
PRESS RELEASE

Destination Hot Spots for 2008

China. With numbers to China steadily increasing over recent years, the big showcase year for China, with the Olympics in Beijing is finally here. The Olympics is an excuse for China to prove to the world that it is now a worldclass powerhouse and many travellers will use the event to make the trek to try and understand what everybody has been talking about. The Terracotta Warriors at the British Museum has also been a massive success in exciting interest for this most complex of nations. Not only is China a fascinating destination, it is also the fastest growing source of future travellers. Expect more!

Singapore. The city will host the world's first Formula One night race on 28 September.

Australia. A heady mix of blockbuster films and sporting events should remind us why Australia and Sydney are so often voted our favourite destinations. The epic 'Australia' – with homegrown Baz Luhrmann's directing and Nicole Kidman starring will outline the drama and beauty of the Northern Territories, 'The Cup' takes us to the other side of this vast continent – to Melbourne which outlines the story of one of the most famous victories of Australian horse racing history –released shortly in time for this year's Melbourne Cup in November. Our British hopeful Andy Murray will also be in Melbourne in January for the Australian Open, Formula One opens its season there in March while in Sydney, the Rugby League World Cup will kick off in October.

Colombia. Over the past five years, the political stability of Colombia has improved dramatically and the Colombian government has invested in tourism. 2008 will see Mike Newell's film of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel 'Love in the Time of Cholera' released in the UK, which has been filmed in Cartagena, widely thought of as the most beautiful city in South America and a favourite stop off for cruise ships and this is bound to fuel interest in Colombia. Although Colombia's has many stunning areas, not all of its problems have been resolved and it is important for anyone planning a trip to keep a close watch on the Foreign Office's travel advice.

Israel. 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the state of Israel. Thomsonfly launched flights from Luton to Tel Aviv in 2007 and there is no better place to try to understand the world's largest religions. History and culture are here in spades, but Israel also boasts coasts on the Dead and Red Seas.

The United Arab Emirates: Abu Dhabi – the new Dubai. Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates and plans to add 25,000 hotel rooms in the next few years. Luxury is the name of the game here, but desert safaris, hiking, mountain biking, scuba diving and shopping in the souk are all fun activities to be enjoyed. However, to keep the minds of these rich people exercised, Abu Dhabi is in the process of developing a Guggenheim museum.

Dubai. There is so much happening and so much building in Dubai, that some visitors have been put off, but ambitions for this former desert mean that this Emirate has its eyes on the future. 2008 will see the QE2 make its final voyage from the UK and become a floating hotel in Dubai. The airport is set to outstrip Heathrow's capacity by expanding the number of runways to six by 2015. Burj Dubai is set to be the tallest building this year, Dubailand will be an entertainment complex twice the size of Florida's Walt Disney World, Bawadi will be a 10 km strip of the largest collection of the leading hotels in the world by 2016, while the artificial Palm Islands and the World are fast becoming established icons of Dubai.

Oman. Arabia's fastest growing, and greenest destination has added more luxury resorts to its portfolio. With more culture and history than the rival emirates, it also has a couple of the world's best hotels in its capital Muscat – the Chedi and the newly refurbished palatial Al Bustan.

Switzerland and Austria. Euro 2008. England fans may not be out at this event in force, but football fans may still want to enjoy the atmosphere.

Syria. Syria's second city, Aleppo is set to benefit from new BMI flights from the UK following its acquisition of the BMED franchise.

Canada – With demand for experience-driven holidays ever growing, Canada has an excellent mix of wildlife, wilderness and vibrant cities. This year is Quebec City's 400th anniversary year.

Botswana. For the last few years, Africa has experienced some of the highest rate of visitor growth in the world, but 2008 is the year for Botswana. Precious Ramotswa, the charming but feisty owner of Botswana's No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency, will be brought to life this year on our TV screens, which again returns the media spotlight on this peaceful African country. In 2007, Botswana hosted the TV teams from Top Gear and the Long Way Down. With this much exposure, demand to travel and safari to Botswana will surely rise.

Siberia. A total eclipse will fall across Siberia on 1 August.

Berlin: Marking 60 years since the airlift in 1948.

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