

# Testimonials

## Sicily Tour and Med Cruise

Hi Mark,

Sue and I want to express our thanks for organizing the Slovenia, Croatia bus tour and cruise etc. Everything went like clockwork, and I must mention in particular the Espana Hotel in Barcelona. We stay in hotels a lot, this one ticked all the boxes: price, position, staff, buffet room; five nights there was not enough.

PS. First class travel on the Emirates A380 is recommended for all-if only just once.

Best regards,

Peter & Sue Tyson.

## CUBA & MEXICO

*It was everything we expected, and more*

Hi Cati,

Just wanted to say how very much we loved our travel to Cuba - it was everything we expected, and more!

Mexico was a bit of a mixed bag, perhaps need more time.

In terms of tour arrangements everything was spot on in Cuba. Mexico wasn't to expectation - the hotel as well as pick up to airport was 30 mins delayed and made us very nervous about missing our flight!

You know how I was trying to get in touch with someone to learn about their experience? Well if there is anyone who'd like me to share mine I would always be happy to help (the least I can do for the lovely Cuban folk), so please feel free to pass on my email.

Hope you enjoy the festive season and let me know if you come across any future specials (without single supp preferably)...

Warm regards

Priyani

## MSC Meraviglia

### *Our tour exceeded our expectations*

Hi Mark

Our 6 night tour with Gate 1 was our first real experience with touring in a group. We were feeling quite apprehensive after 40 years of being independent travellers. On our first night we met up with our tour guide, Riccardo Panareo and the 42 other travellers in our group. It quickly became apparent that we had a small number of very difficult, poorly mannered members in our group. Right from the word go, Riccardo handled them beautifully and minimised their impact on the rest of the group. Our hotels and locations were excellent, as were meals supplied. The amount of group touring in individual cities suited us perfectly as we still had sufficient time to explore on our own. There was no pressure to do optional tours and Riccardo went out of his way to provide lots of additional advice and support to ensure independent exploration was done efficiently and safely.

On this tour we were visiting places we had been to before during previous holidays in Europe, but the benefits of revisiting with the wonderful guides we had were really appreciated. We felt that we learnt so much and gained a much deeper understanding of these wonderful old cities. We also came to the conclusion that the days of visiting these major tourist centres independently are gone ...we achieved so much more and in so much more comfort than we could ever have managed independently. Most of our fellow travellers were experienced at group travel, but they too were particularly impressed with Riccardo and the outstanding guides we had in individual locations. Our guides were all highly qualified, passionate about their subject, and excellent communicators ...we couldn't have wished for more.

Now to the cruise on MSC Meraviglia. The ship was truly beautiful and our internal cabin was excellent. I have a history of getting sea-sick so began the cruise with a level of apprehension, which proved unnecessary. It was possible to totally forget you were at sea..... no sense of instability, no engine noise or vibration, excellent air-conditioning/ventilation. Our internal cabin was larger than I expected and very well designed ...we found it very comfortable and not for a moment did we miss having a window.

Food available on board was plentiful and of a good quality ...their desserts were particularly good. We ate at the Waves and the Panorama Restaurants (which were included in our fare) as well as the buffet. Dining was a much more enjoyable experience in the restaurants. The buffet offered perfectly good food but the noisy and at times poor manners of many of the thousands who would crowd in there was a bit off-putting. If we had been limited to the buffet the range of food would have probably become a bit monotonous after a few days.

We enjoyed being in port for 6 of our 7 days of sailing but embarkation and disembarkation procedures were chaotic at times. On some occasions we would leave and return with ease, while at other times we had to wait for more than an hour to reboard the ship. MSC would benefit from advice from a logistics expert to sort out some of the practical problems they have with inconsistent practices and poor communication. It soon became clear to us that most difficulties could be easily overcome if we just took the initiative and asked. Eg on our final day we were told that all passengers on Deck 11 would disembark in Barcelona at 10.10am. We only had a few hours to see what we could before heading to the airport, so were keen to disembark sooner.

On casually querying if it was possible to leave earlier, it was not a problem in the least, so meant we had about 90 minutes more time to explore. Another example was the simple need for a hairdryer ...I had searched our cabin thoroughly and was certain there was not one there, but on asking it turned out there was a hidden drawer under the desk in which it was concealed ...not too sure how guests were ever meant to discover it!

The only real problem with the cruise stemmed from the sheer size of the ship and the enormous number of passengers it carries. It was always possible to find beautiful areas in which to relax in peace and enjoy great views, but the main promenade deck and the buffet area were often ridiculously overcrowded and noisy.

Without a doubt the benefits far out-weighed any discomforts we encountered. From a personal perspective however, in future we would try to choose a smaller ship, but hopefully one which still offered the stability and comfort of MSC Meraviglia.

Thanks again Mark. Our tour exceeded our expectations and we have now broadened our options for when considering future travel.

Kind regards

Jeanette

## Cambodia

*Our guides were very informative & helpful*

Hi Dave,

Just a thank you to you & your staff.

We had a wonderful holiday, it all went smoothly, our guides were very informative & helpful. The whole experience was fantastic,

Kind regards Jacky & John

## Morocco

*Well done Gate1. I will use them again for other future trips.*

Hi Laura,

The entire trip was fantastic, no delay and no major issues were encountered during our time there. Morocco is an amazing country to visit. Barbara and I had an amazing experience. I will definitely go back again.

**About Gate 1:** Although I have never heard about Gate1 and was my first travelling with them, I will use them again for other future trips. All went well as plan. There was no delay from return transfer to the entire journey. Itineraries were followed through and we didn't miss a thing. Our local tour guide was well spoken and is proud to show off his country. Not a single drama. Well done Gate1.

