



Discover Europe Ltd.
95 Adams St.
Keene, NH 03431

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In This Issue . . .



Thank you Greece . . .

Still Available for Summer:

Discovering East Anglia, July 10 – 18
Experience life in a country house hotel with Gavin Miller in his home region. \$\$\$

Skye & the Highlands, Jul 23 – Aug 2
Edinburgh to Inverness, across to Skye and back down the west coast to Stirling. \$\$\$

Nourishing the Soul, August 3 – 12
Combining food and opera in Italy's Marche region. Brilliant!

Inspirational Wales, August 7 – 16
Writers and poets who have been inspired by Wales with professor Denise Walen.

The Reykjavik Marathon, Aug 20 – 24
Cheer on runners from Tufts University.

Stately Homes, Part II, Aug 31 – Sept 9
We still visit Highclere Castle, but we focus on houses in the south of England. \$\$\$

Late Summer Gardens, Sept 4 – 14
Hosted by noted horticulturalist, Marian St Clair, this tour visits Prince Charles' estate at Highgrove, and many other noted gardens.

Treasure Houses of N England, Sept 10 – 19
Visiting stately homes and beautiful landscapes from Yorkshire to the Lake District. \$\$\$

Group Travel for Individuals

At **Discover Europe** we strive to create rich travel experiences with a difference. Each unique tour is limited to 5 – 15 people and guided by an expert with a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm. But don't just take our word for it; here's a sample of what some recent travelers had to say about their tours and/or tour guides:

I am still basking in the after-glow of this incredible tour. Gavin Miller's knowledge of the region, his gracious attention to the group's needs and interests, and the varied itinerary and settings made for a unique and memorable experience. I can't wait for my next tour with Discover Europe!

Andrea Rockower, **Linger in the Languedoc**

I was very pleased with my first trip with Discover Europe. I liked what I saw as careful, detailed planning & pleasant conversations over the phone.

Richard Woods, **Stately Homes, Part II**

One never knows what will turn up, an adventure every time. (This was their 13th trip with us!)

Michael & Arline Rochkind, **The Glory of Greece**

Discover Europe offers a wide selection of well-crafted itineraries, but we will also customize a trip to your specifications. Whether it's a family reunion, a business trip, a school vacation, or simply a celebration, we can help you plan the ultimate escape to Europe.

For more information, contact **Discover Europe** toll-free at 866-563-7077; contact us via e-mail at discovereurope@earthlink.net; or visit our web site at www.discovereuropeltd.com.



The Amalfi Coast



SPRING 2015
Volume XI Number 1

Into the HEART of EUROPE

THE NEWSLETTER OF DISCOVER EUROPE LTD.



POSTCARD FROM THE EUROZONE

Over the centuries - nay, millennia! - we have had much to thank the Greeks for: philosophy, democracy, astronomy, geometry - the list is practically endless, but I am particularly grateful for the latest gift that they have bequeathed to us. Almost single-handedly they have brought the value of the Euro tumbling down!

This is, of course, a very unfair assessment and I make the point with my tongue firmly in my cheek. There are many factors that affect foreign exchange rates and many other Eurozone countries whose economies are contributing to the decline of the Euro. But so far only Greece is threatening to leave the "single currency," and this is causing a great deal of nervousness in the markets. And nerves, as opposed to facts, are the main driving force behind most financial markets.



Breakfast is included

Whatever the cause or causes may be, we have seen the Euro sink to its lowest level against the dollar in the last 12 years - and it has only been around for 14 years! So now is a great time to travel to Europe - your dollar goes much further than it used to over there. For example that nice "prix fixe" lunch you had last year for 30 Euros was the equivalent of \$43. This year it would only be \$33. It may not make the difference between whether you can afford to go or not, but it does add up once you get there.

So, I hear you ask, "why hasn't Discover Europe immediately slashed the price of all its tours?" Well the good news is that we have - on some of them. And not just on tours within the Eurozone. The strong dollar has also gained in value against the British pound, not to the same extent as against the Euro, but still significant enough for us to offer savings on some of our UK trips as well for the fall.

