

"A journey is like a marriage. The certain way to be wrong is to think you control it!"

John Steinbeck



Peru and the Galapagos were a hit

Eighteen of our guests have just returned from a wonderful three week tour of Peru, which was followed by an optional (Which most guests took) one week extension to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. While I like to think that all Elan Tours are very successful feed back from those guests who have participated on many of our previous tours is that this adventure was one of, if not, the best!

Peru has an enormous variety of scenery and many different climates: Nazca, with its mysterious lines and images, has received only three inches of rain in the last 25 years. Compare that with the lushness of Amazon rain forest! We visited the high Andes and Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world; and cities (Cuzco and Arequipa are very interesting places to explore on foot!) with Spanish colonial architecture and cathedrals containing gold, silver and jeweled treasures. Add to that the remains of civilizations which pre date the Spanish era by thousands of years. The Inca city of Machu Picchu is most famous and lives up to its reputation, but we visited many other sites.

The Peruvians we met were warm and friendly. The indigenous people we met; the Amazonian Indians and the Orus people who still live on man made floating reed islands on Lake Titicaca, are happy to share examples of their culture and way of life. Finally lets not forget the animals! We chose to charter our own deluxe nine cabin catamaran to visit the Galapagos archipelago and were glad, despite the expense, that we did. There is a larger cruise ship which cruises the islands with up to 100 passengers. On one occasion this ship arrived at an Island when we were just leaving. We had enjoyed a delightful time swimming with the sea lions, penguins and tropical fish, but at the site of 100 people coming ashore at once the sea lions and penguins, which are not intimidated by small groups, all scattered at the sight of such a large crowd..

While we expected the Galapagos to be a once in a lifetime experience, we were very pleasantly surprised by our stop at Paracas in Peru, we took a boat excursion out to the Ballista islands, a national reserve. Uninhabited by man the islands are home to hundreds of penguins, thousands of sea lions and millions of sea birds, really! The island scenery is also quite spectacular. The bird population has always been so great that in WW1 the German and British navies fought for control of the islands and the rich guano (bird droppings) deposits a great source of nitrates used to make high explosives. Today guano is still collected to make fertilizers

A final major surprise was Ecuador. The downtown core of the capital, Quito, has remained unchanged for 200 years, the countryside is dotted with volcanoes; mainly extinct but some show signs of activity and the equator monument and the phenomena which occur only when you stand directly on the equator are something that astounded me, but then physics was never my strong suit!

Are you interested in a tour to Peru?

Some people have already come forward who have heard about the wonderful time we had are asking if another tour is in the works. It had been my intention not to organize another trip until the economy and stock market revived. However, if there is interest I would more than happy to put an identical tour together. By far May is the best time to visit weather wise, perhaps we could plan for May 2011.

I have left details of our Peru/Galapagos tour on our website, www.elantravel.ca. Please let me know if you are interested.

Photos from our tour, more can be found at www.elantrave.ca



"The saying "Getting there is half the fun" became obsolete with the advent of commercial airlines"

Henry J. Tillman

Tour update:

Himalaya/Bhutan tour, Oct. 20 2009. \$7,980.00 20 days

We still have space available, although we have released the rooms and air seats which were unsold; we would have check that we could get could rebook a room and air seats if you wished to join us.

Antarctica and Patagonia, Feb. 13, 2010. \$10,505, Patagonia extension \$4,188.00 21 days including Patagonia

Space still available. Remember this tour takes place during the Vancouver Olympics.

Tanzania/Uganda (Gorilla) tour, Sept. 2010. \$9,165.00 23 days.

This tour is proving popular with twenty guests booked we only have two places left. We expect to be able to finalize and guarantee the price by October.

Russia river cruise and Baltic States, Sept. 2011. \$7,980.00 21 days

Again very popular we have already filled one departure with thirty two people registered. If you are interested it may not be too late. I have started a *wait list* and if there is enough support we will add a second departure.

North Africa tour (Morocco, Tunisia & Libya)

A client who has travelled on several Elan Tours took a tour of Libya and Tunisia a few years back (You know who you are!) and has recommended that I look into organizing a trip there. Morocco has also been mentioned as a possible future destination. So why not do all three?



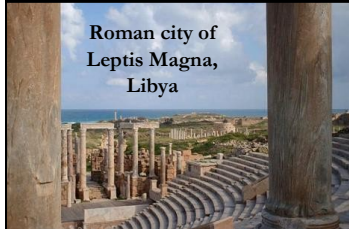
Morocco has very varied scenery; beaches, desert and the Atlas Mountains and each of these areas are inhabited by diverse ethnic groups with strong and interesting cultures. Tunisia has some beautiful rural towns



and was the centre of ancient Carthage. Tourism is relatively new to Libya and is a jewel waiting to be discovered. It has some of the largest Roman sites found

anywhere, which have been well preserved by the dry desert climate.

I am working on putting together a 22 day tour, with ten days spent touring Morocco and six days in Tunisia and also Libya. The tour would terminate in Tripoli (Libya) which is very close to Cairo for anyone wishing to extend their holiday and visit Egypt. The best time to visit would be October, when weather is slightly cooler at low altitude and not yet too cold in the mountains. If the economy and stock market improve sooner we may offer the tour in 2011, if not 2012. If this tour interests you please let me know.



Calling all single ladies!

A charming single lady has booked a spot on our Antarctic cruise tour departing Feb. 2010 and is looking for a cabin mate. If you are interested in visiting Antarctica and Patagonia but are scared off by the high single cabin supplement this may be your opportunity. Call us for details or visit our website www.elantravel.ca

We also have a single lady taking an Eastern European river cruise with us and is looking for a cabin mate. The cruise departs August 23 from Nuremberg and terminates in Bucharest on the Black Sea. A fascinating itinerary. The cost of the cruise is \$3,238.00 and includes 13 guided shore excursions and taxes. Airfare is extra. The cruise ship is a deluxe Viking line vessel.

Our policy is that if a single person, male or female, wishes to share and we have another single guest (Of the same sex) we give each person the others phone number, (With their permission, of course) so they can get to know each other. Depending on the destination, the single supplement saving can be quite significant.

Elan joins the Circle of Excellence.....again!

Of the 5,000 travel agencies operating in Canada, Air Canada selects the top producing 200 to work more closely with them in developing new products and markets. And of those two hundred the top fifty are appointed to the elite Circle of Excellence. For the second time Elan Travel has qualified to join this prestigious "club". What is particularly pleasing is that we achieved membership despite the economy in our home territory of Northwestern B.C. which has been on the critical list since 2002. Elan Travel is also the first and only travel agency from rural Canada to qualify.

While there are financial benefits of membership in the Circle of Excellence such as monetary bonuses based on sales, of perhaps more importance is the regular contact and input our agency group has with senior Air Canada executives, this process has already led to the introduction of more flexible fare structures and more passenger friendly services.....Yes I know we still have a lot of work to do! Of course we would not be a member were it not for the large number of loyal clients that we now have not only in B.C. but throughout Canada.