Their representative was at Casablanca airport to meet us and organised transfer to Rabat. In fact, he was there all day as there were other Gate1 travellers arriving at different time.

**Tour Guide:** Our tour guide M'hamed (Bus 35) who lead the tour from 22nd September to 3rd December was very professional. I am giving him a five-star rating. He personally came to meet us in the hotel in Rabat. If you left stuff (wallet, credit cards, jewellery etc...) behind when you head to the next destination, just inform M'hamed and he will try his best to track them.

Having him as a tour guide was not boring. He talked about Morocco culture, people, religion, politics, a bit about himself and you can ask him anything. The entire guided tour was fun and enjoyable.

At the end of the tour, he organised and stayed awake throughout all hours (guests depart at different hours) to escort and make sure we (and others) got our transfer back to the airport in Casablanca.

If I were to visit Morocco again with Gate1, I will definitely request to be with M'hamed's group which I will also recommend to friends.

In a nutshell, he is one of the best tour guide that I have come across.

**Shopping:** Medina in Fes was the best. You get cheaper and way better stuff from experience.

**Optional tour:** Sahara tour is highly recommended. There was nothing much to do in Erfoud which is a city in the desert.

I will also give good rating for our driver Hassan and bus assistance who had made our bus trip an amazing one. Driving was very smooth and we were not worried when going through the winding road in the Atlas mountain.

Also, thanks to DI Travel and especially Laura for linking and choosing Gate1 for our trip.

Regards,

Suzy

## **MSC Cruise**

***The tour, tour guides, accommodation were all excellent***

Hi Cati,

I just wanted to let you know that we had a fabulous holiday. The travel company was amazing, the tour, tour guides, accommodation were all excellent. We were blessed with good weather (mostly) and the tour guide kept us all under control with good humour. I would definitely recommend the company.

Our cruise was also good although we struggled with the size of the ship and numbers on board, the food, cabins and service were all excellent.

Thank you for all you did prior to our departure, your attention to detail was evident throughout the trip and we greatly appreciated it.

Have a very happy Christmas and may you be richly blessed in 2018.

Kind regards,

Judy

## **Canada/Alaska**

### ***One of the best trips we have ever had!***

Hi Karen,

I have been meaning to send you this email since we got back from our Canada/Alaska trip mid September.

Trudy and I wanted to thank you for the one of the best trips we have ever had.

Your organisation was great and we had everything we needed to make certain we were where we should be with what we needed.

The highlights were just about everything from the accommodation (simply 5 star wherever we went), the tour through the Rockies with Key West Travel and Tours people. The cruise (our first) was stunning. We were upgraded to an outside cabin (with a window) and we were happy with that, although our luggage went missing for several hours).

To top off a fantastic trip Trudy and I had almost 2 weeks of sound sleep, something we rarely experience for more than a night at home.

Thank you, we will do this again sometime soon.

Cheers,

Steve and Trudy

## **Africa**

### ***We saw all 5 big game animals on our first night***

Hi Mark

Yes I'm back home in my own bed and its good.

From the beginning:

Everything about South African airlines was great: room between seats, service, food and cleanliness. The night flight and meal schedule meant I had no jet lag either coming or going.

Cape Town was extremely pretty with the backdrop of Table Mountain. Glenda got to her Cheetah Outreach and the driver advised us to go up the mountain that day. Just as well we took his advice as the mountain was closed the next day and every other day we were there. No one else on the bus trip got to the top!! The day excursions were great. The Cape of Good Hope was a highlight for me as I used to sail. The botanic gardens are picturesque, African penguins very cute. No one enrolled in the shark diving went due to bad weather. The housing situation there is very interesting. The Cape Town Lodge Hotel was in a fabulous spot to stroll through the old Malay/Muslim slave area, and for short taxi rides into the waterfront tourist areas of town. At no time did I feel unsafe.

Birthday bash at Mabula Game Reserve. The cooks provided a huge chocolate cake topped with the candles I supplied. The staff paraded the cake to Glenda accompanied by African drumming and singing. She was blown away. AS FOR THE ANIMALS!! On our first night foray into the bush we saw all 5 big game animals. We had an experienced and very knowledgeable driver named George. Amazing eyesight. Mabula is marvellous-food, staff, accommodation. In hind sight Mabula was possibly the pick of the four reserves we stayed in. Abundant Animals!!

The Garden Court O R Tambo hotel in J'berg that we constantly came and went from, was also good. The staff were very welcoming and friendly. It has a great bar called Rosie's where coloured cocktails were less than \$2 AU.

Victoria Falls was everything that you expected, but my highlight was zip lining from Zambia back to Zimbabwe. A'Zambezi Lodge was an unreal place to stay right on the bank of the Zambezi River, where an elephant strolled past the outdoor bar, where warthogs are used to mow the grass, where vultures fly every morning and where there were lots of HIPPOPOTAMUS. The extra helicopter flight was awesome...we took the longer one. We also upgraded the river cruise to the dinner cruise. Two of the young ones on the bus trip got engaged. He did the 'down on the knee', after phoning for her fathers permission and sneaking out in Cape Town to buy a beautiful ring of African diamonds and emeralds. He asked Glenda and I to take photos. I'm not sure how he will top that for the New Years Eve wedding!!

