

World

Luxury Travel

Magazine

Vol. 1 ■ Issue 12 ■ July, 2013

Best Walking Tours of
Europe

Islamic
Tourism

Travel like a true Muslim

August Happenings
around the World

Top 10 Things
to do in
Canada





The World Luxury Travel Magazine completes a year this month. If I had to define that year in a word, it would be 'beautiful'. Starting from the first day, we have been putting our best efforts to bring our readers the best and most authentic information possible. During this journey, we have also learnt and unlearnt many things and matured with time. Continuing this process, we promise to always live up to your expectations.

This issue of the e-zine has some interesting reads for you. We are going walking in Europe! Read our Cover Story on the most amazing walking tours of Europe. The Islamic holy month of Ramadan is just around the corner. On this occasion, the World Luxury Travel Magazine brings a special feature on Islamic Tourism. The feature gives you an insight of the amazing Islamic destinations where any religious Muslim traveller can enjoy to the fullest while adhering to the Islamic ways of life.



Summer is the best time to visit Canada. Of course, the best time stretches a little towards fall as well. We have already talked about the autumn displays here last year. This time we bring you the ten best things to do in Canada, in our Country Getaway section. Besides, read our regular sections on events and happenings around the world to keep tab of what's happening around you.

Thank you for one year of companionship!

Manashree Prakash
Editor-in-Chief

World
Luxury Travel
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Contents



5 || Cover Story

Best Walking Tours of
Europe



24 || Country Getaway

Top 10 Things to do in
Canada



Special Feature || 36

Islamic Tourism

Travel like a true Muslim

Event Watch || 48

International Conference on Travel Technologies (ICTT) India

|| 50

Happenings

August
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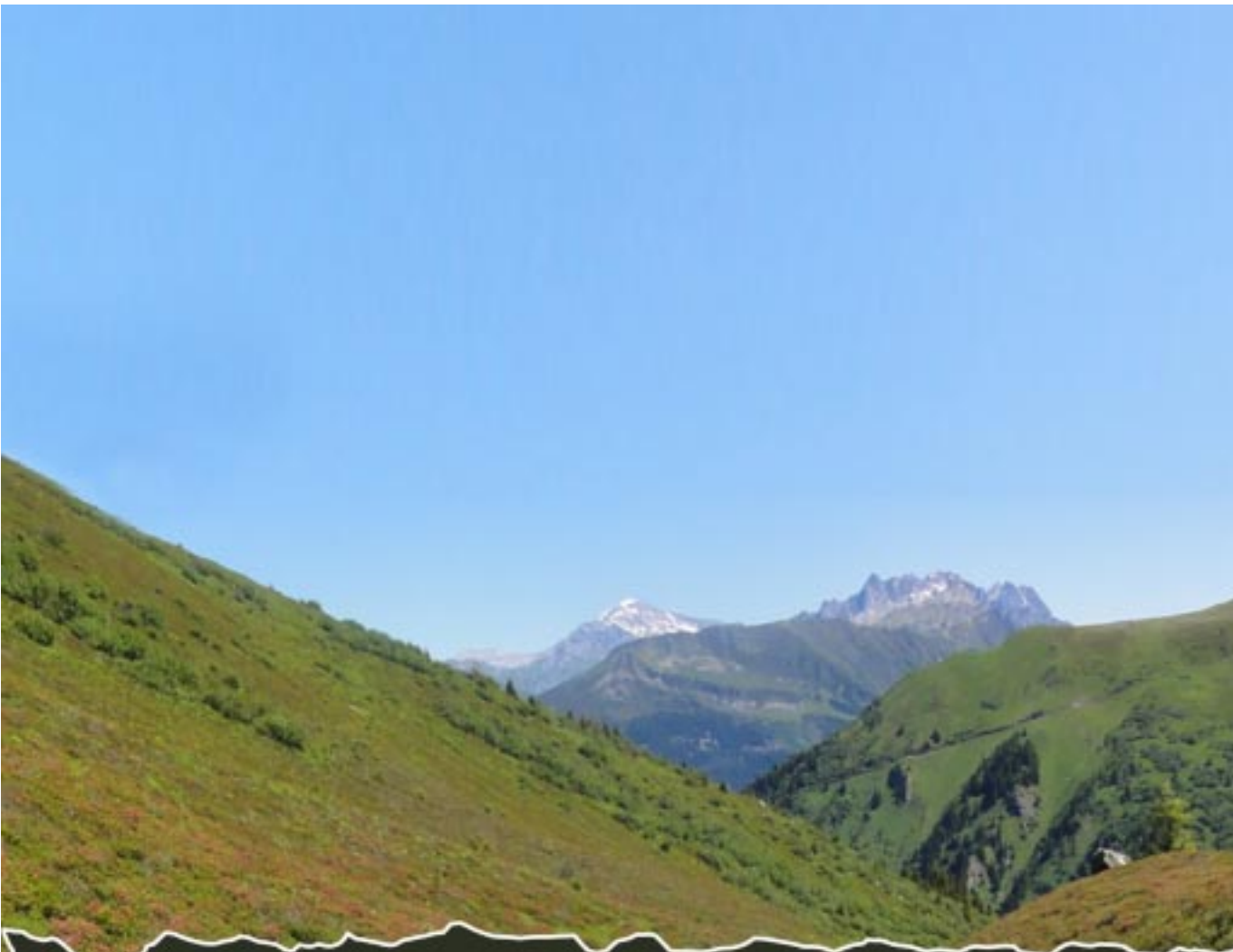
The World Luxury Travel Magazine

completes one year this month.

Here's our journey so far...



Best Walking Tours of Europe



Walking tours are one of the best ways to explore the culture and landscape of any region. It's a 'close up' encounter with many fascinating experiences and sights which you may miss otherwise. Whiz by in a car and you may never enjoy that impromptu meal at the lovely farmhouse on the way, or stop to bend over a wildflower or see the warm smile light up

a peasant's face as you give thanks for pointing out the way.

Europe has several lovely destinations for the walkers to explore. These walks not only offer breath-taking natural vistas, they are also a rich cultural and educational experience. Let us go on a tour of some of the most renowned walking tours of Europe.

Tour Du Mont Blanc (TMB), Alps

One of the incredibly beautiful walks in Europe, the Mont Blanc tour is literally a visual treat. Picture perfect scenery, the majestic Alps, quaint villages, stunning blue glaciers and gorgeous Alpine scenery all the way makes it one of the most popular walks in Europe. The trail involves around 170 km of hiking, 8000 m of ascent and 7 to 11 days of walking. The walk takes you through France, Switzerland and Italy. Les Houches is a popular starting point and the route proceeds in a circuit along seven valleys of Mont Blanc finishing at Les Houches again. Apart from the gorgeous scenery, you also get to gorge on delicious local food. Knowing French will be a big help as it is the language spoken in most places on this tour. All types of walkers can attempt this; however a minimum fitness level is needed to navigate the mountain climbs, poor visibility and changing weather conditions. There are several camps, mountain huts, dormitories or hotels to stay in.

