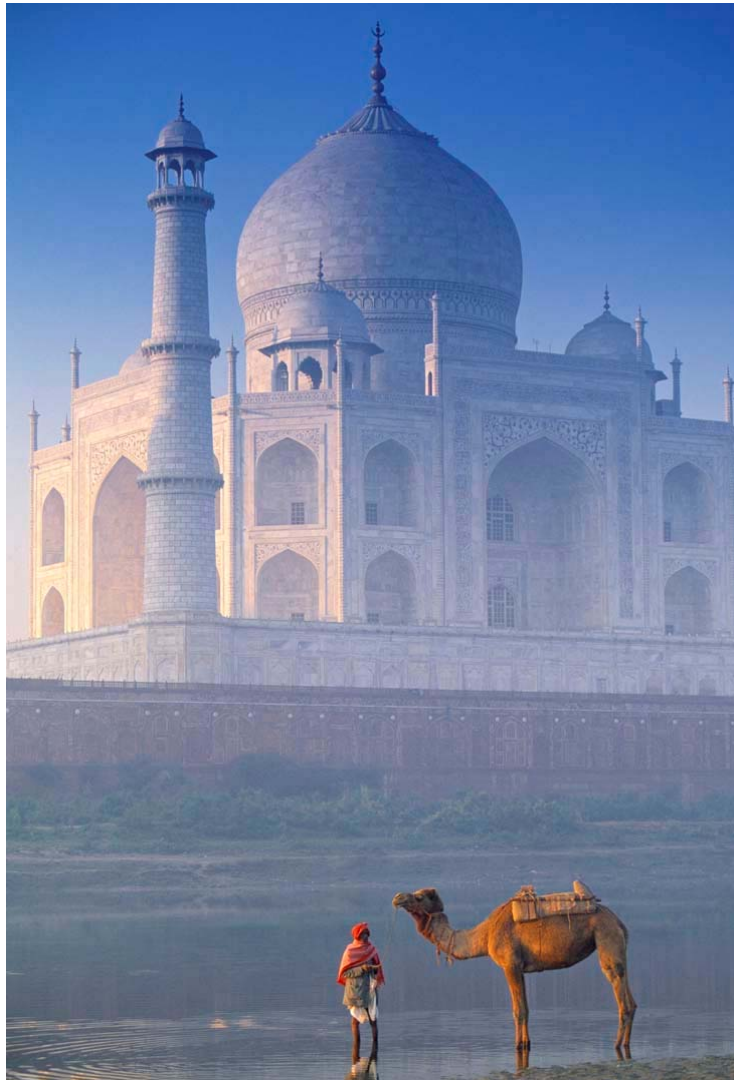


*India: From the Remote Islands of the Arabian Sea
to Elephant Back Safaris and the Taj Mahal*

*A Custom Journey with Special Access
to Seacology Project Sites in the Lakshadweep Islands*



January 30 – February 13, 2010

Why Geographic Expeditions for India?

We know how to take you off the beaten path, even if you're technically on it. From special access to local festivals and unique routes, we allow you to go deeper into India.

Our itineraries feature the best available accommodations, measured by the level of luxury *and* character (the latter is often overlooked in favor of the former).

We have an extensive portfolio of journeys that span India from the highest Himalaya to the tip of the subcontinent, and our India team has personally covered the same ground.

Our trips focus on cultural immersion and strive to reveal the beauty, complexity, and dynamic nature of India through interaction with people from all walks of life.

India is one of the most difficult countries to navigate. With unmatched attention to detail, safety, and the authenticity of your experience, we help you do it with ease.

Our trip leaders are among the most charming, attentive, intelligent, and fun people you will meet in India or anywhere. We worked hard to find them so that you don't have to.

We hope you'll join us!

Why Travel with Seacology?

Seacology www.seacology.org is a nonprofit nongovernmental organization whose sole purpose is to preserve the environments and cultures of islands worldwide. The organization implements solutions by asking islanders to identify a communal need Seacology could support, such as an elementary school or fresh water delivery system. In exchange the village agrees to establish and manage a marine or terrestrial reserve.

