

## AITO Inspiration – Life Begins at 40



The Association of Independent Tour Operators ([www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)) reached its big 4-0 this year. In celebration of this milestone, AITO has selected a list of trips which wanderlusters in their 40s and older would undoubtedly love to sample as part of their bucket list. Try out a range of exciting activities, from trekking the Druk Path in Bhutan to venturing off the tourist trail into Kyrgyzstan or exploring the Arctic frontiers in Svalbard.

### **NEW: Delicious Sicily – from £788 pp with Sunvil**

With its thriving viniculture and eclectic cuisine, Sicily should be high on any foodie traveller's wish list. This new multi-centre [Delicious Sicily](#) itinerary uncovers a culinary tradition that draws on dishes from the ancient Greeks, Arabs and Normans. Savour a stay at a family-run winery, and enjoy traditional Sicilian cooking classes, Marsala tasting and much more. From £788 pp (two sharing), including seven nights' B&B, return flights (Gatwick), two dinners and car hire. Call AITO\* member Sunvil (020 8758 4722, [www.sunvil.co.uk](http://www.sunvil.co.uk)).

### **NEW: Walk between Switzerland's iconic peaks – from £1,940 pp with Inntravel**

Challenge yourself with Inntravel's new [two-week self-guided route](#) between Switzerland's iconic peaks, from the Eiger to the Matterhorn, for arguably the best walking in the entire Alps. Explore high-mountain passes on true alpine trails, walk deep valleys via lakes, forested landscapes and classic mountain villages, and reach altitudes of up to 3,000 metres. Stay in comfortable hotels, or choose remote mountain guest houses for a unique experience along with the best routes. The trip costs from £1,940 pp (two sharing), including 14 nights' half board accommodation, three picnics, luggage transfers, route information, some transport between walks and airport transfers. Flights extra. Call AITO\* member Inntravel on 01653 617000 ([www.inntravel.co.uk](http://www.inntravel.co.uk)).

### **NEW: Explore Arctic frontiers in Svalbard – from £3,400 pp with Cloudberry Journeys**

Bathed in the midnight sun, Svalbard is a wild frontier perfect for adventurous travellers interested in new and exciting experiences. The new [Arctic Explorer package](#) is the ideal way to discover more of this remote and beautiful region, with bases in Longyearbyen's beautiful Basecamp Hotel and the remote Isfjord Radio - a wilderness hotel with a difference. Enjoy a glacier hike and boat trips around the Arctic Archipelago, complete with expeditions and education about the local bird and sea life. The trip costs from £3,400 pp (two sharing), including flights, two nights' B&B, two nights' full board, plus excursions. Call Cloudberry Journeys on 020 7199 6013 ([www.cloudberryjourneys.co.uk](http://www.cloudberryjourneys.co.uk)).

### **A Gastronomic tour of Sicily, Italy – from £2,945 pp with Peter Sommer Travels**

Food lovers with a taste for Italian culture and history will delight in this expert-led escorted tour of Eastern Sicily. Guests will be treated to tasty meals and cookery demonstrations at local restaurants to learn how to prepare regional specialities. Aromatic tours of herb & olive farms will inspire cooks and gardeners alike, while guided visits to Baroque towns & UNESCO World Heritage sites will not disappoint.

Led by [Lucia Iacono](#) or [Marcello Baglioni](#), and departing 24 September 2016, the seven-night tour costs from £2,945 pp (two sharing) including B&B, most lunches & three dinners, crew services, land excursions & airport transfers. Flights extra. Call AITO\* member Peter Sommer Travels on 01600 888 220 ([www.petersommer.com](http://www.petersommer.com)).

### **Learn to sea kayak in Scotland – from £695 pp with Wilderness Scotland**

Learn a new skill with the [Introduction to Sea Kayaking](#) course and experience some of the best sea kayaking in Scotland. Develop paddling techniques while taking in the stunning coastline on beautiful Upper Loch Torridon and the Applecross Peninsula. Enjoy lunch stops in sandy bays and keep an eye out for the seal colony at Kishorn Island, then relax with fantastic food and cosy accommodation in a private bunkhouse on the shores of Loch Torridon. From £695 pp, including four nights' B&B (two sharing), some meals, five days' kayak hire plus lessons and transfers. Travel extra. Departing 10, 17 and 24 September 2016, plus various dates in 2017. Call AITO\* member Wilderness Scotland on 01479 420020 ([www.wildernessscotland.com](http://www.wildernessscotland.com)).

