

Double S Travel

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Double S Travel Worldchoice - Celebrating Twenty Four Years of service to the residents and businesses in the South Bedfordshire area 1985 - 2009

Factsheet for 31 March 2009

Stop Press

From 2009, the UK Government will require Advanced Passenger Information for all passengers travelling internationally into and out of the UK. This is being rolled out over the coming year. It is compulsory to give the following information to the airline/ferry operator prior to travel. Full given names, Surname, Gender, Nationality, Date of birth, Travel document number e.g. passport number, Travel document expiry date, Travel document country of issue.

Double S Travel is through to the finals of the Travel Agent Achievement Awards 2009! Results will be known on 23rd April 2009 at a black tie do at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London!

Today's Exchange Rates

Euro. Our tourist sell rate today:	£1 = 1.03911	worse than last week
US Dollar. Our tourist sell rate today:	£1 = 1.37471	better than last week

Five places to go before you're fifty.

Venice

Venice is a living museum. It's rich blend of Byzantine, Renaissance and Gothic architecture framing a labyrinth of canals and waterways, narrow lanes and quiet corners. Greater Venice consists of 118 flat islands within a large protective lagoon connected to the mainland by a 3 mile long bus and road causeway.

Just 2½ miles E-W and 1¾ miles N-S.

The most popular sights are clustered around St. Mark's square. These include St. Mark's basilica, the Doges Palace, the Bridge of Sighs, the Peggy Guggenheim of modern art.

Motorised traffic is not allowed apart from the water-busses. Venice Lido (the beach) is 2 miles from Venice by waterbus and 5 miles from Marco Polo (VCE) airport.

February is carnival time and early September is Regatta time.

How to get there: By cruise ship, by VSOE, by air.

Example: Trust-Trips. Flying Gatwick to Venice, 1st June, 3 nights, 3 star hotel £233.27. Correct as at 13:43 30Mar09.

Taj Mahal

India's most visited tourist destination and home of one of the world's most famous monuments, the Taj Mahal.

Agra and the area around it is bedecked with impressive Mughal buildings, such as the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, all of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Agra was capital for the Mughal Emperors between 1526 and 1658 and visitors are able to take a close look at the palaces and monuments that they built. Many visitors travel to this destination on a one or two day trip from Delhi whilst others stop on their way to touring Rajasthan. To do the destination justice it needs two or three days and for many a single visit to the Taj Mahal is not enough.

The palaces and monuments of Agra do not fail to impress. Even those who have no interest in the Mughal Empire are impressed by the sightseeing opportunities. Most monuments, apart from Fatehpur Sikri are on fairly flat terrain and accessible to those with walking difficulties.

Whilst not a destination aimed at children it is definitely a place that will be remembered and provide food for thought.

Example: Bales. 7 night India Experience tour from £1245.

Petra

Petra is considered the most famous and gorgeous site in Jordan located about 262 km south of Amman and 133 km north of Aqaba. It is the legacy of the Nabataeans, an industrious Arab people who settled in southern Jordan more than 2000 years ago.

Admired then for its refined culture, massive architecture and ingenious complex of dams and water channels, Petra was built in around 300BC, was lived in for 400 years. Then it was re-discovered in 1812 by a Swiss explorer and is now a UNESCO world heritage site and one of the new 7 Wonders of the World that enchants visitors from all corners of the globe.

The approach through a one kilometre long, cool, and gloom chasm - a long narrow gorge whose steeply rising sides all but obliterate the sun, provides a dramatic contrast with the magic to come.

Suddenly the gorge opens into a natural square dominated by Petra's most famous monument, The Treasury (El-Khazneh), whose intricately carved facade glows in the dazzling sun.

Examples:

Bales. Petra, 5 nights from £799.

Bales. Combine Petra and the Taj Mahal, 11 nights from £1895.

Machu Picchu

Once the capital of the Inca Empire and today the gateway to Machu Picchu, Cuzco is arguably Latin America's archaeological and colonial jewel with stone streets, Inca walls and red-roofed buildings. The fabled 'lost-city' of Machu Picchu retains its mystery, allure and spectacular beauty. The Inca ruins were re-discovered in 1911 and raised scores of questions as to what happened – many of which remain unanswered to this day.

Example: Kuoni. Peruvian Highlights. 14 nights, £3149.

Las Vegas

Originally a mid-19th-century oasis for westbound wagon trains, Las Vegas really developed when the railroad - in 1905, and the Hoover Dam - in the 1930s, were built.

It is now the gaming and entertainments capital of the world. Spaciously laid out in the traditional US grid pattern, the real heart of the city is the 8-mi stretch of very

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busy dual-carriageway called Las Vegas Boulevard – or the "Strip" – that runs from the airport to the original city centre (Downtown and beyond).