Best time to Walk: July and August (advance booking recommended).



Camino Santiago, Spain

This legendary pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela is the resting place of Saint James. It is also known as the Way of St James.

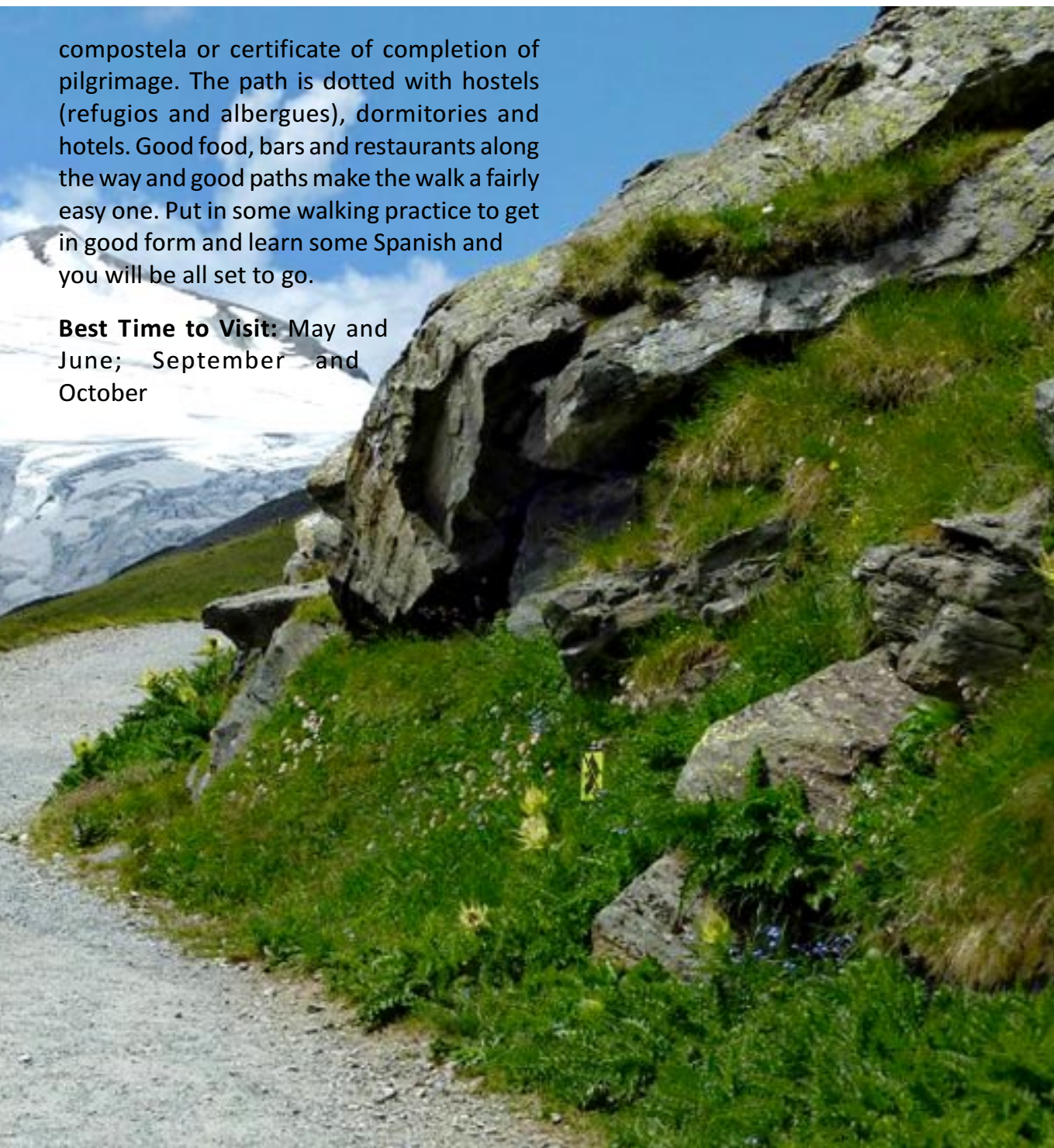
Essentially a network of medieval pilgrim

routes, it converges at the saint's shrine. The beauty of the routes will charm you, whether you choose to walk the whole 780 km from Roncesvalles (Camino Frances) or shorter routes (around 100 km). The shorter trips can be completed in around a week's time. The sight of ancient buildings, picturesque vineyards, historic towns and lovely valleys of Galicia will reward you during the walk. It is also a rich cultural experience. A walk of a minimum of 100 km will earn you the



compostela or certificate of completion of pilgrimage. The path is dotted with hostels (refugios and albergues), dormitories and hotels. Good food, bars and restaurants along the way and good paths make the walk a fairly easy one. Put in some walking practice to get in good form and learn some Spanish and you will be all set to go.

Best Time to Visit: May and June; September and October





Dolomites, Italy

The jagged, limestone mountain ranges of Dolomite are a climber's delight and make for lovely walking grounds. Nestled against this magnificent backdrop are the lovely villages, beautiful lakes (including the spectacular Lago di Braies), verdant meadows, pine forests and quaint mountain huts. You can choose short or long, flat or climbing trails based on your skill and fitness level. There are plenty of mountain huts (rifugio) that provide bedding, basic amenities and delicious local food. You may also look at some historical sites of





World War I. There are hillside tunnels and open air museum of the World War I. Another amazing WWI relic is the via ferrata (iron paths), which were originally akin to metal ladders used by the military for climbing. It is sheer exhilaration to climb one of the via ferratas and needless to say it is a popular tourist activity. The cultural experience of meeting different locals, sampling various cuisines, different languages and absorbing the sheer loveliness of Nature makes this an unbeatable experience.

Best time to visit: Mid-June to September.

Alsace Wine Trail, France

The Alsace region, nestled amidst the Vosage Mountains in France with Germany and Switzerland close by, is not only lovely but also culturally rich.