Seacology's innovative win-win model is inexpensive, maintains indigenous land ownership, and improves the entire community. To date the organization has launched 184 island-based projects, saving an astounding 1,813,324 acres of marine ecosystems and 166,478 acres of incredibly precious terrestrial habitat. In return for establishing island marine and forest reserves, Seacology has helped islanders build 85 facilities such as schools, community centers, solar energy systems, and other critically-needed structures, and funded 30 programs providing scholarships, vital medical services and supplies for island communities. Seacology's work and Seacology's trips have been praised in *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Islands*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Outside Go*, *Travel + Leisure Magazine* and many other newspapers and magazines throughout the world.

This unique trip, specially designed with Seacology, intertwines visits to the rarely visited tropical islands of the Lakshadweep Archipelago, game viewing at India’s finest wildlife park, and a trip by train to India’s most iconic monument—the Taj Mahal.

After a stay at a private, beachside home in Southern Kerala, we venture out to the remote Lakshadweep Islands in the Arabian Sea. We spend five nights in these idyllic tropical islands, where we have special permission to visit Seacology project sites on islands generally off-limits to the public.

After a good look at Delhi, we journey by train to the inexpressible Taj, “the gem of man’s handiworks,” Lord Curzon called it, “without flaw or blemish, exquisite, irresistible, impossible to criticize, incapable of improvement, the most perfect structure in the world.”

Before returning home, we round out our trip at the incomparable Mahua Kothi Lodge and Bandhavgarh National Park, where daytime tiger sightings are more common than at just about any other game preserve on the subcontinent.

January 30

ARRIVAL IN INDIA Depending on flight schedules, most travelers depart on January 28 and, after crossing the International Date Line, arrive in Trivandrum on the 30th. Upon arrival in Trivandrum we are greeted by a Geographic Expeditions representative and transferred to our accommodations.

Our home for the next two nights is the private estate Thayil Kadaloram in Kovalam, where our gracious hosts (and friends of Seacology) are TJ and Sally Mathew. TJ is a native of the beautiful state of Kerala and Sally is from San Francisco. The grand three story Thayil house boasts a choice location on legendary Kovalam beach facing the Arabian Sea.

Sally and TJ are world travelers who have an abiding passion for India – its geography, customs and culture – and especially for its amazing culinary heritage. Together they have taught cooking classes many times over the years before their retirement in the early 1980’s. Their depth of knowledge of regional cuisines will be a delicious addition to our India sojourn.

Thayil Kadaloram Estate (D)



January 31

KOVALAM Those who wish may choose to enjoy Kerala’s relaxing, coastal atmosphere, and recover from jetlag at the beachside estate. For those with energy, we have arranged a short trip through Kerala’s backwaters.

The backwater region of Kerala is an unbelievably beautiful paradise of mangrove forests, emerald green paddy fields, and coconut groves, interspersed with a 900-kilometer network of meandering waterways. Formed by 40 rivers that flow to the Arabian Sea from the Cardamom Hills, this network of canals, lakes and estuaries comprise one of India’s most enchanting regions.

Traditionally called a *Kettuvallom*, or rice barge, the shallow and rounded hull of our boat is made without using a single nail. Each Anjali wood plank is joined to the next with strong coir rope and then coated with resin derived from boiled cashew kernels and fish oil. We'll spend the rest of the day leisurely plying the canals and quietly immersing ourselves in life along the backwaters, witnessing the daily rituals of river life; women washing their laundry along the river banks, children splashing around in the placid warm water and farmers tilling in the paddy fields.

Thayil Kadaloram Estate (B,L,D)

February 1

KOVALAM TO BANGARAM ISLAND Today we fly via Cochin to Agatti Island before taking a ferry to Bangaram Island. The Lakshadweep, a chain of 36 islands approximately 200 miles off the southwest coast of the subcontinent, is India's only group of coral islands. It is a remote and sensitive environment consisting of coral reefs, idyllic beaches, lush palm forest, and turquoise lagoons. A July 2008 *Conde Nast Traveler* article said this about the Lakshadweep Islands: "For a dedicated group of travelers who seek the world's most far-flung spots, this is as close as it gets to paradise."

For the next five nights we stay in comfortable, well-appointed huts on a nearly uninhabited, 128-acre island. Designed to blend into the surroundings, our accommodations are simple but appropriate—palm-frond thatched roofs, private porches looking out over the sea, hammocks to relax in, an outdoor dining area befitting the weather, and of course magnificent snorkeling and diving.

