

AITO Inspiration – Out of Reach



25 June 2018

Explore the unknown with these far-flung experiences from travel specialist members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (www.aito.com).

From Bhutan's Northern Himalaya to the exotic Andaman Islands, the wilds of Knoydart Peninsula to the beauty of Shetland and Fair Isle, those looking for trips beyond the usual tourist hot spots are spoilt for choice with this selection of out of reach getaways:

Finnish Summer in the 'Midnight Sun' – from £755 pp with Artisan Travel

Build your own summer escape to Torassieppi in Finnish Lapland this summer and witness the stunning wilderness of Northern Finland during the incredible 'Midnight Sun'; a time of year when daylight lasts 24 hours a day. Choose from several optional activities to create your perfect escape, including fishing in the Muonio River, hiking through the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park, foraging for food with a local guide, a visit to a reindeer farm, river rafting, hiking with huskies, canoeing and glamping. **Departing until 18 September 2018**, a [Summer in Finnish Lapland](#) costs from £755 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), transfers and three nights' half-board accommodation. Optional activities extra. Call Artisan Travel on 01670 785 085 (www.artisantravel.co.uk).

Visit the Baikonur Cosmodrome – from £3,439 pp with Explore

Explore the leafy streets of Almaty, discover the Silk Road history in Turkestan and uncover eerie rusting ships in the middle of the desert, where the Aral Sea once flowed, on this seven-night tour. Visit the Cosmodrome at Baikonur, where you will learn about the Soviet space programmes and, if lucky, witness a rocket launch. The tour finishes in Kazakhstan's wealthy capital, Bishkek, where gleaming glass-fronted buildings unashamedly jostle for position. **Departing until 30 September 2018**, [Across the Kazakh Steppe](#) costs from £3,439 pp (two sharing), including flights, accommodation, breakfast, some additional meals and an Explore Tour Leader throughout. Call Explore on 01252 884 723 (www.explore.co.uk).

Eastern Canada in the Fall – from £3,585 pp with Ffestiniog Travel

Witness Canada's spectacular display of autumn foliage on an escorted tour aimed at those who prefer to travel away from the usual tourist beat. Take the train through the great wilderness to Northern Quebec and Ontario, marvel at the Fall colours along the St. Lawrence River and on the Abitibi train during a scenic journey to Senneterre, and enjoy the remoteness of Moosonee, a town of just 1,360 residents (mostly First Nation Cree) in James Bay. Niagara Falls also features, as does time to explore Montreal, Quebec and Toronto, plus a visit to Cochrane Polar Bear Habitat. **Departing 3 October 2018**, [Eastern Canada in the Fall](#) costs from £3,585 pp (two sharing), including flights (London) to Montreal/from Toronto, transfers, all rail travel and excursions as per the itinerary, room-only accommodation and tour leader. Call Ffestiniog Travel on 01766 512 400 (www.ffestiniogtravel.com).

Discover the exotic Andaman Islands – from £1,500 pp with Fleewinter

Explore India's exotic and secluded secret paradise, the Andaman Islands, on this fascinating tour. The azure waters, incredible diving opportunities and world-class beaches make the islands the perfect escape from hectic modern life. Discover the vibrant city of Calcutta before making your way to Havelock Island, where you have seven days to enjoy this island paradise whether lounging on the beach or taking part in activities such as diving, snorkelling, boat trips, fishing and guided nature strolls through the rainforest. **Departing from 1 October 2018**, the 11-night [Experience the Andaman Islands](#) trip costs from £1,500 pp (two-sharing), including B&B accommodation, domestic flights and ferry tickets to and from Havelock Island, and a private guided tour in Calcutta. International flights extra. Call Fleewinter on 02071 120 019 (www.fleewinter.com).