Bursting with charming wine-producing villages and lip-smacking local fares, the entire tour is a memorable experience. During the walking tour, you can drink your fill of superb wines while enjoying the beauty of the countryside. Picturesque

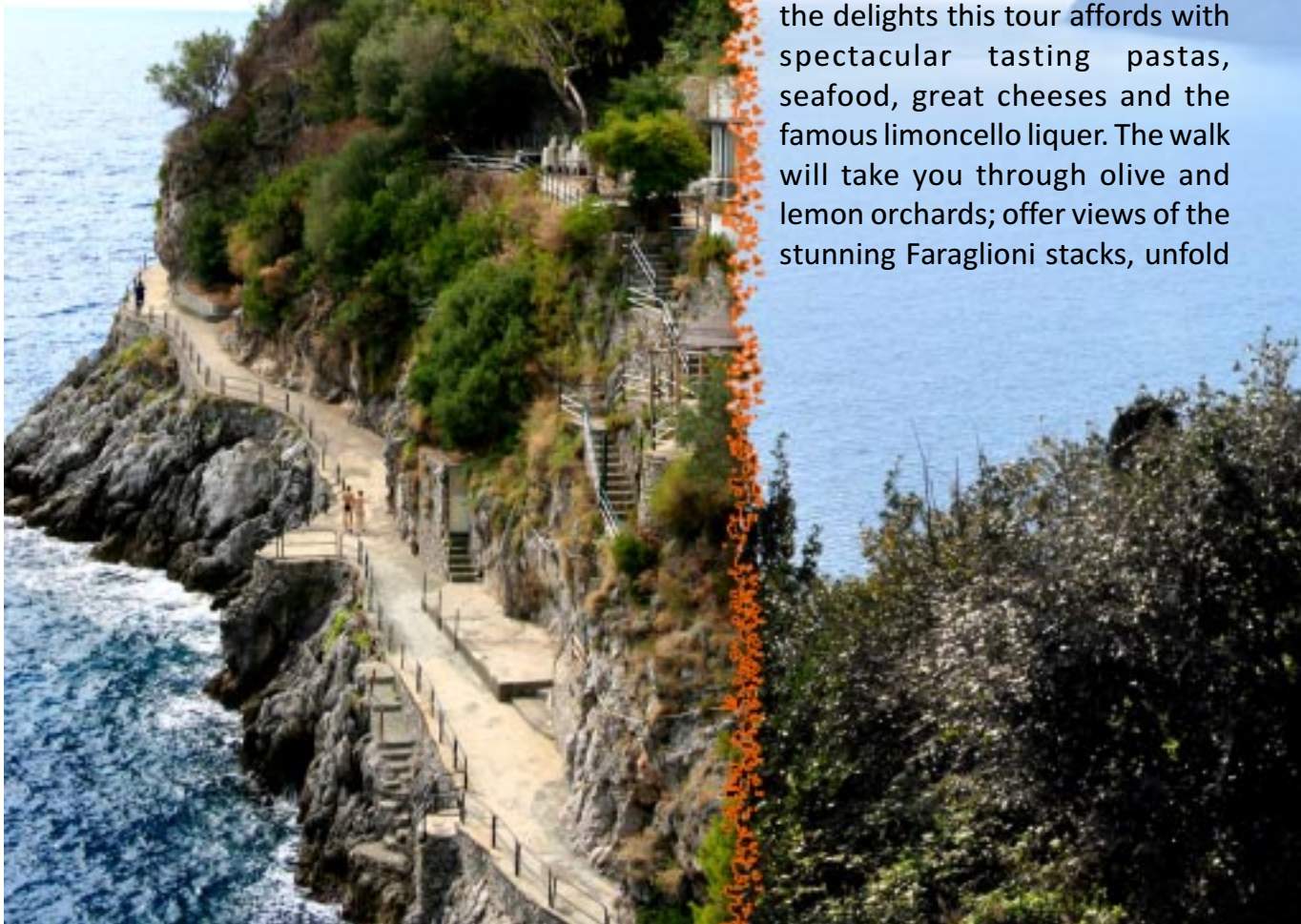


farms, vineyards, charming villages, fairy tale castles and ancient churches will all be a part of this fascinating walking tour. The Alsatian Vineyard Route is very popular and not to be missed are tasting sauerkraut, tarte flambees and Pinot Noir.

French and German are the main language here. The undulating land and short distances makes this an easy walk for most people.

Best Time To Visit: April to mid-October.





Amalfi Coast Walk, Italy

Situated in south-western Campania in Italy and overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, the Amalfi coast is one of Europe's most beautiful coastlines. It is a favourite among walkers for its superb coastal scenery, jagged cliffs, tiny picture postcard villages and the lovely Mediterranean climate. The amazing food is an integral part of the delights this tour affords with spectacular tasting pastas, seafood, great cheeses and the famous limoncello liqueur. The walk will take you through olive and lemon orchards; offer views of the stunning Faraglioni stacks, unfold

the delightful villages of Positano, Ravello and Sorrento, the historic paper mills of Amalfi and the ancient ruins of Pompeii. The famous 'Walk of the Gods' starts in Bomerano and ends in Positano. It takes around week for this tour. A general physical fitness is required for this walk.

Best Time to Visit: April to June.



Greek Island Walks, Greece

Greece is rich in history, culture and natural beauty and a walking holiday is a perfect way to experience Greece. The mild climate and lovely landscape makes it ideal for walking tours. The most popular walking destinations include Corfu, Peloponnese, Crete, Samos and Cyclades. Lovely white washed seaside villages, Byzantine

churches and great local food will make your trip memorable. You can visit the magnificent Acropolis, the lovely beaches of Mykonos, the stunning volcanic town of Santorini, trek the Mt Olympus and explore the Samaria Gorge National Park in Crete. Basic good fitness level is



needed for the walks.

Best Time To Visit: May and June (spring); September and October (autumn).



Lycian Way, Turkey

The Lycian Way is a 510 km stretch of walking trail along the coast of Lycia, stretching between Fethiye and Antalya. Considered one of the best walks in the world, it is an enjoyable way of exploring the Turquoise Coast of Turkey. Home to ancient Lycian, Roman and Byzantine civilizations, Turkey has a rich cultural history as will be borne out by the fascinating ancient buildings you will come





across while walking here. Unspoilt scenery, beautiful beaches, quaint villages and delicious local cuisine are the highlights of the walks. The flames of Chimaera (natural phenomenon of flames coming out of rocks), Olympus and Antalya Old Town are attractions to watch out for. The paths are fairly good but there is some uphill walking so a basic level of fitness is desirable.

Best Time to Walk: April and May; September and October.

The Kerry Way, Ireland

This 214 km circular trail in County Kerry, starting and ending in Killarney, is the walking hotspot of Ireland. It more or less follows the famous tourist trail, Ring of Kerry. Some of the most dramatic