Why not all our trips? It gets a little complicated but in the interests of complete transparency, I will try and explain. Sometimes I feel as though this whole company is a front for a currency speculation operation. Look at it this way - all the money we take in is in Dollars and the vast majority of the money we pay out is in Euros or Pounds. The exchange rate that we get makes a huge difference to the profitability of our programs - and we have to set our tour prices almost a year in advance. So basically we are trying to guess what the exchange rate is going to be a year into the future. As I said, currency speculation.

However, currency speculation is NOT our business, so rather than gamble, we try to take a much more conservative approach and we purchase forward contracts in the foreign currencies that we use. These allow us to lock in an exchange rate well in advance and protect us against the violent swings of the markets. This system has allowed us to never have to invoke the clause in our terms and conditions that says we can charge you a foreign currency "surcharge," quite a common practice amongst other tour operators.



Shop for Bargains

Well, spring has finally made it to our neck of the woods - it is May Day tomorrow, after all, so it's about time. Another unforeseen consequence of our recent move to Keene from the wilds of Dublin, NH, is that the flowers are coming a good 2 or 3 weeks earlier here than they did when we were half way up Mount Monadnock. And, after this brutal winter, they are a very welcome sight!

There have been big changes here in the office, as those calling in recently will have found out. Our Charlotte has moved on - her husband teaches at the local university and is on sabbatical for a year, so they are travelling - and we are very happy indeed to welcome 2 new faces. Tiffany is bringing her marketing and computer skills to bear and Joanna is primarily booking flights and helping with the operational details of running the tours. But we are a small office and everybody here understands that our most important job is customer service.

I'm afraid that once again I have to apologise for the length of time between newsletters - there just don't seem to be enough hours in the day. Which reminds me, we have 8 tours leaving in the month of May (4 to the UK, 2 to Italy, 1 to France and 1 to Greece), so I'd better get to work!

Michael Induni, President

Discover Europe Ltd.
95 Adams St, Keene, NH 03431, USA
Toll free: (866) 563-7077
Tel: (603) 563-7077
email: discovereurope@earthlink.net

Discover Europe (UK)
158 Kentish Town Rd, London, UK
Tel: (020) 7240-3979
Fax: (020) 7379-6878



Madeira - the Floating Garden

But of course, it doesn't always work to our advantage. The present exchange rates for the Pound and the Euro are much better than the forward contracts we purchased for this spring! When you protect yourself against an increase you also lose the ability to take advantage of a downturn, but that was only for our spring trips - and even then you, the traveller, will still enjoy the benefits of lower relative prices when you are actually in those countries buying things.

For our fall trips, however, it is a different story. For most of these the prices were set nearly a year ago before the Euro took the plunge, but the forward currency contracts to cover them were taken out afterwards. So this means we have some significant savings to pass on to you. Thanks to the Greeks!

We have reduced the cost of selected UK trips by \$200 per person and some of our Eurozone tours by \$300 per person. Look for the \$\$\$ symbol in the list of tours in this newsletter for those that are affected. Of course, if you have already signed up for one of these tours, then you will see the price reduction on your final bill.

Remember, the grass may not be greener on the other side of the hill - but you'll never really know unless you go there and take a look at it for yourself. Happy travels!

Michael

A New Puzzle: In honour of the birth yesterday of a daughter to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Early in the 20th century, an American lady who (against her will) was married into the English aristocracy, famously said that she had fulfilled her matrimonial obligations because she had produced "an heir and a spare."

Who was she and to whom was she so miserably married?

The first solution, drawn at random from all the correct entries submitted, will receive a \$200 discount off any trip listed in red in the next newsletter.

News & Notes

East Anglia. If you think of the shape of England and Wales as a head, with the chin being the southwest Cornish coast, then East Anglia would be a bump on the back of the head. Alternatively, if you think of the shape of the whole island (including Scotland) in the more traditional sense of an old lady, then it would be her derriere. Either way it is situated in a place that is surprisingly free of tourism and offers a wealth of natural beauty and fascinating history, known for its landscape of fertile fenland, marshland, and seascapes. Its deep historical roots originate from the Germanic tribes who came marauding along the North Sea coast - the Angles, who gave the region its current name, the Saxons, who, together with the Angles, gave us Anglo-Saxon, the basis for our English language, and, later, the Vikings. East Anglia is made up of the counties of Suffolk (the South Folk), Norfolk (the North Folk) and Essex (home of the East Saxons).