Piedmont's remote and rugged Valle Maira – from £1,095 pp with Intravel

Occupying a fold of Italy's Cottian Alps close to the French border, the formerly deserted mountain villages of the Valle Maira have been newly revamped with the renovation of a network of ancient paths which circumnavigate the valley, known as the 'Percorsi Occitani'. Stroll across lavender-clad hillsides, pass atmospheric relics from World War II, follow challenging high mountain routes and indulge in delicious Italian food in this forgotten valley, so cut off that the locals still speak Occitan. Stay in cosy mountain

retreats along the way, one of which is a renovated school house. **Departing June to September 2018**, [Piedmont's Magical Valley](#) costs from £1,095 pp (two sharing), including eight nights' half-board accommodation, six picnics, luggage transfers, route notes and maps. Call Intravel on 01653 617 000 (www.intravel.co.uk).

Escape to the ends of the earth – from £4,899 pp with Llama Travel

Spend 20 days exploring the pristine landscapes and natural features of Chile and Argentina, from Argentina's Perito Moreno Glacier to the towering mountains of Torres del Paine in Chile. Cruise between Argentina and Chile via Cape Horn, passing through the most southerly regions of Patagonia. En route, explore glaciers, spot penguins and sea lions, and disembark on Cape Horn, in the centre of the choppy seas where the Pacific and Atlantic oceans meet. **Departing 2 November 2018 – 28 November 2019**, the [Cape Horn Cruise](#) costs from £4,899 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), transfers and B&B accommodation. The cruise segment is full board. Call Llama Travel on 02072 633 000 (www.llamatravel.com).

Discover the wild beauty of Shetland and Fair Isle – from £1,195 pp with McKinlay Kidd

Fall in love with the unique culture of Shetland and experience the beauty of the isolated outpost of Fair Isle. With four nights on Shetland and two on Fair Isle, you have plenty of time to explore the traverse rocky landscapes, peer in awe at dramatic cliff-faces, breathe in the sea air on empty beaches and watch the many birds that call these remote islands home. If you are wanting a break from daily life with a warm welcome, then this trip ticks all the boxes. **Departing until November 2018**, the six-night [Shetland and Fair Isle Discovery](#) costs from £1,195 pp (two sharing), including flights (Edinburgh or Glasgow), car rental on Shetland, B&B and dinner on Fair Isle. Call McKinlay Kidd on 0141 308 8009 (www.mckinlaykidd.com).

Explore Bhutan's Northern Himalaya – from £8,020 pp with Mountain Kingdoms

Discover the mysteries of Bhutan's Northern Himalaya on this unforgettable 35-day adventure (28 days trekking). Trek through remote valleys, cross 14 exhilarating passes and experience scenic views of extraordinary mountain peaks. The return journey is through true wilderness, following a route relatively unexplored by western travellers, offering the perfect ending to this Himalayan adventure. There will be plenty of time to visit some of Bhutan's most iconic sights, including the impressive Tiger's Nest Monastery. On your trek, you will camp in comfortable tents and, whilst exploring the surrounding towns and cities, stay in characterful hotels. **Departing 29 September 2018**, [Lunana Snowman Trek](#) costs from £8,020 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), B&B in Kathmandu, 31 days' full board, expert Bhutanese guide and internal flights. Call Mountain Kingdoms on 01453 844 400 (www.mountainkingdoms.com).

Step back in time on the Roman road to Santa Maria, Portugal - from £670 pp with On Foot Holidays

Hidden away in the green valleys of north-eastern Portugal, rural village communities continue a lifestyle that is centuries old. Enjoy the little-known and Wi-Fi-free Peneda-Gerês National Park, where distinctive granite *espigueiros* (granaries), wild uplands and ancient paved footpaths exist on one of Europe's most scenic Roman roads to the monastery of Santa Maria. The week-long walking trip concludes in historic Porto. **Departing until October 2018**, [Northern Portugal](#) costs from £670 pp (two sharing) including seven nights' B&B, six picnic lunches, luggage transfers and route information. Graded medium-hard (11-23 km/day), with some shortening options. Flights extra. Contact On Foot Holidays on 01722 322 652 (www.onfootholidays.co.uk).