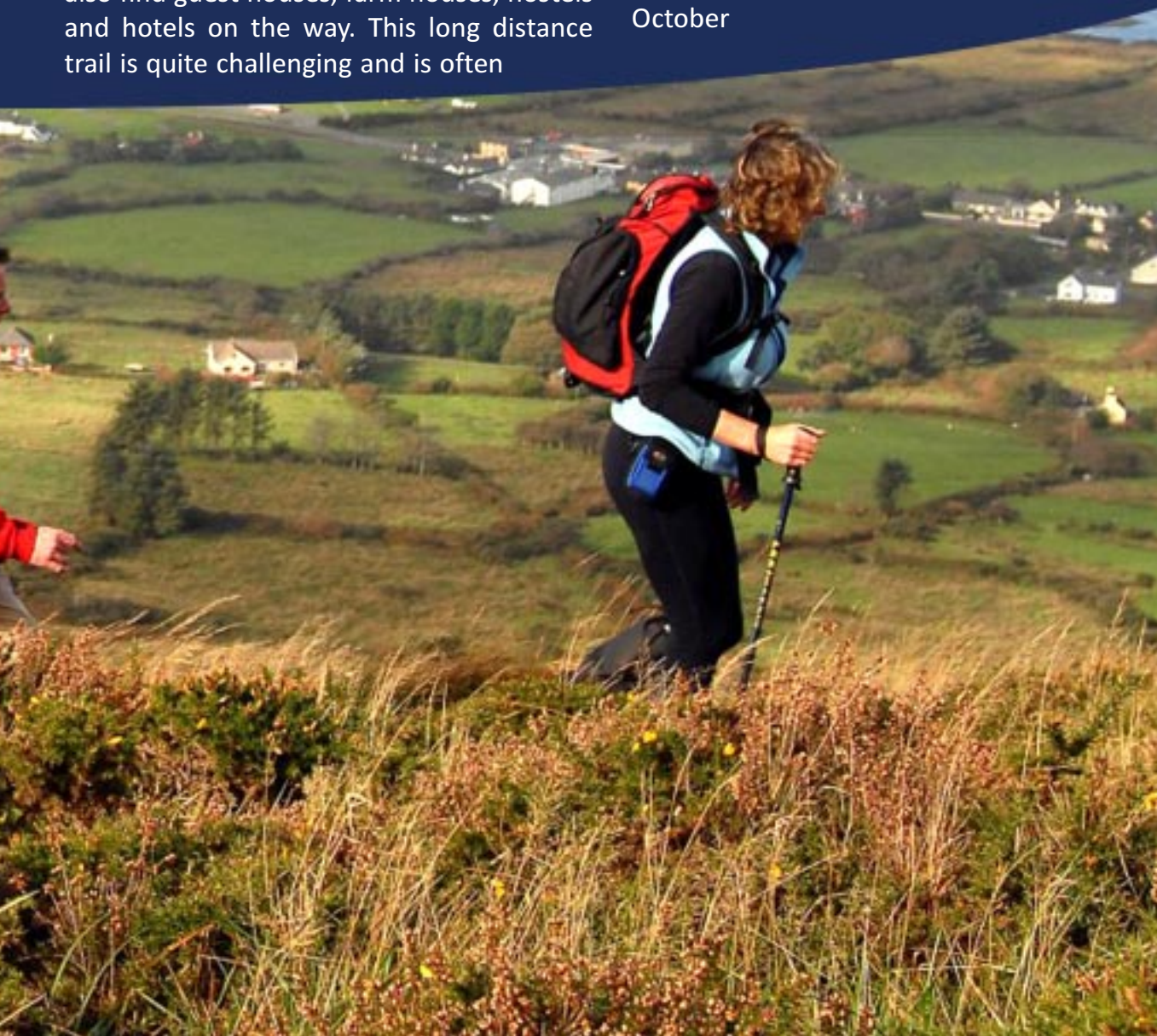
and desolate Irish landscape will take your breath away as you proceed along this trail. It takes around 9 days to cover the whole way. The trail takes you across varied scenery, spectacular cliffs, mountainous country terrain, marshy land, national parks and farmland. Killarney is a popular tourist town but you will



also be crossing secluded places like Black Valley. Enjoy the famous Irish hospitality, the local culture and of course the merry Irish pubs. Bed and Breakfast accommodations are popular and you will also find guest houses, farm houses, hostels and hotels on the way. This long distance trail is quite challenging and is often

covered in remote locations, so it is important to be in top physical form if you are planning to go the whole way. If not, you can still enjoy shorter and easier trails.

Best Time to Walk: April to October





General Tips for Walking Tours

Plan your tour, book in advance, check about local conditions before you set out. Packing light is essential but pack in whatever is vital for that region. Wearing good shoes is the most important thing to do, as it can make or break your trip. Drink a lot

o f




water to prevent dehydration. Check with your doctor and get an 'all clear' certificate before you start. Stay safe during the trip and keep someone informed of where you are heading. Knowing the local language to do the minimum communication goes a long way. Always follow the safety guidelines.

Enjoy your walking tour, stop, admire, enjoy. Remember, the beauty of the experience is in the journey, not the destination.



Top 10 Things to do in **Canada**



Situated side by side, Canada and USA are the twin sisters who would never make up after a cat fight. However, for the tourists, Canada is yet another land of mysterious opportunities. Wrapped in the veil of thick snow, Canada in winter enjoys its icicles as well as its title - "Switzerland of Northern America". In short and sweet summer, hold the warmth in your hearts as it's the most auspicious time of the year to indulge yourself in fun activities. It's the time to say - "I love you too, Canada". Apart from the diversely beautiful seasons, the country is a mine of surprises in terms of lifestyles. Take a look at the facades, witness British and French culture twined with each other to give way to new art forms. When you come to think of it, Canada is the second largest country in the world and one of the richest in terms of wealth and heritage. So, once here, there is always plenty to do, only you have to figure what you want to do. Here are the top ten activities to do in Canada...



Summer time is fun time. It stays for only a few months, so make the most of it through some of the most breath-taking summer time activities.

1. Bungee Jumping

Every high rise in Canada has at least one activity common during summer – Bungee Jumping. Started in

the 1950s, the sport of jumping with a chord attached to hold on to dear life has become a craze in the country. Not only citizens, but tourists also take equal enjoyment out of this daredevil stunt action. Goliath, the 200 feet jump from a cliff, is the best location for bungee jumping in Canada.

2. Summer Camping

Pack your bags and leave! Do you want to spend the time indoors when

nature is waiting for you outside? It's time to reconnect with nature and your family in the once in a lifetime camping experience. There are mushrooming camping grounds strewn about the picturesque landscape. Virgin forests may not be the kind of bonfire that you are looking for. But a Prairie evening with a cool sunset in front of you might be the best way to enjoy your holiday away from the bustle of the routine life.





3. Yachting

The luxury getaway to your Canadian summer retreat is here - luxury yachting. Set sail for your royal destination of enjoyment. There are options aplenty and with century old yachting clubs like Royal Hamilton Yacht Club and Royal Canadian Yacht Club holding the mantle to excellence, there is an aristocratic touch to your smooth holidaying experience. In Canada, boat prices have hit a low. Choose well between motor boats

and sailed ones. The first one gathers speed and covers those extra miles to the horizon while the second is for the lazy ones who take the splashes along with the stride.