Bangaram Island (B,L,D)

February 2 – 5

LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS We have four full days to enjoy and learn about the environment of the Lakshadweep Islands. There will be ample time to scuba dive or snorkel on the beautiful Lakshadweep reefs. Participants will have the rare behind the scenes opportunity to visit a Seacology project on Minicoy Island, which is normally off limits to visitors. Minicoy is the southernmost island of the Lakshadweep archipelago. It is the only island in Lakshadweep that supports mangrove and salt marsh ecosystems. Minicoyans have unique cultural traditions similar to Maldivians. Seacology is funding the construction of a natural and cultural heritage museum and two marine reserve guard posts in exchange for the establishment of a 2,471 acre marine and mangrove protected area. We will fly to Minicoy and back via helicopter where we will be greeted with a warm welcome ceremony and visit the Seacology project.

Bangaram Island (B,L,D)

February 6 – 7

LAKSHADWEEP TO DELHI We return by boat to Agatti Island, then fly via Cochin to Delhi. On our second day in Delhi we will explore this pulsating capital city, where no less than eight empires rose and fell over the span of five thousand years. When Bombay and Madras were mere trading posts, Delhi had been the seat of an empire for more than five hundred years. Synonymous with power and imperial sovereignty, Delhi intoxicated Hindu kings, Mughal emperors and the British Raj, all of whom established their empires here, despite warning that whoever founds a new city at Delhi will lose it. And indeed they did. But not before leaving their distinct legacies throughout the city. Remnants of Delhi's glorious past and its valiant struggle for independence and freedom are manifest in all we see.

Our adventure begins in *Old Delhi*, the Mughal capital established by Shah Jahan in 1638. At the famous *Red Fort*, where Jawaharlal Nehru unfurled the flag of newly-independent India on August 15, 1947, we trade our car for bicycle rickshaws. Weaving through the warren of crooked, congested alleys off *Chandni Chowk*, one of India's oldest and busiest bazaars, we will see that the traditional workmanship

for which India is well known still thrives. We will also visit *Raj Ghat*, Mahatma Gandhi's serene and evocative cremation site, and the *Jama Masjid*, one of the largest mosques in India and Shah Jahan's last architectural triumph.

Time permitting we will also visit some of the impressive monuments of *New Delhi*. One is *Humayun's Tomb*, an exquisite predecessor to the Taj Mahal. Humayun was the second Mughal Emperor, and his tomb, built by his wife, is a prime example of early Mughal architecture and garden layouts. Nearby *Rajpath* ("King's Way") is the architectural pinnacle of Lyuten's New Delhi and host to the annual Republic Day Parade. At the westernmost end of Rajpath is *Rashtrapathi Bhavan*, former home of the Viceroy and the current residence of the President. And towering over the easternmost end of Rajpath is the *India Gate*.

Among the finest hotels in Asia, our accommodation for the night is the centrally located Imperial. It is a distinctive Delhi landmark famous for its service and top-notch accommodations.

The Imperial Hotel (B,L,D)

February 8

AGRA Traveling by train is a quintessential part of the Indian experience, and this is how we'll make the trip to Agra. Once we're in Agra we will stretch our legs with a visit to *Agra Fort*. Previous incarnations of the fort date back to the Rajputs, but the citadel that stands today was the work of Akbar the Great, who built it over the course of eight years (1565-1573). The fort, a testament to the military might and architectural genius of the Mughals, was successively occupied by emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan died here, imprisoned by his son in a small room over the Yamuna River, left to gaze at the Taj Mahal he had built.



Next we'll explore a bit of the old city on foot. The walk takes us past the gigantic *Jama Masjid* to the silver lingam of the *Shiva Temple*. Following the narrow lanes we will pass shops selling items used in decorating the images of gods and goddesses; in the spice market of *Rawat Para* we will see the ornamental and decorated facades of the houses; at *Namak Ki Mandu* we can see craftspeople beat metal to extract the gold and silver used in Ayurvedic medicines; and our walk ends at the *Akbari Mosque*, which leads to the 16th century stone paved streets of *Kinari Bazaar*.

Finally, in time for the sunset, we visit the *Taj Mahal*, the most famous Mughal monument. Constructed by Shah Jahan in memory of his wife, it is the most extravagant monument ever built for love. It took seventeen years, 20,000 workers and a king's treasury to build this wonder. With our guide, we wander the inner chambers and the marble paths, as millions have done over the centuries, and marvel at the architectural brilliance and commitment that went into its construction. Theo Cruz once wrote about the Taj that, "The only way I could escape the feeling of being in a dream was to close my eyes."