Kenya. Inside the Royal Orchid Azure Nairobi hotel was good but we were told not to go outside unattended. Fortunately we only stayed the one night before going onto Lake Elmentaita. we stayed in the cutest adaption of a mud built mini house. Although it was the dry season there was lots of wildlife to be seen on our drives, with my highlight being some pink flamingos. The views of the Rift Valley were amazing too. Then a BONE SHATTERING 2 hour finish to the days drive to the Masai Mara. Such a contrast. The second wave of wilderbeast/zebra migration was on and we got an unforgettable view from the hot air balloon ride. David Attenborough would have been jealous. The visit to the Masai Village was very interesting. Lots of rhinoceros but no elephants as they don't like to be near the wildebeest migration. The visit to the Rothschild giraffe centre where you can kiss a giraffe finished the return trip to Nairobi. I then spent the next day with an Australian volunteer who works in the Ruben Centre in the slums of Nairobi...also a highlight for me ,but for totally different reasons. Again great drives and good accommodation.

Greater Kruger park. Greenfires had stunning new accommodation, food, staff, drivers and congenial hosts. And even more animals to add to my comprehensive/growing list. It is situated on a river but dry at this time of the year, Elephants and giraffes constantly wandered past me as I sat on the wide decks of the buildings.

We saw many black and white rhinos with lots of babies in toe. I opted for a very informative guided walk with the host one morning who was heavily armed as a precaution against large animals we might disturb.

The last few days we added on and went to Black Rhino Lodge in the Pilensberg reserve. Also highly recommended as it sits just outside an extinct volcanic crater, but not blessed with many animals in the days we were there. There was a waterhole that attracted some animals for great photos and quite a few birds...some uncommon.

Lis Spencer

## Morocco

### *Thanking you for a memorable holiday*

Hi Laura,

Thanks for the welcome back.

Morocco was one of our truly wondrous, fabulous highlights of countries we have visited so far. This tour was perfectly coordinated, and presented by one of the best tour guides we have experienced...the tour guide Abraham. He was very knowledgeable, thoughtful, sincere, and humorous through out the trip. He personally saw to every person leaving from their hotel for their flights on the last day, the first flight left at 4:30 am, until the last at 11:30am . A truly great ambassador for the country.

The tour was full of very memorable moments e.g. Camel ride to the Sahara, the Souks of Fez, driving through the Atlas Mountains, tree-climbing goats, the food and the hotels, all was fabulous.

The hotels could not be faulted, and an exceptional one was in Erfoud. This was a paradise, with large rooms, a great buffet meal, pool in the desert. A must see.

A couple of notes for any future trip takers:

You need to fill in a entry card into Morocco at the airport, they are not handed out in the airplane, and it took over about 15 minutes to fill in, and then due the amount of passengers from our large flight a further hour to get through Passport control. According to the itinerary the pick-up would only wait an hour after the flight landed, which put us on edge. However, no worries he was there.

You need to push the optional sightseeing as excellent value. We had already booked the Dinner with Horse Drawn Carriage Ride (this was excellent), Full Day Essaouira (brilliant), and then we extended these optional tours, due mainly to Abraham (tour guide) "salesmanship" of the Dinner with horse drawn carriage ride (fabulous) and Full Day Sahara with lunch (wondrous, exciting and brilliant sunset).

Changing money was very easy in the main centres, however it is advisable to carry many \$1 US notes with you for tips to the additional tour guides when you take the optional tours, for vendors, and beggars. Australian money is not accepted anywhere.

Highlight that Australians have already paid gratuities in their cost. However, in the optional tours you are required to tip. e.g. Sahara camel ride, driver of 4 wheel \$5US and camel owner \$US5 per head, and at the end of the tour a payment to the Driver, assistant and Tour Guide, as a matter of personal discretion.

Many others (mainly Americans) had concerns of safety, but we can all vouch there is nothing to fear except the power of the vendors in the markets to buy their goods.

Marrakesh, is not what I expected, it was a ultra-modern city, with unique fine dining, casinos, safe and fun to walk around.

Casablanca, is not a city to stay for a few days extra, it has limited appeal due to its size (6.5 mill people) and progress. Our half day final day was very adequate.

The progress that was occurring in Morocco, highlighted the fact and supported by the tour guide, would change Morocco within 5 years. So advise your clients to see it now before the modern world consumes it all.

Thanking you for a memorable holiday.

Richard and Lynn

## Egypt

### *The trip far exceeded my expectations!*

Hi Laura

Linda, Kim, Jess and I finished our wonderful Egypt adventure earlier this week, I have to say it far exceeded my expectations! Everything went so smoothly, we were always met on time and the escorts, guides and drivers were always so helpful. Our driver in Cairo and Alexandria, Sinah, was amazing. Our guide/Egyptologist also in Cairo and Alexandria, and again when we returned to Cairo (Vivian) was brilliant as well. she has a Masters in Egyptology and her insight and information undoubtedly added to the depth and interest of our trip. Our river cruise was great, the food was much better than I expected and really tasty and enjoyable. Our guide/Egyptologist there, Amr, was fantastic. Again the information he was able to share gave us so much context and background, it really enhanced our trip.

As well as us 4, we had 2 others on our trip (also from Queensland) and this was a great size. We were all respectful of each other, always on time and enjoyed our time together. I have nothing but positives to say about our trip (obviously from the gushing comments above), and I'm sometimes very particular so the glowing feedback is certainly deserved.

If you need a review on any site, please let me know as I'd be happy to share my comments. I shared lots of photos during the trip, my friends were certainly jealous and some have asked for the trip details. I've shared DI travel with those people so I hope they contact you, as the trip was amazing - and great value.