Discover the beauty of Kyrgyzstan – from £1,980 pp with Pettitts Travel

Explore Kyrgyzstan, the least known of the Central Asian republics and the only central Asian country to allow visa-free travel (up to 60 days) for British citizens. Discover monumental avenues and large Soviet buildings framed by snow-capped peaks in the capital, Bishkek. Visit the petroglyphs of Cholpon-Ata and marvel at the impressive views of the Tian Shan Mountains across the Issyk-Kul lake, and hike in the Karakol Gorge. **Departing year round**, the [Essence of Kyrgyzstan](#) costs from £1,980 pp, including flights (from/to the UK), full-board accommodation, private car and driver, local English-speaking guide. Call Pettitts Travel on 01892 515 966 (www.pettitts.co.uk).

Greenland, Iceland and the Norwegian Fjords – from £2,330 pp with Ramblers Walking Holidays

Discover the northern oceans around Greenland, Iceland and into the labyrinthine Norwegian fjords on this 14-night cruise and walk holiday. Uncover a plethora of natural wonders with pristine arctic wilderness giving rise to floating icebergs, tumbling glaciers, steaming geysers and active volcanoes. Stopping in remote areas not easily accessible by land, spectacular on-board vistas are perfectly complemented by

brehtaking walks through tiny coastal villages, glacial valleys and over magnificent mountain passes. Scheduled over summer to make the most of the scenery and wildlife. **Departing 25 July 2018**, [Greenland, Iceland & Norway](#) starts from £2,330 pp (two sharing), including accommodation on board, all meals and snacks, entertainment on board, port taxes, programme of walks, local transportation and tips to restaurant staff. Call Ramblers Walking Holidays on 01707 386 767. (www.ramblersholidays.co.uk).

The wilds of the Knoydart Peninsula – from £1,495 pp with Wilderness Scotland

Isolated from the rest of the Western Highlands by a notorious strip of mountainous terrain, Scotland's Knoydart Peninsula is often described as Britain's last wilderness. Reached by boat, the Peninsula offers access to some of the best walking routes in Scotland. Sample some of the Scotland's finest cuisine and visit the most remote pub in Scotland for a 'wee dram' while staying in a wilderness lodge right on the beach, a great base for exploring the most remote mountains in Britain. Make full use of the sea by journeying to Skye, the Small Isles and other corners of the peninsula, often encountering whales, dolphins and porpoises on route to the day's walk. **Departing 13 April – 31 August 2019**, this seven-night [Walking – the Knoydart Peninsula](#) trip costs from £1,495 pp (two sharing), including 7 nights' full board accommodation, transfers and guide. Call Wilderness Scotland on 01479 420 020 (www.wildernessscotland.com).

Ends

SAVE THE DATE: The AITO Summer BBQ on Tuesday 3 July. For more information email j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk.

Note to Editors:

AITO, www.aito.com, is an alliance of over 120 of the best travel specialists. AITO members collectively provide an unrivalled range of holidays to every corner of the world. They are passionate about what they do and pride themselves on their attention to every detail of their customers' holidays.

AITO members' joint aim is to offer personal, caring service, to look after the environment in the places in which they work and to provide holidays that deliver both good value and high standards. All AITO holiday companies are required, as a condition of membership, to take full financial protection measures on behalf of their clients via the appropriate industry bonding schemes.

Travel PR will happily email all AITO members with any queries that travel writers may have – it's a great way to receive speedy feedback or information from AITO experts via just one email request.

For further information on AITO, please contact [Travel PR](#) on 020 8891 4440 or email Sue Ockwell (s.ockwell@travelpr.co.uk) or Jackie Franklin (j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk).

Issued by Travel PR on behalf of
The Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO),
18 Bridle Lane, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW1 3EG
Telephone: +44 (0)20 8744 9280

www.aito.com

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