next day each night and looked after the group very well during the rides each day. The bikes were very rider friendly, and well suited to that type of riding. The routes were well planned with plenty of variation through quiet roads and countryside, with stops in interesting towns and villages.

All of our bookings and travel connections organized by Outdoor Travel went very well, with no problems at all. Thank you, Yvette, for all your effort in arranging everything so that it all ran so smoothly. We would have no hesitation in recommending Outdoor Travel to others. Pam

Bike & Boat in Vietnam: *Vietnam is a beautiful place and Ha Long Bay amazing. The first day of cycling was a challenge as the path was muddy with huge muddy potholes from all the rain, and I was christened quickly, doing a lovely side into a metre deep pile of mud and water. The cycling through this area was superb, continued to be a challenge and inspiring. The kayaking was super and lots of fun between the four nationalities. The food served on the junk was of the highest quality. In fact, everything about the Ha Long Bay area was brilliant.*

Central Vietnam was great, Hui and Hoi An interesting in their history. In Saigon, we met our Vietnamese/English speaking guide, Chow, who was just superb. He knew his history, his people, and his geography and gave us so much info one never finds in a guidebook. He remained with us through the Mekong Delta. The junk for this part of the trip was also good, and again the food amazing.

Neville and I have never been on an organised tour before so this was a new experience, which we enjoyed because of the great company and the physical aspect of the tour. Overall the trip was superb, and we feel very comfortable about returning to Vietnam for more extreme cycling.

I do want to thank you for your great organisation. There were no hassles with any aspect of your bookings.
Jacqueline

Bike & Boat in Canada: We thoroughly enjoyed our recent trip to Canada and highly recommend the Bike and Barge tour supplied through you. The quality of bicycles and equipment was excellent. Rode about 70kms per day mostly on quiet "Route Vert" cycle tracks and within the city on dedicated bicycle paths. Always felt safe. We took our own Australian helmets. The first day out of Quebec was raining so the guide suggested we stay on the boat to our first port, then take a short ride in the afternoon back.

Every other day was fine with plenty of good riding at a pace leisurely enough to visit museums and points of interest on moderate gradients. The scenery certainly lived up to the billing of the most beautiful villages in Quebec.

Food was fully up to advertisement and expectation - fresh local produce sensitively prepared and lovingly served. Buffet breakfast, lunch ingredients spread out to prepare our own and four-course dinner served on starched white tablecloth every night. Once staff became aware that Sharon avoided wheat products special efforts were made to ensure appropriate food choices were available at every meal, even though we made no specific requests. John & Sharon

AND NOW FOR THE OTHER NEWS:

"The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. We may not get there in one year or even one term, but America, I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that we will get there. I promise you, we as a people will get there." **President Elect Barak Obama.**

WHERE ON EARTH IS.....?

Internet map & route finders

Looking for a map to get you from A to B then you now have 4 great Internet choices:

- 1) Click-on to our website & the Michelin Guide link on our Active Europe page <http://www.AlltheWeb.com>
- 2) Go to the <http://www.mappy.com/> website for a host of easy to read options
- 3) Go to <http://www.googleearth.com/> for a graphic view of the world we visit walking or cycling
- 4) Want help in finding you way around Australia – <http://www.travelmate.com.au/> for help from Travel Mate Mapmaker to generate a map of your proposed trip along with driving directions.

SMART TRAVELLER – Government travel advisories - all countries see: <http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au>

Call our travel experts & talk to us about our personal recollections and experience – we regularly visit the areas we offer – call Martyn, Lucie, Yvette or Sue.

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CARBON & THE HOLIDAY & WORK ENVIRONMENT

What we can do to make a difference?

With the release of reports into the global impact to the environment by carbon emissions & the use of cars, planes & of power generation there have been some creative new information sites that can give you some ideas about how you can look at a personal contribution to the issue of global warming.



Offsets made simple - '[Carbon Offsetting Explained](http://www.climatecare.org)' (website homepage <http://www.climatecare.org>)

PC Power Consumption, Does it Really Matter?

More than **30 billion kilowatt-hours of energy** are wasted because many of us simply forget to shut down our computers when we're not using them. If we could just improve the efficiency of how we use our PCs, the savings in energy costs would be over \$3 billion dollars! The CO2 emissions from just 15 computers are equivalent in energy terms to the gas consumption used by one car.

[Learn More About PC Power Consumption...](#)

Our goal is to introduce 100,000,000 PC users into the Local Cooling community. If just 100 million of us optimise the efficiency of our computers' energy consumption, we could prevent over 300 billion kg of CO2 gas emissions, equivalent to over 1.8 billion gallons of oil, in just the first year alone. [Take Part in Our Project to Spread the Word about LocalCooling](#)



See: <http://www.localcooling.com/facts/> & please spread the word



A Victorian based solution - <http://www.treesmart.com.au>

Each year, the average Australian vehicle emits about 4.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide - the major Greenhouse Gas. While various attempts are being made in the transport sector to reduce vehicle use and emissions, through programs such as [TravelSmart](#), an alternative way of reducing Greenhouse Gases in the atmosphere is to remove them after they have been emitted via carbon sequestration in trees.

The **TreeSmart** program aims to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by planting, maintaining and harvesting plantation eucalypt trees. The **TreeSmart** program is different to some other carbon sequestration programs that plant trees and leave them un-maintained as a perpetual forest.

The **TreeSmart** program will operate by selling subscriptions to Australian travellers ([motorists](#), [road freight operators](#), [public transport travellers](#), [air travellers](#), [conference attendees](#)) to enable the CO2 emissions from their travel to be absorbed (sequestered) in eucalypt trees grown for eventual harvesting and replanting.

OUTDOOR TRAVEL Pty Ltd do not specifically endorse any of these options & do not vouch for their effectiveness or credibility but we believe this information will help make an informed decision