So thank you for sorting our trip, it was just fabulous!!!

Kindest regards

Sharyn Johns

## Professional and cooperative

You and your team are really the most efficient, professional and cooperative people I think I have ever dealt with.

Thx Russ

M

## Cuba

### *My guide was excellent*

Hello Russ

I really enjoyed my visit to Cuba – an amazing country and my guide was excellent. He went above and beyond the call of duty so I could do and see the things that were of interest to me and I learnt so much about the history and culture of the country.

I can't pick a favourite place as they were all different and interesting except for the luxury resort at Varadero which was definitely the low point of my trip. Although the staff were nice, I found it to be very regimented, entirely divorced from the real Cuba and very uninspiring – not my scene at all. We changed the itinerary so that I was only there for 2 nights – I returned to Havana the day before I flew out because my flight out was at 6.00am and if I'd stayed in Varadero I would have had to leave there about midnight to get to the airport on time. Also a last afternoon and evening in Havana was a good way to end the trip.

Just a comment re the accommodation. I stayed in Casas in Trinidad and for my last night in Havana. Although the hotels were fine I actually preferred the Casas – the standard of the accommodation and the meals were good, service was as good as or better than most of the hotels, security was up to scratch and, as a not insignificant bonus, I had interaction with the locals.

My one regret is that I would have liked to stay longer and explore the east of the country as well.

Cheers

Jean

## Dubai & Singapore

### *Very professional*

Dear Leanne,

Got back on Tuesday very early. 31 hr trip via Dubai & Singapore. We are still recovering.

The cruise & tour of Croatia & Slovenia went off without a hitch, the weather was glorious and the scenery brilliant.

The Gate 1 guide & driver, Blaze & Stepan were very professional which ensured a most enjoyable tour.

We recommend both MSC and Gate 1.

Thank you for organising such a great holiday for us.

Best regards

Maha and Tom

## **Cuba**

### ***I can highly recommend the tour***

Hi Mark,

Just to let you know that I have returned from CUBA. What a trip, well past my expectations.

The tour guide was fantastic and certainly made the trip worthwhile. Lots of fun, good food and company. I can highly recommend the tour. Thank you for all your assistance, looking forward to the next trip.

Not sure as yet where to go?

Hasta Pronto,

Manfred

## **Alaska/Canada adventure**

### ***It's our new favourite place in the world***

Hi Cati

Hope all is well.

We just wanted to thank you so much in relation to our recent Alaska/Canada adventure. It's our new favourite place in the world. I'm sure you will understand why.

Mostly though, thank you for your consistent attention in responding to any of our requests and enquiries. It made the entire experience so easy.

I hope I am able to call on you in future for our future holiday requests.

Kind Regards

Joe

## Real Alaska Trip

### *“Such a memorable trip”*

Hi Mark

Just wanted to give you some feedback about our recent trip to Alaska/Canada.

The trip exceeded our expectations in all ways. The cruise and coach trip went smoothly.

We would certainly recommend Princess Cruises and Key West travel to others.

Our accommodation was first class except the Empire Landmark Hotel in Vancouver. This hotel (as you are probably aware) is to be demolished in the immediate future. As a result, fixtures and fittings had been allowed to deteriorate. This was disappointing-especially as this was at the end of our trip.

Thank you for organizing such a memorable trip for us.

Regards

Fiona & Tom Winter

## Japan

### *“Everything went like clockwork”*

Hi Leanne,

I just want to drop you a short note to say how much I enjoyed the trip to Japan.

It was a fantastic experience, and I am glad now that it wasn't a group tour. The ability to plan one's own daily itinerary was a definite benefit, although I did enjoy the pre-arranged tours.

Your tour representative in Japan did a superb job, everything went like clockwork and the guides were first class.

Also, the accommodation was very good, well located with great service and breakfasts.

So, thank you for all your assistance and I won't hesitate to make recommendations to other potential travellers.

## **Karen, the best travel agency facilitator I have ever known!**

Karen, you are an amazing person, AND the best travel agency facilitator I have ever known, AND I have known ALOT! I cannot thank you enough for helping us work out this trip....coordinating travel for a grandma from Sydney, and a grandma from Port Lavaca, Texas, who just survived a Cat 5 Hurricane Harvey!!! I know I was a "challenge"!!! You passed with flying colors and never lost your temper or composure! A

long, long, long.... time ago I was a high school English teacher, and I love to write. If your company sends out a personal review letter for your clients to fill out, Please send me one, and Bernadette too. When we're done with our reviews they may make you the President of this company! Seriously, I love writing good reviews. Everyone else can't wait to write their complaints. I don't go with the flow. I like to write only ravingly good reviews. So, get one to me if you can.

On our next birthday trip why don't you come with us. I have a gazillion travel points saved up from various hotels and airlines, so some of the trip can even be free. Free is good!!!

Good night! It's almost midnight here. Must be close to 3:00 pm your time. Thank you so much. Come to Houston and I can show you around!!!

Sandra Henke

## Tokyo

### *A great destination*

Laura,

All of the arrangements went well.

The guides were always prompt. They were mostly middle-aged to older women, as was the meet and greet.

The hotel rooms were understandably smallish, but that didn't worry me. The amenities were excellent.

The Bullet train pulled into Tokyo 15 minutes ahead of departure time, all passengers departed, doors closed for cleaning (impeccable), doors opened 3 minutes to the hour, passengers get on....train leaves precisely on the hour.....so slick!

I did a lot of walking, however once you sorted out the metro at the various cities all goes well. Each gate is manned, and the attendants are incredibly helpful. The bus stops are the only place where I felt there was a lack of orderliness...

