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Smithsonian Journeys Announces 2009 Trip Around the World

Smithsonian Journeys has announced its 2009 trip, “Extraordinary Cultures: An Epic Journey Around the World by Private Jet,” from March 11, 2009 through April 5, 2009. During this unforgettable journey, travelers, along with a team of Smithsonian experts, will immerse themselves in the sounds, colors and textures of age-old cultures in some of the most remote corners of the world. Travelers also will enjoy meetings with renowned local experts and dignitaries.

During the 25-day trip, travelers will explore the cultures of Papua New Guinea’s Huli Wigmen, Mali’s Dogon stilt dancers, New Zealand’s Maori people and many others through their ceremonies, rituals and traditions, expressed with body paint, feathered headdresses, colorful weavings, hand-forged jewelry, intricate beadwork and marvelous tattoos. Travelers will mingle with indigenous people and explore exotic places while traveling by private jet, bypassing commercial airline routes and schedules—a rare privilege for explorers. Travelers will be whisked from one destination to the next aboard a private Boeing 757, specially configured to generously accommodate 88 VIP-style seats, instead of the standard 228 seats.

Travelers will be accompanied by world-class Smithsonian experts, including Richard Kurin, the Smithsonian’s Acting Under Secretary for History and Culture, a trained anthropologist whose work at UNESCO will open doors that are not accessible to the general public. In addition, Smithsonian anthropologists Adrienne Kaeppler and Mary Jo Arnoldi, as well as local experts, dignitaries and high level government authorities, will provide an in-depth look into fascinating traditional cultures.

The first leg of this epic journey will begin in Washington, D.C., with an exclusive presentation at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. Travelers will then depart for Lima, Peru—for centuries, the center of the Andean world. They will journey to an isolated mountaintop where, nestled in cloud forests, sits Machu Picchu, one of the world’s most impressive architectural achievements.

Travelers will immerse themselves in the fascinating culture of the Maori people in Rotorua, New Zealand—home to one-third of the Maori population. Participants can explore bubbling mud pools and hissing sulfuric fumaroles, considered by the Maori people to be a gift of fire from the gods. These natural geologic phenomena are the inspiration for the intricate designs used in *ta moko*, traditional Maori facial and body markings. Travelers will have the choice of exploring the flora and fauna of New Zealand’s Daintree Rainforest or they can venture into the pristine waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

In Papua New Guinea, travelers will have their choice of exploring three seldom-visited areas, including the Western Highlands, where they will learn about the unique moka ceremony, a gifting ritual; the Southern Highlands, where travelers will explore a prime bird-watching habitat where many varieties of birds of paradise thrive; or the Sepik River Basin, where travelers will meet skilled artisans who make beautifully carved story boards, masks and other unique creations.

The celebration of remote cultures concludes in Marrakech, Morocco, located in an oasis of palm and olive groves in Northern Africa and steeped in ancient Berber tradition. Participants will explore the Moroccan city and visit the Koutoubia Mosque, the tombs of the Saadian kings and the palace housing the Dar Si Said Museum of Moroccan Arts.

Smithsonian Journeys’ “Extraordinary Cultures” private jet tour is available for \$59,950 per person, based on double occupancy, and includes roundtrip private jet travel from Washington, D.C., luxury accommodations, meals, ground transportation, excursions and activities, welcome reception, lectures by Smithsonian experts, on-board physician, baggage handling, gratuities and emergency evacuation insurance.

About Smithsonian Journeys

Smithsonian Journeys, the educational travel program of the Smithsonian Institution, is dedicated to the life-enriching experiences of educational travel. More than 250 international itineraries are led by eminent study experts. For more information, call 1-877 EDU-TOUR (877-338-8687) or visit www.smithsonianjourneys.org.

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