



## AITO Know It All – Media Newsletter

AITO ([www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)) turns 41 this year. As its 120-plus specialist operators continue to innovate, here is a selection of exciting new programmes, destinations and itineraries on offer for 2017.

**7 February 2017**

### **New tours and news from AITO members**

*Travellers can book directly through the AITO members featured in this newsletter. AITO members marked \* can also be booked through a local, trusted [AITO Specialist Travel Agency](#).*

**Activities Abroad\*** introduces South Africa as a new destination with a new tour: [South Africa Family Adventure](#). Families will enjoy a fun-filled **fortnight** exploring Cape Point and Cape Town's Table Mountain, with opportunities to join a river safari cruise, experience thrilling game drives and safaris at Amakhosi Safari Lodge, visit a Cheetah care sanctuary, snorkel in the clear waters of Kosi Bay, and much more. *Departures between 22 July and 19 August 2017.*

**Artisan Travel\*** offers a new small ship cruise where guests can explore the Aegean Sea and admire some of the most beautiful islands that Greece has to offer, based on a deluxe mega yacht. The [nine-night escape](#) features culture, history, ancient mythology and stunning landscapes, visiting Athens, Kea, Delos, Mykonos, Santorini, Crete, Kythira, Monemvasia, Nafplio and Hydra or Spetses. *Departures between 20 April and 19 October 2017.*

**Archipelago Choice\*** is now offering bespoke activity and wildlife holidays to the undiscovered tropical islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. Explore the spectacular islands on the **14-night São Tomé fly drive itinerary** - perfect for independent and adventurous travellers. Guests can travel across the islands with opportunities to explore by foot, go snorkelling, diving, bird-watching, join boat trips and visit plantations. *Departures available throughout 2017.*

**Chapters Experience Holidays\*** has introduced a new **week-long** walking holiday exploring rural Andalucía in southern Spain. [Insight to the High Alpujarras](#) offers the chance to cook like a local, tuck into tapas, explore nearby villages, stroll through olive groves and vineyards, and try yoga. Guests will stay at the quirky Las Chimineas – a collection of rustic village houses with lovely views and its own organic farm. *Departures between now and 14 October 2017.*

**Expressions Holidays\*** has launched the first of its guided Italian wine tours: [Wine Tour to Piemonte](#). Accompanied by an Italian food and wine expert, visit renowned vineyards such as those producing Barbera, Dolcetto, Moscato and Asti wines, with tasting opportunities on a number of prestigious estates. This **four-night** tour highlights the flavours of the Piemontese landscape, from wines and the Slow Food movement to the individual character of the villages. *Departures between 17 May and 4 October 2017.*

**Ffestiniog Travel\*** showcases its rail expertise with a new escorted holiday, paying homage to Japan's remarkable railway story. The [18-day tour](#) explores the three main islands of Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, combining journeys on high-speed bullet trains with scenic steam train travel. Visit the Maglev Exhibition Centre in Tokyo, and the new and vast Kyoto Railway Museum – plus enjoy extensive sightseeing. *Departures between now and 19 September 2017.*

**Inntravel\*** has collaborated with Margaret Marande, author of *The Hardy Way – A 19th-century Pilgrimage*, selecting highlights from her curated walk through Hardy's verdant Wessex to create a brand-new holiday: [The Hardy Way](#). Guests can retrace routes from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* to Win Green, visit Shaftesbury – or Shaston, as it was named in *Jude the Obscure* – and stay at the Inn in Cranborne, where Hardy once stayed. *Departures between 1 April and 31 October 2017.*

**Kudu Travel\*** offers a new escorted walking tour in the UNESCO-listed mountain range of the Dolomites in north-east Italy. [Dolomites Walks and Wildflowers](#) includes daily guided walks brimming with Alpine wildflowers, visits to museums, plus delicious regional food and wine. Spend two nights in South Tyrol, followed by five nights in the beautiful town of Cortina d'Ampezzo in the heart of the Southern Alps on the seven-night trip. *Departures between 25 June 2017 and 25 June 2018.*

**Llama Travel** has launched a new land-based holiday: [Galapagos Island Stay + A Taste of Ecuador](#). The **ten-day** trip begins on mainland Ecuador, where guests can wander the cobbled streets of Quito, choose to join excursions to the Papallacta hot springs or visit the market in Otavalo. Then guests will fly to the Galapagos for four days of exploring its unique geology and fascinating wildlife. *Departures between now and 31 March 2018.*

**Martin Randall Travel** introduces a new **seven-day** tour, [Savouring Lombardy](#), led by author and former director at the Teatro alla Scala, Fred Plotkin, combining the Italian region's best elements: music, gastronomy and art. Visit Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper in Milan, taste Italy's top red wines in the Valtellina valley and enjoy high-category tickets to Verdi's Nabucco at the Teatro alla Scala. *Departures between 30 October 2017 and 30 October 2018.*

**Mountain Kingdoms\*** is excited to launch its new [Gorilla & Wildlife Walking Safari](#) in Uganda. A real once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, travellers will have the rare experience of seeing the mighty mountain gorilla in its natural habitat, and can also spend a day with chimpanzees in the rainforest. Guests will also enjoy safaris in several of Uganda's other game-rich national parks where they can spot and tick off the ultimate 'Big Five'. *Departures between 4 March 2017 and 3 February 2018.*