One of our most popular and experienced tour guides, Gavin Miller, comes from this part of the country - his parents still live in the town of Sheringham. Gavin, who has been described by our clients as "kind, completely devoted to his touring group, knowledgeable, steady, full of wonderful surprises" will lead a small group here this July (spaces still available!). He has designed this itinerary to showcase the



Sandringham

And a Solution: In the last issue we asked what I was buying when I ventured into the hardware store recently.

Pointing to a shelf, I said to the clerk "how much are those?" "\$4.50 each," came the reply. "So how much for ten?" "\$9.00." "What if I bought a hundred?" "That would be \$13.50."

The answer is . . . house numbers.

The first correct solution to be drawn at random was from Isabella Cooper of Breckenridge, CO and she gets to deduct \$200 from the cost of any tour listed in red in this newsletter.

hidden treasures of the region where he grew up.

So if you are up for an adventure with Gavin that promises to peak your curiosity, fulfill your need to see, feel and savor the beauty and history of a region in England that has so much to explore, join us this July 10-18 and Discover East Anglia!

Cell Phones. We often get asked about using your cell phone when in Europe. The bottom line is that some US Cell phones just do not work in Europe. There are two main network systems used for cell phone service in the US. They are called GSM and CDMA and they are not compatible with each other. Europe is on the GSM system, as are certain US carriers like AT&T and T-Mobile. Sprint and US Cellular use the CDMA system which will not work in Europe.

This is not such a bad thing because if your American cell phone works in Europe it is very easy to very quickly rack up huge bills in roaming charges, especially with data usage.

So how do use a cell phone affordably in Europe?

1. The least expensive way is to purchase a SIM card with a local phone number and prepaid minutes when you are overseas, put it in your phone and start calling. However, in order to do this your phone has to be "unlocked" (you have to be able to switch SIM cards and carriers at will) and most phones purchased through a particular carrier do not let you do this. This also has the disadvantage that you will have a different phone number, so whereas you will be able to make calls easily, people won't be able to call you unless you give them the number. It will also still be expensive for you to use a European phone to call back to the USA.

2. If your phone is unlocked you can purchase your European SIM card in advance and have it sent to you in the States. This way you would be able to leave the number with people who need it before you go. One place to find these is at www.simsmartprepaid.com though



The Cathedral, Palma, Mallorca

there are plenty of others and, as we have not used this service, we cannot endorse any one particular company.

3. Another option (and the one that I use with my iPhone) is to only use the device where there is a good wifi signal - and this is very easy to find pretty much everywhere in Europe these days. This immediately removes the worry of data roaming charges. Then, what you need is a VOIP (voice over internet protocol) app of some kind for your phone (personally I use Vonage, but Skype works well and there are various others). This allows you to make phone calls over your internet

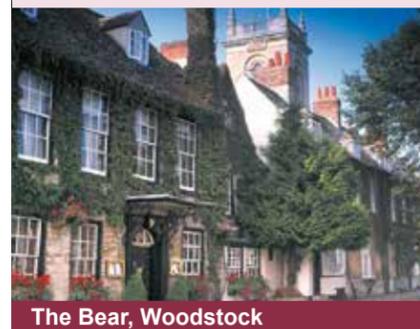
connection thus completely avoiding the cellular networks and their associated roaming charges.

A Web Site that you might find interesting. www.europe-berlin-guide.com. Two of our wonderful tour guides, Sara Cereda and Matthias Kort have put this site together and I love what they've done. Many of you have had the good fortune to have travelled with either one or the other of these two extraordinary individuals in Italy, Germany or Eastern Europe, but Berlin is their current home and I am told (even by other Discover Europe guides) that what they do not know about Berlin is not worth knowing!

OUR FAVORITE HOTELS

The Bear Woodstock, UK

Originally a 13th-century coaching inn, this is now a fabulous 4 star hotel and a part of the Macdonald hotel group's "signature" collection. Located in the picturesque village of Woodstock, next door to Blenheim Palace and a short distance from the center of Oxford. I'll be spending 6 nights here this month on our *Stately Homes* tour.



