



## May 2021 Newsletter



CREATE INSPIRING JOURNEYS

In the last newsletter I expressed cautious optimism that our lives would soon return to normal, and we'll experience the pleasure and the excitement of travel. With understandable caution, restrictions are slowly, but surely being relaxed here in the UK, in Europe, and in the USA as the vaccine proves to be effective. So we have good reason to be optimistic that science will overcome the pandemic, and the global vaccination programme will allow us, once again, to enjoy inspiring journeys.

In this newsletter we'll continue a journey with our travel partners through the countries of the Mediterranean, broadening our horizon to Turkey in the east and Portugal in the west.

### Danielle Matijaca - Travelive, Turkey.

[travelive video](#)

There are a few places in the world that leave you speechless, and the Cappadocia region in Turkey is one of them. Cappadocia or "Kapadokya" which, in Turkish, means "land of beautiful horses" is one of those enchanting places that visitors love because of its mystical characteristics. Embrace its lunar landscape that has remained virtually intact for millions of years, out-of-this-world fairy chimneys, and the stunning cave hotels with panoramic views. So what to do and see while in Cappadocia?

For the very best views and photo opportunities head to Esentepe or Pigeon Valley Viewpoint, while those that like to explore and trek will absolutely love walking the Ihlara, Pigeon, and Red Valleys.



The number one activity in Cappadocia, without a doubt, is hot air ballooning. Ascending high above the valleys, just as the sun rises, provides an indescribable birds-eye-view of this unique landscape. After the exciting balloon ride refresh with a delectable Turkish-style breakfast and a glass of champagne to toast this unforgettable morning.

Just as exciting as seeing Cappadocia from the sky, is exploring its underground world of cave churches and cities. Hundreds of ancient underground cities, dating back to Hittite times, have been discovered in the area, some going as deep as eight stories below ground, the biggest and most famous one being Derinkuyu which, at one point in history, housed 20,000 people. Don't miss the opportunity to stay in a cave hotel built into the natural scenery!

### John Fair - CroisiEurope.

[croisieurope video](#)

Home to flocks of pink flamingos and herds of white horses, the Camargue is a wildly beautiful natural landscape. This low-lying area, created around the Rhone river delta, comprises large brine lagoons or *étangs* cut off from the Mediterranean by sandbars, and encircled by reed-covered marshes.

There is no better way to experience this ancient tranquil wilderness than on board the MS Anne-Marie, cruising sedately along the Canal du Rhône à Sète. Our luxury barge was specially designed to provide refined comfort for twenty-four guests, furnished in contemporary style with a personal touch.

Relax in a lounge chair on the sun deck while watching the world drift by. Take a bike and cycle along the paths beside the canal. Savour local wines and fresh produce in the bar and restaurant. And on warm summer evenings, enjoy a barbecue on deck and a dip in the jacuzzi!



The Anne-Marie covers the canal's 98 km over seven leisurely days, so there's plenty of time for shore excursions. Discover the splendid seaside town of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer with its fortified church and the medieval town of Aigues-Mortes which is entirely surrounded by a robust defensive wall. Sail on through Provence to Sète on the edge of the beautiful Étang De Thau, where we'll meet the shellfish farmers and fishermen and sample their wares.

Cruising the canals and rivers of France is a retreat from the hustle and bustle of modern life. A pleasant way to discover our varied landscapes and encounter the communities living alongside our waterways.

**Quiz: What are the five largest islands of the Mediterranean Sea?**

### Sarah Falconer - La Fiermontina.

[la fiermontina video](#)

Puglia, the heel of Italy, is the perfect treasure trove of ancient olive trees, pristine coastlines, whitewashed hill towns, magnificent architecture, and genuine hospitality.

This lesser-known corner of Italy is a delight to explore and the food of Puglia is amongst the best in the country, simple yet superb.

Sample the “ear-like” orecchiette pasta shells, pressed into shape by the renowned nonnas (grannies) sitting outside their doors in the backstreets of Bari, the regional capital. Try the most delectable grilled meats from the butchers in the picturesque village of Cisternino, where narrow streets and an elegant central piazza open out onto views over rolling hills and drystone walls. Enjoy fresh seafood straight off the boats at the fishing port of Trani, unloaded before the Cattedrale di San Nicola Pellegrino, a fabulous example of Romanesque architecture whose creamy white limestone walls contrast with the deep blue of the Adriatic Sea.

My favourite city is Lecce, known as the ‘Florence of the South’. Nearly all its more than 40 churches were built in the 17th century, in the baroque style, which makes the city a carnival of stone that inspires awe in all who visit.



The city has a confident and vibrant feel, which stems from the fact that this is a university town, buzzing with young students. Like me, you are sure to fall in love with Lecce, with the fascinating history, stunning Roman amphitheatre and sensational baroque architecture, sitting alongside shady courtyards, secret gardens and delightful restaurants.

### Luís de Sousa - Mr Travel

[travel portugal video](#)

UK and Portugal’s alliance goes back to the fourteenth century, making it the oldest in the world. Many of you have probably visited once or twice and enjoyed the weather and beaches of our beautiful country. But what about really immersing and discovering such a friendly place? Portugal especially in the remote and unpopulated areas can be a welcome surprise!

Far away from the Algarve, the northern region is crossed by the Douro, which enters Portugal between the ravines and mountains of the interior to flow down to the Atlantic at Oporto.



On terraces along this valley are grown the grapes for the famous port wine, which is aged at the lodges around the town of Vila Nova de Gaia. But let us take you upriver to the undiscovered parts of the Douro, walking the mountain trails where you will be mesmerized with the scenic views and intrigued by traditions like cheese making and harvesting.

The central region is where you will learn the history of Portugal, while being captivated by our World Heritage Sites such as the beautiful monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha, the Convent of Christ in Tomar, and Coimbra University.

But other features of this region are well worth discovering. To the east, the historic fortress villages, strategically aligned along the border and perched on the top of mountains, can be spotted from afar by the tall towers of their medieval castles. And enjoy the picturesque Schist villages, so called because the local stone used to pave their narrow winding streets and construct their houses mingles seamlessly into the colours of the natural landscape. Come discover the real Portugal.

### Eva Saringala - Eclectic Greece.

[eclectic greece video](#)

The Minoan civilization flourished on the island of Crete in the Bronze Age from 2000 BC until 1500 BC. Just outside Heraklion, the capital of modern Crete, lies the Palace of Knossos. This large archaeological site includes a labyrinth-like palace complex, with vivid frescoes depicting scenes such as bull-leaping and processions, and a museum with fine gold jewellery, elegant stone vases, and pottery with vibrant decorations of marine life.

Near this site, located in an extraordinary landscape of unique wild beauty, we can introduce you to a lifestyle that has changed little since that Minoan age, when we visit a shepherd on his working farm.

We'll start at the paddock, where you will can milk the goats with the shepherd and participate in traditional cheese making. Have you ever tried mizithra, the typical fresh cheese of Crete made with milk and whey? It's delicious when paired with a fresh salad and accompanied by a glass of the shepherd's homemade raki, the Cretan version of ouzo.

We'll introduce you to Cretan traditional music while you watch the sun turning red in the sky as it goes down. Enjoy a plate of dakos, a popular snack of tomato, fresh cheese, herbs and olive oil placed on top of a paximadi rusk.

Dinner is a traditional menu of superb Cretan tastes including sarikopitakia, sheep's cheese-filled pastries fried in olive oil and served warm with a sprinkle of honey on top. Enjoy a selection of local wines. Your palate will be pleased. Take your time, savour the tastes, sip the wine, and let the music escort you into an enchanted environment under the stars.



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