The Imperial Hotel (B,L,D)

February 9

FLY TO KHAJURAHO AND DRIVE TO BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK After our flight to Khajuraho we drive to Bandhavgarh National Park (about six hours), where we will spend the next three nights at India's most spectacular new safari lodge – Mahua Kothi. A first-of-its-kind safari lodge in India, Mahua Kothi is comprised of twelve cottages built in the Central Indian vernacular. It is a wonderfully designed Relais et Chateaux lodge in the heart of the Bandhavgarh jungle. We will stop for a picnic lunch en route.

The park is located in one of India's last remaining substantial forests. This area was originally part of the princely state of Rewa, but the history of the park goes back to the Ramayana. According to legend, Rama stopped in the park on his way home from Sri Lanka after his battle with the demon Ravana. Though small, the park provides an opportunity to view many of India's diverse and endangered animals, including the spotted deer, sambar, barking deer, nilgai, blackbuck, four-horned antelope, gaur (Indian bison and largest of the world's oxen), sloth bear, leopard and – of course – the Bengal tiger. Tiger sightings are generally more frequent in Bandhavgarh National Park than anywhere else in India. We will have the opportunity to partake in an elephant back tiger safari.

Mahua Kothi (B,L,D)

February 10 – 11

BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK We have two full days to further explore this wonderful park, combining wildlife viewing with a look at the area's rich history. After an early morning game drive we may



picnic at the base of an old fort situated on a hill that overlooks hundreds of miles of forest. Abandoned in 1935, the complex was once a thriving home for thousands of residents, ruled by the Maharajah of Rewa. Beautiful statues and buildings that have been partially reclaimed by vegetation dot the hilltop ruins. Those who opt to make this short hike can explore the remains of temples dedicated to the incarnations of Vishnu and marvel at the beauty and serenity of this remote archeological treasure. Elsewhere in the park there are also caves with inscriptions dating back to 1 B.C.

After more game viewing in the afternoon, we'll retire in the evening to our luxurious accommodations and perhaps dinner under the stars.

Mahua Kothi (B,L,D)

February 12

DRIVE TO KHAJURAHO AND FLY TO DELHI Depending on flight schedules, we may have one last, morning game drive before departing for Khajuraho. Upon arrival in Khajuraho we connect with our flight to Delhi.

Trident Gurgaon (B,L,D)

February 13

INDIA TO USA Depart Delhi (usually in the very early morning) for home, and arrive later the same day.

Why Geographic Expeditions?

The travel business—the world’s largest industry—is intensely competitive, and the modern traveler is increasingly sophisticated. We’re proud that the readers of *Travel & Leisure* have consistently voted us one of the world’s Top Ten Tour Operators and that *Conde Nast* names us one of the Top Travel Pros, but laurels are not to be rested on. Here are some of the reasons we think GeoEx should be at the top of the list of companies you consider:

Personal Service. GeoEx has earned its spurs as a company that puts personable, individualized service first and foremost. We know discerning travelers expect it, and we expect it of ourselves. And because of our commitment to service, well over half of our business consists of Private Journeys, which demand persnickety attention to detail and the continual ability to meet and anticipate our travelers’ unique needs and desires.

Passion. We know, we know: *everybody* these days has to be passionate about what they do, including the guy who changes your oil. But it’s a strong word, still a good one, and it’s accurate. We’re a company, top to bottom, of travel enthusiasts, of map browsers, book readers, and dreamers. There’s nary a nook or worldly cranny we haven’t explored, with eyes-open gusto. And when we return we get to work at sharing those sublime places with our travelers.

Experience. We’ve been at this great task for a long and fruitful time, growing from a little start-up into an industry leader. Our eyes are still full of stars, but they’re also clear; we’ve encountered problems and solved them again and again; though it might be self-serving to say it, there is no substitute for experience, and we’ve got it.

Innovation. More than a quarter century ago GeoEx pioneered travel to the newly opened hinterlands of Tibet and Central Asia. Since then we’ve been at the forefront, charging ahead (carefully, intelligently), bringing travelers to places like Tuva, the Empty Quarter, Iran (we were the first American company to run trips to that country after its revolution), the backroads of Cambodia and Kenya, to long-sequestered areas of northern India, to the South and North Poles and just about everywhere in between. We design our trips from the ground up, incessantly looking for new delights and new ways to experience time-honored destinations.