The Bear, Woodstock

Itineraries for 2015/2016

Please note that there are two types of tour shown here. If the tour name is in **Red**, then it is a regular Discover Europe tour with between 5 and 15 participants.

If the tour name is in **Blue**, then it means that the tour is being sponsored by an organization. These tours may well also be available, but as the circumstances vary from trip to trip, please call us first.

England's West Country, Sept 10 - 19 London to Land's End by train and then winding our way back by road. \$\$\$

Treasures of Cathar Country, Sept 17 - 26 Stays at the Chateau de Camon and the Relais des 3 Mas in Collioure highlight this trip to the Midi. \$\$\$

Important Houses of Norfolk, Sept 20 - 28 An in-depth exploration of the stately homes of East Anglia with Nicholas Merchant. \$\$\$

Treasures of Northern Italy, Sept 20 - Oct 3 The Italian Lakes to Venice and the Cinque Terre with the Rev. John Rogers.

Burns' Country, Sept 25 - Oct 4 \$\$\$ Glasgow to Robbie Burns' country, the borders and the Wigtown Book Festival.

Sicily: Island Crossroads, Sept 29 - Oct 9 This ancient island has been home to the many civilizations of the Mediterranean. With an optional extension to the Aeolian Islands.



Lingering in the Languedoc

Linger in the Languedoc, Oct 2 - 10 \$\$\$ An extended stay at the Abbaye Chateau de Camon with day trips exploring the region from Carcassonne to the Pyrenees.

Kent: Garden of England, Oct 8 - 17 \$\$\$ Canterbury, Dover, Gardens, Dickens, Kings and Castles, History and Hops.

Autumn in Tuscany, Oct 16 - 24 \$\$\$ From our base in Montecatini Terme, we take trips into the Tuscan countryside.

The Glory of Greece, Oct 22 - 31 \$\$\$ Athens, Corinth, Mycenae and Delphi - the highlights of mainland Greece.

A Mystery Tour?, Nov 8 - 16 \$\$\$ A celebration of the great English Mystery writers & a day trip on the Orient Express complete with a murder mystery lunch.



Florence at Christmas

Thanksgiving in Mallorca, Nov 20 - 28 A week in paradise with Vassar professors Barbara Page and Judith Dollenmayer - and no cooking and cleaning!

Tuscan Christmas Markets, Dec 3 - 11 Italians take their Christmas preparations seriously - their Christmas Markets are like German ones, but with better food!

Christmas in Scotland, Dec 21 - 29 Stays in Glasgow and Edinburgh, then Christmas in a Scottish castle.

2016

Madeira, My Dear? Jan 29 - Feb 07 The average daytime temperature in Madeira in February is 70 F! Find out why this incredible island is called Portugal's Floating Garden.

The Northern Lights, Various dates We are running at least 8 sponsored, long-weekend trips to Iceland in February and March - I'm sure we have room for you.

Sicily: Island Crossroads, Mar 18 - 26 This ancient island has been home to the many civilizations of the Mediterranean. Now with an optional extension to Malta.

Barcelona & Mallorca, April 7 - 15 The vibrant city of Barcelona and an island paradise - and then stay on:

Spanish Panorama, April 14 - 23 From Madrid to Andalusia with visits to Toledo, Cordoba, Granada and Seville.

The Dalmatian Coast, Apr 21 - May 1 From Dubrovnik, up the coast of Croatia to Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia.

Wales & Welsh Borders, Apr 28 - May 7 A circular tour of Wales - from Snowdonia in the north to Cardiff and St Davids.

A Greek Easter, April 29 - May 8 Greek Orthodox Easter in the village of Tolo and then visits to Delphi and Athens.

Under the Tuscan Sun, Apr 29 - May 6 From our base in Montecatini Terme, we take trips into the Tuscan countryside, Florence and the Cinque Terre.

For detailed itineraries, contact **Discover Europe** toll-free at 866-563-7077; e-mail at discovereurope@earthlink.net; or our web site at www.discovereuropeltd.com.