A great destination...

Cheers, Peter.

## South African tour

### *"We enjoyed the whole trip"*

Good Morning Mark,

We wish to comment on our trip 14-day African Safari with Victoria Fall and Kruger Park. We were very pleased with the Gate1 host Stuart McMillan. He was very helpful & informative with the first part of our trip.

The Garden Court hotel was great, especially the shuttle service to & from the hotel and airport. The staff, guides etc. in the Victoria falls were fantastic and the accommodation was very good as well. The Green fire lodge at Kruger was excellent and what a fantastic place it was. We certainly enjoyed the whole trip and it would not be possible without your careful planning and coordination.

We will certainly recommend you and your staff to our friends.

Yours truly,

Greg & Elizabeth Paull

## Canada and Alaska

### *“Everything went like clockwork”*

Hi Laura

I do apologize for taking so long to follow up with you regarding our Alaska/Canada holiday.

We had an awesome time away both Canada and Alaska are absolutely beautiful places and the weather was perfect.

I would like to say thank you to you Laura, for organizing a very stress-free itinerary for us.

Everything went like clockwork, the Rocky Mountaineer was spectacular they provided excellent service and delicious food, and we did sort out our load and go credit card eventually.

Thanks again for everything, and the next time we decide to travel, I have your email and ph. number.

kind Regards

Debra Poole

### *“Gate 1 tour guide Anna was amazing!”*

Hi Cati

I too wanted to send my thanks to you for a great holiday. Deb has captured my feelings, as well as her own, much more articulately than I could.

The transfers worked. The hotels were comfortable and very convenient.

Helsinki was a really exciting discovery and the hotel a dowager in disguise. Loved it.

Our trip to Estonia, despite the cold and rain, was fun and our guide priceless. Deb would have taken her home to meet her son in the blink of an eye if possible.

The cabins on the Russian ship were comfortable, roomy, clean and had amazing balconies that allowed us to watch the world go by day or night. Gate 1 tour guide Anna was amazing! She was like a mother hen, not

quite used to the likes of us Aussie old gals but was professional, knowledgeable, caring and fun to be with. The places and sites were remarkable and memorable.

The things I will always remember most were the white nights, sunsets at 1 am, and gliding over the river and watching Russian people enjoy their summer holidays and the silver birches along the river. Breathtaking and beautiful.

So a big thank you to you for organizing it and tailoring our travel to our needs and wants.

Well done!

Thanks again

Cherie Christensen

## Africa

### *“Wonderful trip”*

Hi Mark

As promised here is what we thought of our wonderful trip.

We have just arrived home from an amazing two weeks in South Africa and Victoria Falls. We couldn't fault the arrangements as everything went so well and all tours were really well chosen.

Our tour leader Kirsty was friendly and knowledgeable and made sure we got the most out of our time.

The two game lodges we stayed at were perfect. They were very ethical in their approach to game drives which we really appreciated. We saw so many animals including the 'Big Five' plus so many others.

The two-day trip to Victoria Falls is a must and the tours there were great. We had a guided tour of the falls and a sunset cruise on the Zambezi, both were really worth it. We added a helicopter flight which was amazing.

There was nothing we would change. Thank you, Mark, for looking after us and answering our many questions.

Kerry & Neil Jorgensen

August 2017

## Alaska and Canada

### *“13-day tour was run like clockwork”*

Hi Helen,

Just a short note to let you know we are safely back from our trip, and to thank you for booking it for us.

Everything you arranged went smoothly, and we had a great time.

The tour through the Rockies was good and we were very happy with the tour company involved and the accommodation provided.

The land part of the princess 13-day tour was run like clockwork, and the staff were very helpful.

The cruise itself was lovely, and the ship was comfortable except for the miniscule shower.

We did have a good time, and want to thank you for arranging it for us.

Will happily recommend you to our friends when they are thinking of travelling.

Kind Regards

Trevor and Viveca Woods

July 2017

## Croatia

***“We would travel again with Gate 1”***

Hi Mark,

We would like to congratulate you and gate1 on our Croatia trip it was first class. Elvis, our tour guide and Mario our bus driver could not do enough for us. We were very pleased with the trip and would travel again with you and gate 1.

Pauline & Peter Fleming, Tasmania

## Egypt

***“A magical time”***

30/11/16

Dear Cati

Many thanks for organising my recent trip to Egypt. Actually my second trip in about 6 months.

Susan and Carole thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Our wonderful experience was enabled by the two best guides that I have ever met, Mostafa and Michael. We were made to feel special, they were caring and thoughtful. There was nothing that we asked that they wouldn't accommodate or tried to. Mostafa and Michael were just wonderful company, engaging, fun and definitely exceptional guides. They were constantly

looking after us, providing ideas and giving advice. I would highly recommend them to anyone. These guides made our trip such an unforgettable and awesome experience.

It was a magical time for me as it was my second trip to Egypt and they welcomed me like a friend/family.

As a result of our experiences, I believe that there will be a lot more people using Destination International and Chrismar Travel in their plans to tour Egypt. I know that Carole and Susan will be letting their friends know about the safety and friendliness of the Egyptian people and the fabulous guides we had. They were in awe of the extent in what/how the guides did in order to accommodate our requests. The Chrismar team who was at the airport meet & greet, transfers etc. were also very accommodating, knowledgeable and brilliant. Mekey stayed with us until we were checked in and safely through the gates even though there was a hold up and it took over an hour to complete this process. He was excellent, patient and understanding and stayed until we were through the check points on our departure.