### **Self-drive Chile: vineyards, lake district and Patagonia – from £4,680 pp with Journey Latin America**

For travellers who relish the freedom to explore independently, Chile's contrasting landscapes offer a rewarding self-drive experience. Sample some of Chile's finest wines in vineyards of the Colchagua Valley, home to several attractive villages. Discover beautiful sapphire lakes, overlooked by snow-capped volcanic cones in the lake district, and head south into deepest Patagonia for Torres del Paine, Chile's most famous national park, dominated by granite massifs of smooth rock towers, gem-coloured lakes and massive glaciers. The [18-day self-drive holiday](#) costs from £4,680 pp, including accommodation (two sharing), transfers, car hire, excursions and flights. Call AITO\* member Journey Latin America 020 8600 1881 ([journeylatinamerica.co.uk](http://journeylatinamerica.co.uk)).

### **Uncover Peru's Inca Heritage and explore Machu Picchu – from £999 pp with Llama Travel**

Take the [Machu Picchu Express](#) to experience one of the Wonders of the World. Begin in the Sacred Valley to enjoy the serenity of the area independently, or join an excursion to learn about the innovative ways of Inca agriculture. Take the train through the cloud forest to the town of Aguas Calientes, hop on a shuttle up to Machu Picchu for an inspiring guided tour around the ancient ruins, and wander the cobbled streets of Cusco, a significant settlement in the Inca Empire. Here you can admire colonial architecture and the ancient Inca sites dotted in and around the city. Departing from September 2016, the holiday costs from £999 pp (two sharing), including B&B hotel and flights. Call AITO\* member Llama Travel on 020 7263 3000 ([www.llamatravel.com](http://www.llamatravel.com)).

### **Finnmark husky expedition and the Northern Lights – from £1,860 pp with Simply Sweden**

Book now for an incredible [husky expedition](#) across the Finnmark Mountain Plateau. Drive your own team of huskies under the remarkable famous blue Arctic light cast by the winter sun. Marvel at the ribbons of green, blue and purple hues of the Northern Lights dancing across the sky and view spectacular mountain scenery from your authentic mountain cabin. An exciting holiday for those looking for a back-to-

basics wilderness experience and who love the outdoor way of life. The trip costs from £1,860 pp (no single supplement) including flights, transfers, full board accommodation and three days of guided husky mushing. Departure dates on 22 and 27 January 2017. Call AITO\* member Simply Sweden on 01427 700115 ([www.simplysweden.co.uk](http://www.simplysweden.co.uk)).

### **Trekking The Druk Path, Bhutan – from £2,295 pp with KE Adventure Travel**

Discover pristine landscapes and taste the unique and fascinating culture of Bhutan on the [Druk Path, Bhutan holiday](#), the perfect short or introductory trekking experience. Set in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan - The Land of the Thunder Dragon - walk the ancient route between Paro and Thimpu, plus visit all Bhutan's premier cultural sites. Enjoy an escorted five-day trek, with stunning views of the Himalaya and a visit to the famous Tiger's Nest Monastery. From £2,295 pp (£2,995 pp with flights), including accommodation (two sharing), meals, Bhutan visa fees, excursions and all land transport, plus flights from Kathmandu to Paro. Departures are 10 October 2016, 7 April, 29 September, 9 October and 23 October 2017. Call AITO\* member [KE Adventure Travel](#) on 017687 73966 ([www.keadventure.com](http://www.keadventure.com)).

### **Calgary Stampede, Rocky Mountaineer Train plus Vancouver – from £3,998 pp with Prestige Holidays**

This independent holiday kicks off in Calgary, where you will experience the world-famous stampede, exciting rodeo events and chuck wagon races. Next, pick up your hire car and explore mountainous Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper over the course of seven days before boarding the Rocky Mountaineer train (SilverLeaf Service). Enjoy the two-day rail journey, then discover the incredible city of Vancouver at leisure. Departing from 6 July 2017, [the trip](#) costs from £3,998 pp (two sharing), including accommodation, event tickets, car hire, the Rocky Mountaineer (SilverLeaf Service) and return flights. For full details call AITO\* member Prestige Holidays on 01502 567222 ([Canada@prestigeholidays.co.uk](mailto:Canada@prestigeholidays.co.uk)).