4. Flying

When it comes to flying, Canadians are just born for the skies. The best flying conditions in the world (probably better than even in flight simulators) with clear skies and excellent weather, Canada produces the best



pilots in the world. Though no Canadian flying school will encourage happy go lucky tourists to get a hand on their world class equipment, but there is always the option of “ultralights”. These light weight babies are built for the flier within you. Much cheaper to hire and they don’t require a pilot’s license while flying. Still if you want expert help, approach for the ‘learn at your pace’ program under

Recreational Aircraft Association (RAA). Are you interested in free fall? Challenge thin air with the thrill of skydiving. Drop to freedom from the SWOOP jump platform in Toronto.



5. Bear Watching

The rarest of rare views come as a bonus with a trip to Canada. How about a Polar Bear Cruise around the Arctic Circle? The giant white carnivores patrol the Northern Arctic regions of Canada (near Labrador). There are two more types of bears found here. At Cedar's Inn, keep a close watch for ferocious Black Bears to devour spawning Salmon fishes. Speaking of Salmon, even you can catch a few on your own. Participate in Canadian Fly Fishing.

There's plenty to cater all – bear and human.

Bear watching is one of the more interesting and unique activities in Canada because of the light brown Grizzly Bears. Unlike the Black Bears, which are found almost in all forest regions, Grizzly Bears roam the Western mountainous slopes.





6. Windsurfing

Take your splash in style with the surfboard under your feet. Winds are by your side wherever you are – Atlantic, Pacific or the Great Lakes. Choose from among the

different ranges of wave boards available at the beaches. Come August, do visit the Canadian Masters Windsurfing Association (CMWA) Annual Championship in Ontario and witness the true masters of surfing tame the waves with their stunts.





7. Scuba Diving

Canada is the leader in scuba diving not only in technology but for the most beautiful scenic spots underwater. On both the sides of the Great Lake and in the protected shelves of the British Columbia coast, there have been many such wonderful marine lives garnered by nature for hundreds of years. Tranquillity can be a synonym for Canadian scuba diving if you are interested in the 400 odd varieties of oceanic fishes found at these coasts. The thrill for extreme adventure also isn't far behind. The deep waters of the Great Lakes have over 4000 sunken ships with their many secrets.



8. Whale Watching

Welcome the chance to meet the whales, literally! The world's largest mammals seem to occupy the coasts of Canada because of the large unpopulated waters near the Arctic. About 90 whales can be found near the Vancouver coast alone. Other major whale watching sites include Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Newfoundland etc. Best time to see the whales is during summer – from the month of May to the months of September–October. You may also spot seals, dolphins, pilot whales, swordfishes and killer whales.





9. Ballooning

Not exactly jet skiing, but there is no better view of Canada than from a balloon. As you capture the distant countryside as well as the parliament with equal clarity, let the world see colours too through the colourful balloons that float in the sky. Ballooning is a national pastime over here as every year thousands of colourful balloons take part in the numerous ballooning festivals and competitions. With a clear sky and calm weather, summer time is ideal time for festivals like the Cornwall Lift-Off, Atlantic International Balloon Fiesta, Canadian Hot Air Balloon Championship and more.

10. Winter Activities

- **Skiing:** When you have nothing else to do, just strap your feet up to a pair of skis and set out in the endless traces of snow. World famous skiing slopes of Canada are very close to the USA border. There are many skiing slopes between New



Brunswick and Nova Scotia as well as there are in the ridges of Canadian Rocky Mountains in the West. Winter is long. So, skiing has made way to many new forms of entertainment. Heli-skiing, Ski Tours, Canadian Snowboarding, snowshoeing, snowmobiling are only to name a few.

- Ice Fishing: Winter, not exactly the ideal time you would like to get your hands in water. Canada gives you the chance for deep sea fishing in the coasts of British

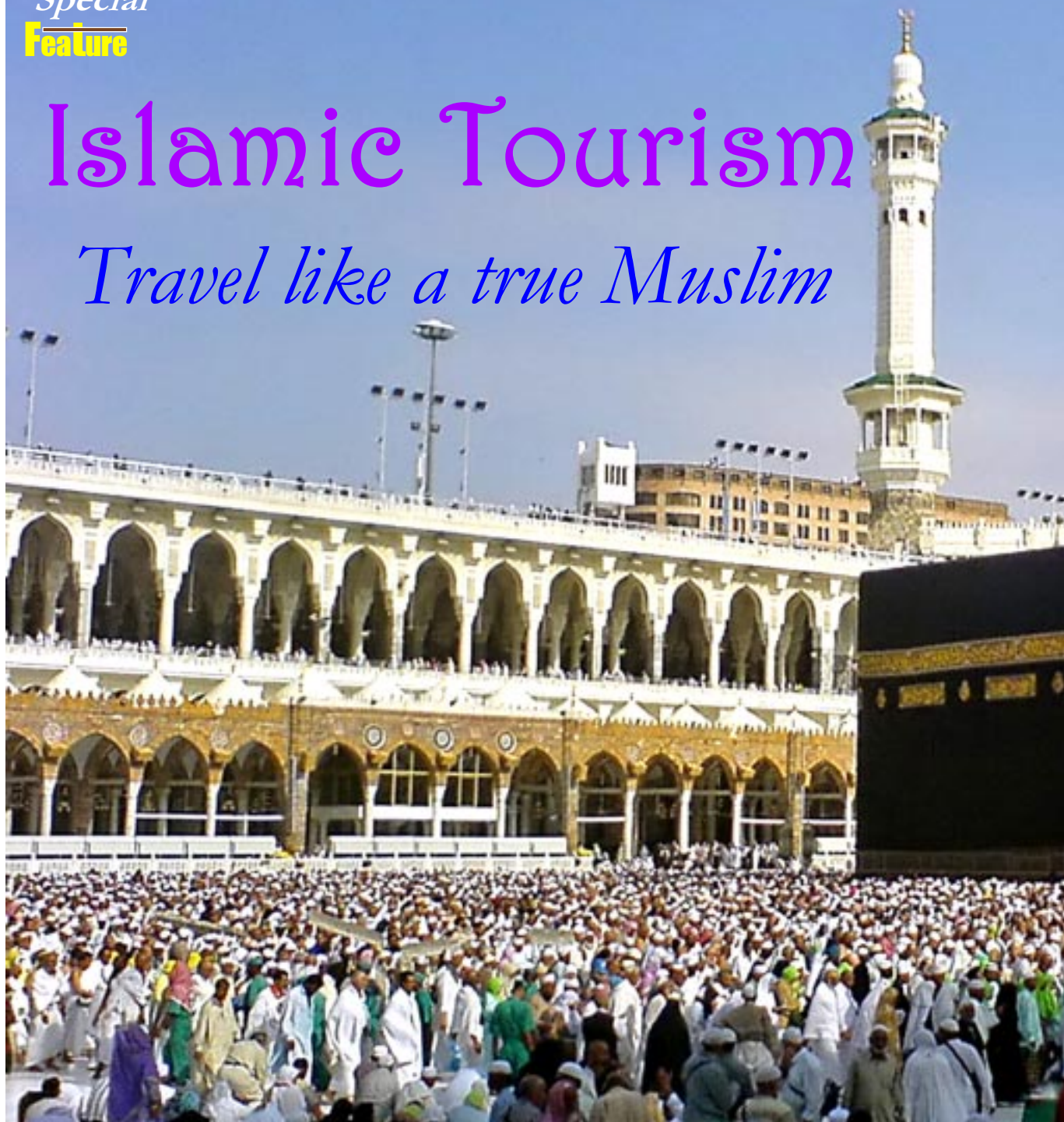
Columbia with slightly elevated temperature.