Along both sides of the Strip the vast majority of accommodation and associated leisure venues are found and it's here that the dazzling neon is brightest.

Las Vegas takes on a whole new personality after sunset when the millions of lights go on. Although famed for being a 24-hr city – there are no public clocks anywhere because they are irrelevant – Vegas is more than just a glitzy, over-the-top gambling and entertainments centre. The sun shines virtually all year round for sun worshippers and the low humidity makes it a preferred choice for sufferers from respiratory diseases. There's also a host of outdoor sporting pursuits. You will either love it or hate it, but most visitors thoroughly enjoy the experience, although generally end up considerably poorer!

Daytime entertainment: Wet 'n Wild water park; the Adventuredome (a 5-acre indoor theme park on the Strip); roller-coasters and thrill rides in many localities; numerous museums including Liberace, Elvis, the Guggenheim Hermitage, the Guinness Book of Records, Madame Tussauds, the Bellagio Fine Art gallery; luxurious health spas; golf. The bigger themed hotels host plenty of attractions, including the Atlantis aquarium at Caesars Palace.

Nightlife: Over 50 casinos (most hotels have their own) as well as ubiquitous slot machines, but you are under no obligation to partake and dress code is casual. Children cannot gamble and must be accompanied by an adult in all gaming areas. Many of the hotels host regular performances by stars such as Elton John, Billy Joel, Sting, the Rolling Stones and Celine Dion. Live music such as rock, jazz and country. Broadway plays and musicals. Showgirl reviews, such as Folies Bergere, including some topless shows. Also comedy, magic shows, hypnotists, circuses including the Cirque du Soleil. Plenty of cinemas and IMAX theatres.

Example: USAirtours. 5 nights from Gatwick 29Dec09. £749.

All of the above and more are bookable through Double S Travel Worldchoice on 01582 752752 on our website www.doublestravel.co.uk using the 'Book online' facility 'Do something Different'.

In brief:

Thinking of going to New Zealand next year? Join my group! Call me on 01582 752752 or email me at steve@doublestravel.co.uk for details.

Interested in a cruise? Visit our cruise club website at www.upadeck.co.uk it contains details of over 20,000 cruises, port descriptions and ship details!

The Passenger Shipping Association has revealed nearly 1.5 million UK passengers took a cruise in 2008 - an 11% increase on 2007.

Inghams is pulling its summer short-breaks programme due to poor sales.

Eurostar is running a full timetable as of the end of February – the first time since the fire in the tunnel last year.

Do you Twitter? Follow Double_S_Travel.

Travelling to the USA? You need a visa (called an ESTA) in order to travel.

Members of ABTA, Association of Cruise Experts, Leading Cruise Agent
IATA accredited. CAA ATOL licence 6766.

Proprietor: SJ Pattenden TD, BA (Hons). VAT Number 449 3040 53.

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

If you would like to join my emailing-list to receive offers and news, simply email steve@doublestravel.co.uk and put 'Mailing List' in the subject box.

Always:

- Check that your passport does not expire within six months of your return date.
- Ensure you have taken out good travel insurance and if going to Europe, take your EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) with you too.
- Put the 24hour UK Consular Assistance number - +44 020 7008 1500 into your mobile telephone – just in case you need emergency help.
- If hiring a car, don't forget to take both parts of your photo driving licence (the card and the paper sheet) and a credit card with you. Some rental companies no longer accept the old style green paper non-photo driving licences.
- Ensure you have all the visas you need to travel.
- If you have booked connecting flights, the baggage allowance may be smaller than your long haul flights. To avoid extra charges, pack to the lowest baggage allowance.
- Tell your credit card and debit card issuer where you are going and for how long otherwise you may find you cannot use your cards. Take a Cash Passport instead of your debit card – much safer.
- Use public transport to get to the airport. Most travel insurance will only cover you for a missed departure if you used public transport.
- Take a photocopy of your passport with you. If you lose your original it is much simpler to replace if you have a copy available to you.
- Protect your money and your holiday by booking an ATOL protected holiday through a reputable travel agent. Even short-breaks using no-frills airlines can be covered if booked through an agent.
- Declare all medical conditions and hospital visits at the time of taking insurance and tell the insurer if you develop a medical condition before you travel otherwise they may not settle if you try to make a claim.

Remember, travel safely, protect your money by booking through an ATOL holder, but most of all - enjoy your travelling.

All the best,

Steve Pattenden.

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Acknowledgements. DG&G Gazetteers for much of the destination information.