Chrismar Travel has the BEST team that I have ever experienced so far.

I also want to mention that the Tour co-ordinator in Luxor was exceptional. He was aware that we had to continue on to Alexandria on arrival in Cairo airport and managed to upgrade us to Business Class and had tagged our luggage as priority at no extra costs, so there would be no delays for our onward trip to Alexandria. This was a very thoughtful gesture and superior service. We were very impressed and grateful.

In the beginning, I think Carole and Susan was worried and hesitant about travelling to Egypt but by the end of the trip they were convinced that they would need to return to see and absorb more of the extensive history that Egypt has to offer and the wonderful people who made it enjoyable.

Once again thank you Cati and Chrismar Travel for co-ordinating all aspects of this trip and making our holiday one of the best, enjoyable, and fantastic experiences.

Best Regards, Elaine Elphick

## **Egypt Testimonial**

***“We had a fabulous time!!!”***

3rd June 2016, Destination International

Hi Cati

Thank you very much for organising a wonderful trip for us to Egypt and Jordan.

It was with great anxiety and trepidation that we decided to choose the 14 nights/15days Ancient Egypt Tour departing on 6th May 2016. Our family and friends were very worried about us and some thought we were crazy to travel to Egypt.

As you can imagine we had read a lot of write ups and asked you a lot of questions before we left as we were not sure what to expect and how safe it would be for us as tourists.

I must admit that I was quite surprised and overwhelmed at the welcome that we received from the minute we arrived at Cairo airport. Everything went like clockwork and the staff at Egypt Travel who met us at the airport and Luxor were extremely helpful and accommodating and took us under their wing. We were escorted from point to point. We didn't have to worry about a thing, even our wake-up call was organised.

However the highlight of the trip was the Nile cruise. We had an excellent guide who was very attentive, obliging and always taking care of us but also lots of fun. The guide went above and beyond what we expected. He was exceptional. He treated us with special care and wanted us to have a really great experience in Egypt. The staff on the cruise ship were also very accommodating and friendly and made us feel special and cared about their passengers. We had a fabulous time!!

In short our experience in Egypt indicated that it was very safe for tourists, especially Australian tourists. At the various tourist checkpoints, when the guards were told that we were Australians, we were waved to continue and they welcomed us.

Once again, many thanks for all the preparation, booking and of course your insight on what we required that helped make this the best holiday we've ever had. We are extremely happy that we decided to take this trip and we hope to visit Egypt again soon.

Regards

Elaine & Jen

## Europe River Testimonial

### *"A trip to remember"*

Hi Russ

Denise and I had a fantastic time! A trip to remember. Absolutely loved the cruise (my first river cruise so I wasn't sure how it would go!) The KK Opera Hotel you organised for us in Budapest was excellent. Lovely hotel and perfect location (unlike the American Gate 1 people who had a hotel that wasn't quite as central) Absolutely loved Budapest! There were about 12 Aussies on the cruise, rest were mainly Americans and Canadians. The Monarch Empress was beautiful! So new. The labels were still on the life jackets! Great accommodation and food. It was so relaxing not having to unpack for a week! All crew and tour guides were excellent. Great fun and very knowledgeable! Perhaps not as scenic as I thought (except the Wachau Valley - magnificent!) but we did travel at night. Great experience going through the locks. Shore excursions were wonderful, both the included ones and the 'extras'.

As you know we didn't book any shore excursions beforehand for the cruise, but this wasn't a problem. We were able to pay by credit card. Prices were very reasonable and the local guides (usually very young and enthusiastic!) were amazing.

Bus trip from Regensburg to Prague went smoothly. Prague was another highlight. (there were so many!!) and the hotel, the Imperial, an art deco hotel, was amazing, and again centrally located. We walked everywhere as we did in Budapest! Sad to leave. Could have easily filled in a week there.

Flight to Istanbul with Turkish airlines was great. Actually more room than Qatar, which was very cramped. Great flight attendants on both though!

Loved Turkey. Too much to write about. But Izmir and Cappadocia were the highlights. Hotels (all business hotels) were good, with the exception perhaps being the one in Antalya, a 'resort' hotel, at a pebble beach. Although the weather had warmed up, needless to say we, as Australians, didn't swim! The pool looked nice but the rooms were basic and quite grubby. We had been spoilt in Budapest and Prague! Breakfasts in all hotels were great. Lots of choice. Lovely cheeses and yogurts!!

Our tour guide (Mehmet) was very knowledgeable, but did put us to sleep at times, especially on the bus!! Also some problems with the voice boxes for tours. Often didn't work properly. We did book one tour from home (Our balloon flight with Voyager Balloons, who also arranged a private tour for us. Full day in Cappadocia and Dervish performance. Not much dearer overall.) also a day out in Izmir with Viator that ended up being with Fez Travel. This was meant to be a group tour but was only Denise and I! Tourism seems to be down by 50 to 60 percent in some places, and locals are glad of any work. We never felt unsafe at any time by the way. Didn't even think about bombings etc!

It was probably just as well we did book some tours beforehand, as when we wanted to do the ones with Gate 1, booking through our guide, we could only pay in US dollar or by credit card if over US\$200! We should have done a few with you.

By the way (though I think Denise may have mentioned this) we have not received any contact from Gate 1 re any kind of feedback (though we were told on the cruise at least that these would be emailed to us 'very soon'). No mention of any feedback from our Turkish guide.

Thank you Russ for organising such a brilliant holiday for us!!

Truly memorable!!