There are many countries which can encourage culture from outside. But for Canada, French and English have helped but only in creating a multicultural base for the country. Canada celebrates this unity in diversity on June 27 every year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day. Get up close with friendly folk in an enriched society. This festival is also an opportunity for the wanderers amongst us to witness colours, music and culture from around the world. Stratford Festival by the Ontario Lake and Shaw Festival by the Niagara Falls are just common passages to nature's unending beauty and people's cultural sobriety.



Islamic Tourism

Travel like a true Muslim



Travelling has always been an intrinsic part of human existence. Initially it was to gather food and later it became a means for trade and business. Much later, perhaps during the 17th century, the tourism dimension was added to travelling. The element of luxury and relaxation started getting importance apart from commerce. History chronicles that great spiritual leaders

travelled far and wide to spread their message of God and peace whether it was Jesus Christ, Lord Buddha or Prophet Mohammed. Prophet Mohammed travelled all over west Asia, mainland Europe and Africa. Initially, travelling was either an exodus or conquest while trading was just an offshoot. There wasn't any specific Muslim or Islamic tourism initiative. Tourism used to be a general relaxing activity without any particular nomenclature. But over a period of time, things have changed and tourism has acquired various

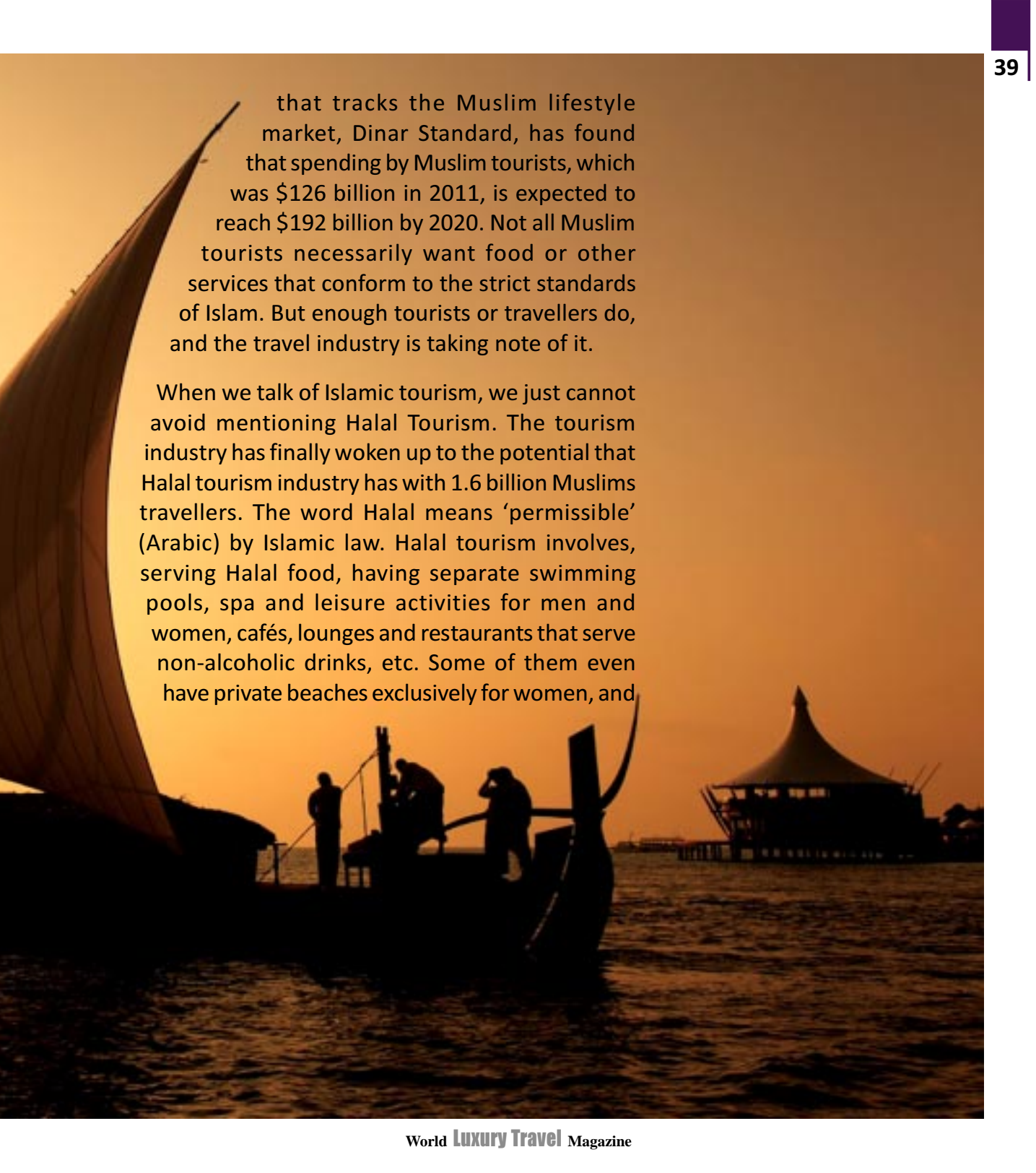


dimensions. The latest niche in tourism is Islamic or Halal tourism, which effectively means tourism activities that are compatible with Sharia laws or permissible with Islamic practices.

Islamic tourism is an alternative to conventional tourism in the following respects:

1. Avoidance of religiously prohibited (haram) products and services in the tourist packages; in other words, observance of the halal requirements such as in the hospitality and entertainment products and services.
2. Offering non-tangible, qualitative ingredients or contents in the tourist package, especially as defined in spiritual-moral terms. One of the major features of Islamic tourism is that it is a k-tourism (knowledge-tourism), including the pursuit of spiritual knowledge.
3. Offering opportunities for vastly improved cultural literacy, for learning other perspectives on the inner meaning of tourism, especially the understanding of pleasure, vacation and recreation as the primary objectives of tourism.
4. Islamic tourism is not just about visiting holy places, mosques, shrines and tombs, and other popular religious sites that are limited to the history of Islam. Objectives of sight-seeing or touristic sights such as the pre-Islamic historical sites and the natural wonders targeted by conventional eco-tourism may be included.

A news report by a
US-based firm



that tracks the Muslim lifestyle market, Dinar Standard, has found that spending by Muslim tourists, which was \$126 billion in 2011, is expected to reach \$192 billion by 2020. Not all Muslim tourists necessarily want food or other services that conform to the strict standards of Islam. But enough tourists or travellers do, and the travel industry is taking note of it.