Responsibility. We stand by our commitment to careful, mindful, and environmentally and culturally responsible travel. Once again, this is something most every travel company is careful to trumpet. Bottom line: as travel enthusiasts, as fans of the human species, we detest going to places that have been subject to touristic predation, conscious or unconscious. We will not add to that predation. Doing it thoughtfully and sensitively is a little harder than doing it willy-nilly, but well worth the effort, ethically and economically.

Safety Net. We maintain 8,760 hour per year emergency logistical support for our travelers in the field. (You got it: 24 x 365.) Our automatically included insurance program—\$50,000 medical expense, 24-hour medical assistance, and \$75,000 evacuation insurance for every trip member, with optional and recommended trip cancellation, trip interruption, and baggage insurance—is tops (a claim we’re more than happy to back up). We think you’ll come away convinced that GeoEx is utterly committed to our travelers’ safety and peace of mind from beginning to end.

Comfort. We’re not fans of discomfort for discomfort’s sake, so we carefully pick the most salubrious accommodations, from hotels to in the major cities to little inns along the way. Our boats around the world are built for comfortable exploration rather than floor shows and costume balls. Our treks are frankly luxurious, with all the cooking, cleaning up, portage, and camp setting up done by our rigorously trained staff.

<p>LAND COST \$12,500 (double occupancy)</p> <p>SINGLE SUPPLEMENT \$2,450</p> <p>PLUS INTRA-INDIA FLIGHTS (Economy Class) \$2,850 (subject to change by carriers)</p>
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Included in Land Cost

- Best available accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- Meals as noted in itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- All ground transportation (including all transfers) within India
- Services of a Geographic Expeditions expert trip leader throughout
- Sightseeing as noted with experienced English-speaking local guides
- All entry fees at all temples and monuments
- All tips at restaurants and hotels
- TravelGuard Medical / Evacuation Insurance Coverage and Assistance Services

Not Included in Land Cost

- Meals other than as noted in itinerary
- International airfare and en route stopovers
- Intra-India airfare (noted separately)
- Passport fees, visa fees, excess baggage fess, or departure taxes
- Video, still camera, and movie camera fees
- Tips / gratuity to the Geographic Expeditions trip leader
- Items of a personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.
- Trip cancellation, travel delay or baggage loss insurance (this optional coverage is highly recommended and can be purchased through Geographic Expeditions)
- Charges incurred as a result of delays beyond Geographic Expeditions' control

Single Supplements

Costs are based on double/twin occupancy. We do not like to charge an additional amount for the single traveler and - upon request - will make attempt to match such travelers with a suitable roommate. If no one is available to share, the single supplement charge will apply.

Refunds for Unused Portions of Trip

Because our rates are based on group participation, no refunds can be made for any accommodations, services, or features not taken. If cancellation occurs while the trip is in progress, there will be no refund for any unused portion.

International Airfare and En Route Stopovers

The land cost does not include your international transportation from your home city or charter flights within India. Geographic Expeditions has an in-house air department with many years of experience arranging complex travel to remote destinations. Unless you are working with a travel agent or specify otherwise, we will assume that you want us to make all domestic and international air reservations according to the trip itinerary.

We try to secure the best possible fare for you and request that you notify us immediately of any pre- and post-trip extension plans. Our air department will be happy to assist you with these arrangements and with any other additional extensions you may wish to add to your trip itinerary. Early reservations ensure the most desired airlines, routings, seating, and departure times.

If you are not using Geographic Expeditions for your air travel (including using frequent flyer tickets), it is essential that you give us your air schedule at least 60 days prior to departure, so that we may confirm your arrival and departure hotels.

Trip Grade: Moderate Touring

Geographic Expeditions has unrivaled expertise in organizing trips to India. This exciting itinerary highlights the cultural heritage of India and on some days the drives to our destinations may be long and a bit rough. Because of the nature of the roads and the unpredictability of flights, it may be necessary to revise our schedule before or during the trip. We will keep all trip participants advised of the latest information we obtain. Please also note that bathroom facilities during some drives are few and far between, such that your privacy in an 'emergency' may be limited to a nearby tree or rock. Anyone who would be uncomfortable in such a situation should not consider this trip.