We will gladly recommend DI Travel to all our friends! Also let me know if you want more detail, or if you want me to speak with any prospective travellers!!

## Europe Testimonial

*"I will be happy to recommend DI Travel"*

Hi Russ

Just a quick note regarding our trip to Europe and Turkey. Jan and I had a great time and were very happy with the arrangements you made. We loved the K&K Hotel in Budapest. It was in an ideal position and enabled us to fully explore the city on foot. The only time we needed transport was to go to the thermal pools. The river cruise with Gate 1 was excellent. Lovely boat, informative Guides and excellent food. The transfers were reliable and in particular Chevy who took us from the hotel to the airport in Istanbul attentive and helpful. I hope you get to meet him in person some time because he was absolutely charming and looked after us very well. We had no troubles in Turkey and enjoyed the included tours. Our guide, Mehmet, was very knowledgeable and explained in great detail the historical facts about Turkey. It is a shame the tourism industry

in Turkey has been so severely affected by terrorist activities. We were very lucky to be given a hotel upgrade for our last few days in Turkey and that rounded off the holiday nicely.

I will be happy to recommend DI Travel to others as all arrangements made by you were excellent. We had expected to receive something from Gate 1 asking for feedback but we have received nothing so far. I hope your trip to India went well. Please thank the girls in your office who handled our queries promptly and efficiently. I think you have a great team so keep up the good work. Very kind regards Denise

## Well done to Gate 1

*"Seamless, top notch, knowledgeable, organised, colourful and entertaining"*

Hi Laura,

No complaints at all.

Flights and connections to hotels were seamless. Hotel quality and service was very good and comfortable. We have travelled a fair bit overseas on tours and found the Gate 1 tour guides in India and Thailand top notch. They were very knowledgeable, organised, colourful and entertaining. The Thai tour guide, Lift, was particularly good. She was an absolute entertainer and comedian.

The content of all of the options and tours was well paced. There was very good balance between the pace and the temperature (30's)

There was good variation in the food choices and exposure to local cuisine and always guidance by the tour director on what was safe.

The length of the India and Thai tour was appropriate to give a good introduction to the culture, but of course no holiday is ever long enough.

The tour buses were also excellent. The pre-trip documentation seemed to indicate the bus may not be to the typical standard but this was not the case. Bus drivers were also very capable which we seem to take for granted on tours. Assistants were also very attentive.

The start times each day were easy, although I'm normally an early riser.

I've never really had a bad experience with tour organisation or content because I am accepting of the local conditions and environment.

The only thing that can usually influence the trip are the other passengers, but in this case they were all tolerable and all from North America which seems a contradiction.

It's interesting that of all the people on the Gate 1 tour in India that went on to Thailand, we were the only ones that were on Gate 1 in Thailand. The others ended up with Asiaworld Travel. On meeting some of these travellers along the way in Thailand we realised we were the lucky ones.

Overall, we were very happy with the tour and can now tick these destinations off the list.

The cost of the tour was remarkable and we could not see any influence of this on the "experience" compared to other travel we take.

Other travel we have used has been through SNA, Trafalgar, Travel Marvel, APT and cruise lines Princes, Holland and MSC so well done to Gate 1.

Regards Wayne

## Gate 1 Tours

***"Gate 1 tours are so organized and our guide from Cuzco was extremely approachable and nothing was an effort"***

Hi Cati,

Would like to thank you for organizing our holiday. It was excellent. Everything went very smoothly. Gate1 tours are so organized and our guide from Cuzco was extremely approachable and nothing was an effort. We were the only Aussies in our group of 19 with everyone else from the USA and great company. We had some very long dinners with our fellow travellers.

It was a busy itinerary with very early mornings. We were the only one doing the optional excursions which meant we had a personal guide and driver, but gave us little time to rest up like our fellow travellers. But all the optional tours were great and deepened our experience in the culture of Peru. Being the oldest in the group we were treated so caringly by our fellow travellers. Really felt like the senior citizens that we are. Absolutely loved Macchu Picchu that we saw in perfect weather and probably the highlight were the floating islands in Lake Titicaca.

Our time alone in Chile was great too. Cannot recommend highly enough Chilean Wine Lovers Tours. Owner Mauricio designed and took us on our tour and we were well looked after at every one of the top class wineries by either the owner or the well experienced sommeliers. It was expensive \$250 each but as we are dedicated wine lovers and members of wine and food clubs and have experienced wine tastings all over the world, and had told Mauricio this when enquiring we expected a great day and were not disappointed as it was the best wine excursion we have ever done. We caught a bus to Valparaiso. What a wonderful art nouveau city. A day was not long enough.

Kind regards, Pam

## Expat Explore Tours

***"Susan our tour guide is an absolute gem and Kevin our driver an equal treasure!"***

Hi Laura,

Just to let you know that I am having a wonderful time here in France with Expat Explore Tours and currently now in Lourdes having experienced a delightful past few days touring down to south of France via Dijon and Lyon, onto the French Riviera area of Nice, Cannes, Monte Carlo, and Eze. Yesterday was Pont Du Gard and Avignon and today via Carcassonne into Lourdes.

Susan our tour guide is an absolute gem and Kevin our driver an equal treasure! Hotels have been comfortable and adequate for our needs and our coach very comfortable with regular comfort stops along the way. I would have no hesitation in booking with Expat again. Excellent value! 50% of our group are Australian! All very nice people of varying age group from teens through to older than me.

Tomorrow I continue the journey to Biarritz and then Bordeaux where a group of us hope to take a guided bike ride tour. Looking forward to that!

Cheers for now Laura, Kind regards, Jacquie.