**On Foot Holidays** has introduced a self-guided experience in the South-West for Spring 2017 to [Devon and Dartmoor](#). The seven-night trip meanders through some of the most beautiful and varied countryside in the British Isles – from Dunsford to the coast at Dartmouth. The walk starts in the medieval city of Exeter and then continues to legendary Dartmoor with its downs of extraordinary beauty – backdrop to much literature, both romantic and mystical. *Departures between 16 May and 23 May 2017.*

**Pure Crete\*** has introduced an inspiring week of history, culture and archaeology in Western Crete, new for 2017. Explore Chania, Aptera and nearby sites with wonderful views and join the Battle of Crete Memorial Service. Led by Dr Jill Marrington, [Exploring Crete Week](#) includes accommodation in Aptera, expert guidance, all excursions, and is suitable for single travellers, couples and small groups. *Departures between 16 May and 23 May 2017.*

**Simpson Travel** has expanded its collection of villas in Corsica, including the five-bedroom [Villa U Casone](#), ideal for multi-generational gatherings, offering contemporary style, jaw-dropping views over L'Île Rousse bay and the mountains of Cap Corse, a heated pool, plus a dedicated concierge service. The charming coastal town of L'Île Rousse, just 2km away, has shops, bars, restaurants and a string of beaches. *Departures between 14 May and 8 October 2017.*

**Sunvil\*** is offering a new [seven-night fly-drive holiday](#) to Paphos, one of 2017's 'European Capitals of Culture'. The trip includes stays in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, and the Troodos Mountains, where charming villages, marked walking trails and forested landscapes await the visitor. Cyprus is the ideal destination for intriguing events and culture, as well as sun and

glorious beaches. 2017 is the 47th year Sunvil has featured the island. *Departures between now and 31 October 2017.*

**The Aurora Zone\*** has a new tour - [Aurora Mountain Lodge & ICEHOTEL®](#) - in Swedish Lapland. Guests can go snowmobiling and husky sledding, encounter reindeer, embark on Northern Lights hunts and visit the famous ICEHOTEL®. The new Aurora Mountain Lodge is cosy, has rustic wooden décor, and is perfectly positioned for opportunities to see the Northern Lights, with activities taking place on its doorstep. *Departures between now and 2 April 2017.*

**Wilderness Scotland\*** has added a new guided holiday, [Sea Kayaking – the Scottish Highlands](#), combining sea kayaking with mountain hiking. Paddle through sheltered sea lochs, remote bays and uninhabited islands, look out for sea eagles, otters and porpoises and stay at a cosy Highland Inn on the shores of spectacular Loch Torridon. This trip is perfect for beginners as well as those looking to improve their skills. *Departures between 29 April and 29 September 2017.*

### **Latest news from AITO-affiliated Tourist Boards**

**The Catalan Tourist Board** is promoting the [Bike Camp Melcior Mauri](#), hosted by Catalunya, from **9th to 12th March 2017**. Cyclists will enjoy four days of pure cycling while discovering the breath-taking landscapes of the Costa Daurada. As a special guest for 2017, Miguel Indurain – winner of five consecutive Tours de France – will join this unique event, as well as the renowned climber, Claudio Chiappucci.

**The Jordan Tourism Board** has announced the launch of the [Jordan Trail](#), a 650km stretch connecting Um Qasi in the north and Aqaba in the south. The trail is the first of its kind, passing through 52 villages and helping local communities along the way. With many iconic sites to explore, from the ancient city of Petra to the Wadi Rum desert, now is the best time to visit the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

**Macao Tourism** has updated [Macao's calendar](#), which is filled with unmissable events in 2017. Macao ushered in the Year of the Rooster with a number of exciting and colourful celebrations including parades and firework displays. Highlights in the year ahead include the Feast of the Drunken Dragon, the 29th Macao International Fireworks Display Contest and the 64th Macau Grand Prix plus much more.

**The Malta Tourism Authority** has launched its [2017 Calendar of Events](#), featuring fantastic seasonal traditions and events. Through numerous high profile initiatives, the Maltese Archipelago has received global recognition and has become one of the most popular holiday destinations in Europe. Malta's capital city Valletta, renowned for its rich historic past, has been awarded the much sought-after title of European Capital of Culture 2018.

**The Tenerife Tourism Corporation** is excited to announce that the island is gearing up to host its highly- anticipated carnival, which is taking on a Caribbean theme this year. [The Santa Cruz Carnival](#), the world's second largest carnival after Rio, is taking place in the island's capital city from **19th February to 5th March 2017**. Expect spectacular parades, original fancy dress and non-stop street fiestas!

**VisitDenmark** reveals that a new [LEGO House](#) will open in the popular theme park, LEGOLAND Billund, to coincide with the 85th birthday of the first wooden block and the 60th birthday of the first interlocking brick. Designed by Bjarke Ingels architects, the house will be an interactive experience where fans of all ages can play and meet other LEGO builders. LEGOLAND Billund has partnered with nearby Lalandia holiday centre and the Givskud Zoo, making Billund an even more fun destination for families to visit.

**VisitPortugal** is featuring a new programme - "[All for All - Portuguese tourism](#)" - a special concept and commitment to ensure tourists feel welcome to the country, wherever they come

from and whatever their accessibility requirements while on holiday. VisitPortugal aims to be a top destination for tourists with special needs, achieved by creating an accessible and affordable destination for all, and by responding to each individual's requirements by providing better special needs services all round.

## **Ends**

**AITO, [www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com), is an alliance of over 120 of the best specialist holiday companies. 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.**

**Their joint aim is to offer personal, caring service to their customers, to look after the environment in the places in which they work and to deliver holidays that represent 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.**

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For the latest Directory of AITO members' PR contacts, please [click here](#).