Our policy is to use the best available accommodation in each location. Accommodations in the remote Lakshadweep Islands are comfortable but simple, and may lack some of the amenities of five-star accommodations elsewhere on the trip. Also, schedules on the trip can be rigorous. Every participant needs to be fully aware of these conditions before the trip. Flexibility and a sense of humor are essential.

Pre-Departure Packet

After you sign up on the trip, a detailed packet of information on health and safety, travel documents, clothing, background information and suggested reading will be sent to you.

Visas

Visas are required for U.S. citizens traveling to India. Visa applications and instructions will be sent to participants in the pre-departure packet.

Important Note

While we endeavor to make the itinerary as accurate as possible, it should be considered an approximate schedule of activities rather than a rigid schedule of events. Trip itineraries are subject to revision due to weather, road and trail conditions, government restrictions and other factors beyond our control. Advance reconnaissance sometimes presents opportunities for superior routing with minimal advance notice - we always do our best to select the safest and most beautiful routes. Terms and Conditions for this trip are contained in the Travelers Information section of the catalogue insert and on the Limitation of Liability agreement supplied in the trip preparation packet.

The People Organizing Your Trip at Geographic Expeditions

Kirk Uhrlaub is our Regional Director for India, Tibet, and Sri Lanka. An avid traveler, Kirk has visited numerous corners of the globe, including the top of Argentina's Cerro Aconcagua, the back roads of Spain and Portugal, beautiful Bali (where he and his wife spent their honeymoon), and amazing, addictive India. Prior to working for Geographic Expeditions, Kirk studied abroad in Costa Rica, worked as a script supervisor in Hollywood, and trudged through law school in San Francisco. After a brief stint as an attorney, he found his true calling in an area that has been one of his lifelong passions: travel.

Kirk has a B.F.A. in film studies from the University of Colorado, and a J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. He likes to spend time with his wife, Mindy, and their two sons. He also enjoys mountain biking, hiking, photography, gardening, and movies. Email him at kirk@geoex.com.

Mike Parker has been traveling since he was two years old, when his father strapped him into a baby-pack and toured California's backcountry on cross-country skis. The landscapes of his childhood stretched beyond the California backcountry to include the wilds of Alaska, the hills of Asturias, the ice-shelves of Antarctica, and beyond. Prior to joining Geographic Expeditions, Mike was in charge of a nationwide, promotional bus tour of colleges and universities that took him to most of the lower forty-eight states. He looks forward to helping you create your upcoming adventure. Mike can be reached by email at mike@geoex.com.

Geographic Expeditions

Geographic Expeditions is a professional travel management corporation, which provides a broad range of travel and location management services for individuals, travel agents and corporations. It also supplies an array of location and marketing support services and specializes in remote locations and complex logistics. The company has operations throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific.

Geographic Expeditions was organized in 1981 (as InnerAsia Expeditions) to develop and operate specialized travel programs in central Asia. It was the first American company to negotiate protocols with the Chinese government to operate tours into Tibet and western China. Nepal, India and Bhutan were added soon thereafter. It has pioneered travel in Tibet, Bhutan, Mongolia, Vietnam, Burma, Patagonia and remote sections of the former Soviet Union. Over the years, Geographic has expanded from its Central Asian roots to the rest of the world. Currently the company provides travel services for approximately 4,500 passengers a year.

Geographic has acted as tourism development consultants to numerous governments and non-governmental organizations. Another expanding and significant area of Geographic's services is location consultation and management for a grand variety of companies such as ABC Television, Boeing, Sotheby's, the Walt Disney Company, ESPN, the BBC, Travel and Leisure, the National Geographic Society, Fox Broadcasting, Harper Collins, and CBS Television to name a few. The company also arranges special interest trips for a variety of non-profit organizations such as the American Museum of Natural History, the Audubon Society, Stanford Alumni Association, the Tibet House, World Monuments Fund, the University of Chicago, Houston Museum of Science, Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, Outward Bound, the California Culinary Academy, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Nature Conservancy and many, many more.

Operating Standards

The staff of Geographic Expeditions is dedicated to preserving the character of the lands and cultures we visit. We invite you to call us for a description of the steps we are taking to promote environmental and cultural preservation.

Additional Questions?

Please call (800) 777-8183
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Pacific Time

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