### **Kyrgyzstan Overland: 15-day ultimate expedition – from £565 pp with Oasis Overland**

Sign up for an adventure with this 15-day [Ultimate Expedition](#) from Bishkek, venturing off the tourist trail into Kyrgyzstan. Take in the stunning scenery in one of the few remaining untouched wildernesses on earth - swim in the mighty Lake IssyKul, hike to the edge of the glaciers and stay in a Yurt by the banks of Lake Song Kol. Finally, travel towards the border of China and visit an ancient Silk Road Caravanserai, Tash Rabat. Enjoy camping in stunning scenery and some simple hotel stays. Departing 25 July 2017, the trip costs from £565 pp (plus US \$395 local payment), including accommodation (two sharing), all excursions and equipment and some meals. Flights extra. Call AITO\* member Oasis Overland on 01963 530 113 ([www.oasisoverland.co.uk](http://www.oasisoverland.co.uk)).

### **Crossing the Zanskar, an overland journey from Delhi to Ladakh – from £2,790 pp with Pettitts**

Join one of the greatest journeys of the subcontinent, [Crossing the Zanskar from Delhi to Ladakh](#), centred on the spectacular Manali to Leh road - one of the highest routes in the world and only open for travel between July and September 2017. Enjoy three nights in the charming British hill station of Shimla, travel to Manali, and through the Kullu and Chamba valleys to the high Himalayan plateau of Ladakh -

one of India's true frontiers. Spend five nights in this predominantly Buddhist region of ancient monastic centres and remote mountain villages. The trip costs from £2,790 pp (two sharing), including B&B, train travel, private car transfer, an escorted tour, some meals and return flights. Call AITO\* member Pettitts on 01892 515524 ([www.pettitts.co.uk](http://www.pettitts.co.uk)).

### **Experience India's hill railways – from £4,645 pp with Ffestiniog Travel**

Whether inspired by Channel 4's popular *Indian Summers* series or simply wanting to see the former British hill stations for yourself, this 21-day escorted tour is a real treat. Encompassing journeys on magnificent railways which once served these summer retreats - the Kalka Shimla Railway, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and the Nilgiri Rack Railway - you'll also visit the Sikh holy city of Amritsar, enjoy sightseeing in Delhi, travel to Agra's iconic temple to love, the Taj Mahal, and much more. Departing 19 February 2017, [Indian Hill Railways](http://www.ffestiniogtravel.com) costs from £4,645 pp (two sharing) including flights (London), B&B, 16 lunches, 12 dinners, all rail journeys, transfers, excursions and itinerary-featured admission fees, plus the services of a tour leader. Call AITO\* member Ffestiniog Travel on 01766 772030 ([www.ffestiniogtravel.com](http://www.ffestiniogtravel.com)).

### **Annapurna panorama tour of Nepal – from £1,279 pp with On The Go Tours**

Explorers on this trip will experience a wonderfully varied and easy-paced trek through the stunning Annapurna region, lodging in quaint mountain villages, with a range of unique experiences. Track tigers in Nepal's Chitwan National Park, relax by picturesque Lake Phewa and sightsee in fascinating Kathmandu. Enjoy a jeep safari, rickshaw rides, pottery making and more. The 13-day [Annapurna Panorama tour](http://www.onthegotours.com) costs from £1,279 pp, including seven nights in hotels (two sharing), five nights in tea houses, 12 breakfasts, eight lunches and dinners, escorted tours and excursions, trekking permits, flights and transfers. Call AITO\* member On The Go Tours on 020 7371 1113 ([www.onthegotours.com](http://www.onthegotours.com)).

**Ends – 18 AUGUST 2016**

### **Note to Editors:**

**AITO (established in 1976, i.e. 40 years ago in 2016) is an alliance of over 120 specialist holiday companies, all of which offer full financial protection to their clients and all of which are proud of their expertise and knowledge, the quality of service offered and the emphasis which they place on Sustainable Tourism. AITO members together offer holidays and travel arrangements around the globe, with a huge array of niche holiday ideas that simply can't be found elsewhere. Visit [www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com) for a full list of members and the destinations which they serve.**