

"The management has personally passed the water in your room"

Beijing hotel room sign



Tour program update

Now that Christmas is out of the way I thought I would update you on the status of our upcoming tours.

PERU/GALAPAGOS, May 15 2009, \$6,890.00. We will be spending 21 days in Peru visiting Lima, the Nazca Lines, Calca Canyon, Machu Picchu (Of course) and three days on the Amazon River. We are offering a one week extension to Ecuador including

M.V. Anahi, our deluxe Galapagos catamaran



a four day cruise of the Galapagos Islands. For this portion, we have chartered our own deluxe catamaran. This extension at \$3,554.00 is not inexpensive. We feel strongly that booking on a larger 150 passenger cruise ship is not the right way to experience these unique

islands and their very unique, fragile eco system. We have one cabin still available, and a few more places on the Peru portion.

CHINA/TIBET, Sept. 3 2009, \$5,950.00. Featuring Beijing, Mongolia where there will be an opportunity to ride a Mongolian pony and perhaps spend a night in a yurt; the Tengeli Desert where, continuing the animal theme, camel treks will be available. We will travel to Lhasa aboard the new railway, the World's highest, and spend a few days touring Tibet. Then on to Nanjing, an ancient city with interesting architecture, also infamous as the scene of Japanese atrocities during the war. Finally Shanghai, where there will be plenty of time to shop and also see the famous Chinese Acrobat show, and stroll along the Bund. We currently have eighteen guests booked and will cut off sales at twenty four.

HIMALAYA TOUR, Oct. 20 2009, \$7,980.00. Featuring Bhutan

and Sikkim. At present we have eight persons booked and will probably limit the size of the group to sixteen.

This will be our third tour to the region, however this time we will be travelling into the heartland of Bhutan where fewer tourists travel and where the Bhutanese culture has seen little or no outside influence. The U.N. rates the Bhutanese as the most content people on Earth. You only have to be there a short time to appreciate the warmth, friendliness and gentleness of the people. We will also visit Sikkim a former Buddhist kingdom which voted in a plebiscite to join India. Sikkim still retains its separate culture,

the scenery here is spectacular. Another wonderful stop will be in Dajreeling, popular during the Raj as a summer retreat for the British, the town still has some fine



Festival dancers, Bhutan. (We will be attending a festival)

Victorian architecture and offers fine views of Khangchendzonga, the third highest Himalayan peak. Tea plantations surround the town and an excursion on the 100 year old steam train service is always fun.

TANZANIA & UGANDA, GORILLA TOUR, 20 Sep. 2010 \$9,165.00. Well, you certainly like this tour. The first departure sold out immediately and we are now taking names for a second departure. As well as gorilla viewing, we will also visit the Kibale

(Continued overleaf)

Some travel tips..... before you go.

Before departing on a trip abroad, here are a few tips that can save you frustrations:

Credit cards: Phone your credit card company/ies and inform them of your travel dates and destinations, otherwise they may suspect your card has been stolen and decline the transaction. Also write down your credit card numbers and card company phone numbers and keep these separate from your wallet or purse, just in case of loss or theft.

Passport: Canadian passports have a very high black-market value; keep your passport safe at all times and never leave it in your hotel room. Keep a photo-copy and the phone number

and fax number of the Canadian consulate in country you are visiting or closest country. Faxing the copy to them will speed up the issuance of a replacement passport if the original is lost or stolen.

Insurance: Make sure you have out-of-country health insurance, perhaps through a pension/benefit plan or through your credit card. But read the fine print some plans have a high deductible or a low ceiling on any claim, you may wish to purchase additional insurance. As for loss or theft, make sure expensive items, such as jewelry, cameras etc. are covered under your household insurance. You may have to provide a list of such items and their value in advance.

Chimpanzee reserve, Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti, Murchison Falls and spend some R&R time on the tropical island of Zanzibar. We are limited to twenty four guests, as only this number are allowed into the gorilla reserve per day. At \$9,165.00 per person, this is one of our more expensive tours but the entry fees to Bwindi and Kibale reserves alone is \$900.00 per person; at least these funds go to protect the animals.

ANTARCTICA/PATAGONIA, February 13, 2010 \$10,825.00.

Our South American gateway will be the exciting city of Buenos Aires, after two days we move onto the world's most southerly city, Ushuaia to embark on the FRAM for our seven day cruise of Antarctica, with lots of opportunities to meet the local residents;

penguins, whales, elephant seals etc. We are also offering an optional ten day extension tour of Patagonia at a cost of \$3,875.00 per person .

For all the details on these tours visit our website elan-travel.ca or e mail me, g.clark@elan-travel.com and I will be happy to mail the brochures to you.

All Elan tours are fully inclusive! All meals, taxes and even tips are included

Our recent India/Nepal tour

At the request of a Mason's Lodge we organized a four week tour of India and Nepal, the tour proved popular and soon friends and contacts of the Mason's asked if they could join. We ended up with thirty six in the group. While travelling with such a large group presented some interesting challenges the tour was an enormous success. Usually an Elan tour is limited to eighteen and sometimes less; China being the exception where it is very comfortable to take groups in the mid twenties.

Our tour took in Rajasthan, Agra, Fatapur Sikri and Varenasi in India. Plus Amritsar, we discovered that few tour groups visit the Golden Temple and the arrival of such a large group of foreigners caused quite a stir, we were treated as VIP's and given a behind the scenes tour and presented with gifts. This picture even appeared in the Punjabi newspaper. When touring India we always find time for a rest stop in Orchha, a wonderful quite town, steeped in history, there are dozens of



abandoned temples and a palace dating from the 15th centre. The town is clean and like the Himalayas the shopkeepers are not in the least bit pushy. For some wonderful reason Orchha remains relatively undiscovered by tourists.

Nepal was wonderful, although there was nervousness when the Maoists won the election earlier in the year the country was very peaceful, if somewhat dysfunctional; electricity is now rationed to ten hours per day! We visited, Chitwan National Park, for animal viewing and Pakora for views of the Himalayas as well as Kathmandu, of course.

While in Chitwan we paid an early morning visit to the elephant breeding centre, on arrival there seemed to a bit of excitement, we soon learned that two hours earlier an elephant had given birth to twins, the first recorded time this has happened to an asian elephant. We were able to get very close to the mother and her babies, as you can see from the photo. A short while later villagers arrived en masse to witness the family which made headlines the next day in the Nepali newspapers.



A major accolade for Elan Travel

Air Canada just announced the list of agencies that qualify for membership in its elite Circle of Excellence, and Elan Travel is included. The Circle of Excellence is an exclusive group of 50 travel agencies. Elan is one of only five from B.C. The criteria is based on sales growth with Air Canada and marketing innovation

What is remarkable is that the economy in Northwestern B.C. has, for many years, been in a steep decline. Some years back, Elan Travel sought to offset the decline by developing new opportunities; such as developing our international tours, and developing programs to bring large numbers of tourists, particularly anglers to our region.

What is particularly pleasing to us is that Elan Travel is the first travel agency based in rural Canada to qualify for membership.

I am pleased that one of the rewards of membership is that my staff each qualify for a free Air Canada ticket...they deserve it. It also means that I have the opportunity to meet with Air Canada executives on a regular basis to discuss future business opportunities, (And hopefully get them to improve their service!)

Finally I would like to thank our many clients. Their support and loyalty made this achievement possible