When we talk of Islamic tourism, we just cannot avoid mentioning Halal Tourism. The tourism industry has finally woken up to the potential that Halal tourism industry has with 1.6 billion Muslims travellers. The word Halal means 'permissible' (Arabic) by Islamic law. Halal tourism involves, serving Halal food, having separate swimming pools, spa and leisure activities for men and women, cafés, lounges and restaurants that serve non-alcoholic drinks, etc. Some of them even have private beaches exclusively for women, and



mixed beaches for families where women can wear the Islamic swimming dress code and hang out with their families. Countries that promote Halal vacations make the holiday experience for a Sharia abiding Muslim, a pleasant and memorable one.

Let us take a look at the Halal tourist destinations which are not members of

the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (formerly known as Organization of the Islamic Conference):

Vienna, Austria: Approximately 8.4 million Muslims live in Austria, making it home to a number of mosques and other Muslim tourist attractions such as the Vienna Islamic Centre and Islamic Cultural Centre.

Munich, Germany: More than four million Muslims have chosen to make it their home. The high number of Muslims means visitors will never find themselves too far from a mosque or a Halal restaurant.

London, United Kingdom: The United Kingdom's capital city has always been a hotspot for Gulf travellers during the hot





summer months so it's not surprising to see it listed as seventh in terms of Halal-friendliness. Though in recent times UK has not been the safest places for a Muslim to be in, as hate crimes against them has risen manifold.

Delhi, India: Islam is the second most practiced religion in India and home to more 138 million Muslims. The world's eighth largest city is home to the second largest community of Muslims in India making its Halal street food just as famous.



to the certified fine dining restaurants, Sri Lanka also boasts a number of Muslim-owned roadside food outlets.

Gold Coast, Australia: The Gold Coast has it all, picturesque beaches and theme parks, and for its Muslim visitors, prayer rooms and Halal restaurants. Muslim tourists visiting during the Holy month of Ramadan will also find a score of Iftar, Suhour and night activities.

Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's large Muslim population means Halal restaurants are a plenty in this stunning country. In addition



South Africa: Where else can you find the world's second highest waterfall, the third largest canyon and some of the most stunning views in the world? It is the third most Muslim-friendly destination and boasts a wide variety of Islamic facilities including Halal restaurants and masjids (mosques).

Singapore: Around 15 per cent of this island state's population is Muslim, meaning

Muslim travellers will feel more than at home while visiting Singapore. It boasts of Halal certified restaurants and more than 70 mosques.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Taking the top position among non-OIC countries as Halal-friendly tourist destination of the year is Bosnia





and Herzegovina. More than 50 per cent of this southeast European country is Muslim. This means there are plenty of facilities and options available for religious Muslim travellers.

In this article we took a look at various destinations which have been attracting Muslims from all over the world. We have mentioned destinations for the lavish spenders as well as for budget conscious travellers. Several surveys have been

conducted to find out which are the best destinations/countries for Islamic tourism. Having said this, we would like to emphasise on the fact that there can be no best destination.

Different factors are taken into consideration for each survey. If one has given priority to the safety factor then another has considered accessibility as the most crucial point. However, the common

thread that we found among all the surveys conducted among OIC and non-OIC nations are the availability of Halal food and prayer places. Muslims are generally religious and prefer to visit places which are compliant with their religious beliefs. This inclination makes the Muslim tourist a niche client in some way. Though there are exceptions. Interestingly, the most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, does not have too many Halal food joints.



Apparently, for the local population, Halal food is not a priority. Although Malaysia has been considered the most Muslim-friendly country, surprisingly Thailand's Suvarnabhumi Airport has been voted as the most Muslim-friendly airport in the world.

Despite the global

recession during the last few years, tour and travel expenses have gone up steadily among the Muslims. To a certain extent it is sad that while Malaysia has done very well in catering to the Muslim tourists, Indonesia, despite being the numero uno Islamic nation, has not made much progress in the Islamic travel and tour sector. But Islamic tourism is the most booming sector in the global tourism industry at the moment and we can always expect things to improve drastically in the near future.



**Event
Watch**

International Conference on Travel Technologies (ICTT) India



The International Conference on Travel Technologies (ICTT), which concluded on June 9, 2013 at The Leela Kovalam, was an eye-opening experience. The ICTT, which was supported by the Association of Travel Trade Organizations, India (ATTOI) was a first of its kind platform on which travel professionals from all walks of the industry could exchange ideas, views and expertise.

The primary reason behind organizing the conference was the changes that are happening over the web space, travel-related software, mobile applications, the turnaround of marketing and sales trends, etc. In order to keep pace with these changes, almost everyone and anyone related to travel and tourism from India and around the world came together at the ICTT 2013.

The conference, inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, emphasized that it was high time for the tourism industry to incorporate social media, blogging and digital applications for marketing their services.

An exhibition on travel and tourism was also held on the side-lines of the conference which was highly attended. Activities such as presentations by the Tourism Minister and Kerala Tourism Authority added to the interest quotient of the event. Mr Chandy stated that Kerala could always woo its target audience in Sydney, London and other such cities through innovation.

The event was attended by more than 250 delegates, including tour operators, travel professionals and bloggers from around India and abroad. The conference was addressed by 17 eminent speakers, including former Union Minister Dr Sashi Tharoor, covering 23 issues, from countries like the US, UK, Australia and UAE.

Mostly the speakers spoke about the benefits and drawbacks of social media and cutting edge technology apart from online marketing, mobile applications, pricing and distribution strategies. They also focused on managing reviews and handling competition, revenue management, business intelligence and the future of technology. Most speakers, however, lamented that the Union Government was yet to prioritise travel and tourism as a frontline industrial sector. Except Kerala, no other state has really shown any significant progress in tourism policy or infrastructure. The eastern and northeastern parts of the country lag way behind the rest of the country despite having immense potential for tourism.

It is expected that ICTT, which was held for the first time, would become an annual event henceforth. The participants were unanimous on the point that they have gained new insights into the conduct of the tourism business after attending the conference and welcomed the Kerala Government's novel initiative.

August Happenings *around the World*





The Edinburgh Festival fringe

Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Edinburgh, Scotland)

Dates: August 2 – 26

The Edinburgh Fringe takes place every year for three overexcited weeks in Scotland's charming capital, Edinburgh. Fringe Festival is known as one of the biggest arts celebrations in the world. This festival takes place all over the city at the renowned venues such as the Traverse Theatre, Cabaret Voltaire and the Stand comedy club. Performances also take place in public parks, pubs, and even moving vehicles. This year the fiesta is likely to hold around 2000 shows with over 30,000 performances.

Edinburgh Fringe Festival is a place where the participants are free to be innovative. The participants are a bunch of student theatre companies, TV celebrities, jazz musicians, Dutch musicians, beginners and seasoned professionals.