## Thank you

*"everything you said it would be and more"*

Dear Laura,

Just back and wanted to thank you and your company for putting together a wonderful experience for both of us, it was everything you said it would be and more, all transport was on time all hotels were good to rate the Keywest tour was exceptional and FYI they would have picked us all up at the hotel, they did drop us off at our hotel, just letting you know for future, nothing went wrong we were blessed with the best weather, there were a few little things but completely out of your control, so all in all a wonderful experience thank you all again.

Regards Alan & Agnes

## USA and Canada trip

*"a holiday of a lifetime"*

Hello Mark,

Tricia Hockey here, well we are back from our USA and Canada trip and all I can say is a very big thank you for our superb holiday. Delta is a great airline to fly with and also Alaska air was great. The hotel in New York was in a great position for all our day trips and very comfortable. The bus trip to Quebec was great and Washington was fabulous, the hotel there was a real treat.

The hotel in Seattle was sadly not up to the standard of the rest of the trip and the shuttle to Vancouver was a bit of a nightmare as well as we got caught in a traffic jam unfortunately but the bus was smelly, as the toilet was really on the nose. I think we would have preferred to go straight to Vancouver. By the time we got to our hotel in Vancouver, which by the way was the best of the whole tour, it was close to 10.30 and we had to be up at 6 the next day to get to our Rockies Tour. To be fair that is about the only thing we can fault.

The Rockies tour was magnificent and the cruise was very enjoyable, if a bit cold and wet, but hey you can't control the weather.

Our five best highlights of our trip have to be Niagara Falls, Meeting my cousin and his wife in Banff, Hubbard Glacier, Butchart Gardens, and last but not least Whistler.

Our day in Whistler was magical as we had missed out on the Sulphur mountain cable as the weather was bad so we were able to do the cable car up to Whistler and the peak to peak cable as well as the ski lift down the mountain. Also we saw bears galore up close and personal. Before we had only seen the back end of them through a bus window but at Whistler they were everywhere. Please accept our deep gratitude for giving us a holiday of a lifetime that will take a long time to forget.

THANK YOU, Cheers Tricia and Owen.

## South Africa trip

### *"unforgettable places of interest"*

Hello Mark, just thanking you so for the fantastic organization of our South African trip.

You were so spot on with the whole package, it was amazing the accuracy of the itinerary, the quality of our accommodation, and the unforgettable places of interest we experienced.

We were upgraded on arrival to an exclusive boutique hotel in Cape Town, " Dockside." It was still part of the Victoria and Alfred Hotel, very glamorous indeed. This was a total surprise.

Our breakfasts in all hotels throughout the trip were really good, and we were given packed box breakfasts when we set off early for the game drives. How brilliant was that ha!

We loved the bus tour, have never experienced one before, but can recommend it to anyone doubting ever doing it. Our tour guide Tessa Easingwood from Gate1 was fantastic, so knowledgeable, happy to share her time with us all, we will never forget her and the friends we made on the tour. We have been invited to stay with friends from U.S.A. anytime we are travelling there!!

The food wine and shopping were all great and so inexpensive.....all the more to spend ha!

Our fellow travellers from Gate1 were blown away that inclusive in our trip was the three nights at Drifters Game Lodge, which they knew nothing about so thank you for that too. Drifters was really out of this world. We were upgraded there too. How lucky to get a brand new unit, instead of the glam tents. We sat on our veranda and watched two giraffe heads appear through the trees on the other side of the dry river bed, also buffalo and baboon, how unreal. The meals served were delicious at Drifters, the chef James did an excellent job.

The game drives blew us away. Yes it was an early rise to the beat of an African Drum, but to go through the African bush in full 4 wheel drive and see wild animals was amazing. Morning coffee while the sun was rising, out there on a small hill was truly beautiful. Sundowners was also amazing watching the sun go down with a chilled wine or beer and nibbles, before doing a night drive were the highlights.

Bush walks and learning so much about the bush species and animal habit so good. Karl our guide was so caring about our welfare. I was a bit scared walking so I asked "isn't this dangerous walking in the bush, what's stopping a lion etc attacking us?" He just replied "lions are more afraid of us, and besides they don't know what we taste like, so there is no problem." I felt a bit better...until he next said " however if they do attack us it's game over as we apparently taste good!!" I did two bush walks and lived to tell the tale ha!!

Adrian and Kim run Drifters and were really great folk, it was so nice sitting around the fire after a game drive having a drink before tea, it truly is a beautiful lodge. It has been extended, and all the cabins are new, I believe the tents are being replaced with more of the eco style cabins we stayed in.

Well there is one negative, nothing to do with your part of the package..... and that was the affect of the malaria tablets we took....probably not necessary as it was winter when we were there, but a small thing compared to contracting Malaria.

So a big thank you to the crew at Destination International Holidays on a job well done!! Trish and John Freeman.

## **China Trip June 2014**

*"mystical"*

Dear Joan,

It has been remiss of me not to contact you sooner. You are right, we have already been back for a month.

Joan, we had such a great time. It was culturally enriching and very authentic. We had a tour manager who was well versed on everything and from China (Annie) and each place we went we had a tour operator who knew even more about where we were! The organisation was superb – we never had to check in luggage just get our boarding pass and off we would go. The cruise was very good too. The river is very mystical and almost futuristic if I can describe it like that with massive cities just popping out of the haze from nowhere as you come around another bend and on the other side is farm land with women lining up with their wicker baskets to do the washing in the river.

I hope all is well for you.

Bye for now.

Regards, Debra