***Trivia** - In 2010, there were 40,254 performances in 259 venues, featuring 21,148 performers.*

La Tomatina (Bunol, Spain)

Dates: August 28 (last Wednesday of August each year)

Every year, innumerable people come down to a picturesque Spanish village named Bunol to play or take part in the world's largest food fight - La Tomatina.

Thousands of people make their way from all corners of the world to fight in this biggest food fight where over one hundred metric tons of over ripe tomatoes are thrown at each other on the street.

Trivia - *The festival began way back in 1944 but there is no known religious or political significance for it.*





Notting Hill Carnival (London, England)

Dates: August 25 – 26

The Notting Hill Carnival is well known as one of the largest street carnivals in Europe. This social gathering showcases an incredible collection of music, colourful costumes and array of Caribbean food. The number of people attending this event each year goes up to one million and it features hundreds of food stalls, and traditional steel drum bands and massive sound system.

This year the Carnival will start on Saturday with a steel band competition, followed by Kids' Day on Sunday and the costume prizes. Monday is main parade day. The parade will end in the evening and then the streets will be left for after parties. If you make it to

London this August, make sure you visit London's very own carnival – the Notting Hill Carnival.

***Trivia** - The Notting Hill Carnival completes the route of 3.5 miles long from start to finish.*

***Tip** - Driving in the packed crowd is impossible, take the bus or tube; and beware of pickpockets.*



The Suicide Race (Omak, Washington)

Dates – August 8 – 11

The Suicide Race, also famous as the World Famous Suicide Race, is a horse race held each year as a part of the Omak Stampede, a rodeo. This deadliest Horse Race is one of the weird ones where the horses and riders run down the Suicide Hill, a 62-degree slope that runs for 225 feet to the Okanogan River. Nearly 15-20 mounted horses terrifically makes hoof-thundering gallop down an almost vertical hill.

Over a span of four days and nights, riders repeatedly run their horses off the Suicide Hill with a 120 feet galloping start. It is unclear how many horses or people have died in the race since its inception in 1935.

Trivia - Practices for the race starts three weekends prior to the race. Before the horse is allowed to compete in the race, it must pass three tests to prove its eligibility.





The Washington State International Kite Festival (Long Beach, United States)

Dates – August 19 – 25

The Washington State International Kite Festival (WSIKF) is a week-long kite celebration and competition held annually in August. This 6-day exciting occasion boasts skies with colourful kites of different shapes and sizes. The high flying action and choreographed movement of gaudy and colourful kites creates a rainbow of colours flying through the skies of Long Beach.

Washington's Kite Festival draws famous kite fliers from all around the world and thousands awed spectators to celebrate the fiesta of kites. Kids and kids at heart all will undoubtedly enjoy this colourful and sporty event.

You can even participate in kite workshops to learn few interesting things about this fascinating past time.

Trivia - The kites flown in the festival are generally the traditional kites from Bali, China, Japan, India, Malaysia and Thailand.



The Hungry Ghost Festival or Ullambana (China)

Dates – August 21

The Ghost Festival, also known as the Hungry Ghost Festival or Yu Lan (or Ullambana) is a traditional Chinese festival celebrated on the 15th night of the seventh lunar month. During this time, it is believed that the gates of hell open, releasing hungry ghosts to search their food and to pay a visit to their loved ones. People light up the lanterns on roadsides and at the riverside for the convenience of the ghosts. It is a day to honour the departed spirits of ancestors and pray for their safety.

During this unique festival the streets are

abuzz with Chinese opera stage shows and puppet shows to entertain the spirits and keep them happy. Floating lanterns filled with Lotus flowers and candles are sent off into water and air, which gives directions to the lost ghosts and spirits.

***Trivia** - Activities of the festival include preparing foods for offering and burning ghost money (or paper money also known as hell money) to please the visiting ghosts and spirits as well as deities and ancestors.*



The Great British Beer Festival (Olympia, London)

Dates – August 13 – 17

The Great British Beer Festival in London is the biggest annual beer festival in Britain, organized by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Around 55,000 people are expected to attend this year's Great British Beer Festival. This year's event will offer visitors more than 800 real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers to try. At the London Great British Beer Festival '13 tutored tastings will be available which will help one to become a beer connoisseur. This event is not all about the beer though. There will be many other exciting activities like pub games, live music and plenty of entertainment and delicious food to enjoy.

Trivia - One very popular event at the Great British Beer Festival is Hat Day, which is always held on the Thursday of festival week.



Puck Fair (Killorglin, Ireland)

Dates – August 10 – 12

Killorglin, in the heart of Kerry, celebrates Ireland's most unusual street festivals - Puck Fair. A group of Killorglin inhabitants head up into the nearby mountains and catch a wild goat. They bring that goat down to the town and crown it as the 'King Puck'. The festival begins after the wild goat is put in the cage. Puck Fair is linked to the pre-Christian celebrations of a fruitful harvest. The male goat or "Puck" is a pagan symbol of fertility.

Festivities of the Puck Fair include street traders, street artists, craft fairs, buskers, face painting, pet show, bonny babies, puppet theatre and music and singing sessions, dancing and drinking. The fiesta goes on for three days, concluding with a fireworks show on the last night. After the Puck Fair ends, the King Puck is set free in the mountain once again.

***Trivia** - Puck Fair, the oldest festival in Ireland will celebrate its 400 years in 2013.*



Birdfair (Rutland Water, United Kingdom)

Dates – August 16 – 18

Birdfair covers the whole spectrum of the bird-watching industry whilst at the same time it supports global bird conservation. The Birdfair will celebrate its 25th Anniversary this year and will continue supporting BirdLife International's Flyways Programme, with specific focus on the Americas.

In this Birdfair you can find everything from sculptures, binoculars to bird food, including

eGuides to eco-holidays. This event has a great significance for all who are into birds and wildlife. The fair will comprise of hundreds of stands selling the latest products for wildlife enthusiasts. A large number of suppliers of binoculars, cameras, books, clothing and other bird-watching equipment along with artists and tour companies, display and sell their wares with various lectures and other attractions.

Trivia - Birdfair does not allow dogs onto Birdfair property, including all car parking areas.



Raksha Bandhan (India)

Dates – August 21

In India, Raksha Bandhan (Rakhi) is celebrated as a sign of togetherness and unconditional love between brother and sister. Raksha Bandhan (meaning - bond of protection) is a festival where a brother promises his sister to always be there by her side and to protect her from all evils in the world. The ritual begins with a prayer in front of God. The sister then ties a beautifully decorated thread or bracelet (Rakhi) on her brother wrist and wishes for his happiness and well-being.

Primarily, this festival belongs to north and western regions of India but now it is celebrated in most parts of India with the same spirit.

Trivia – These days, people even tie Rakhi to their neighbours and close friends signifying a peaceful co-existence of every individual.

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