

Hip Trips for Young Adults



Whirl through Europe and see wonders Down Under with companies that cater to travelers ages 18-38

By Michelle White

If you crave adventure, culture and camaraderie — and you're in the 18-to-38 crowd — two travel companies offer great vacations at terrific values just for you. Contiki Holidays and Trafalgar Tours boast irresistible itineraries that explore some of the world's most enticing regions.

Contiki's trips for ages 18 to 35 and Trafalgar's Breakaway to Europe tours for ages 21 to 38 encompass all the ingredients for an unforgettable vacation. Whether shopping for Maori arts and crafts in New Zealand, dining in a Bavarian tavern, exploring London's museums or dancing at a club in Amsterdam — you'll find excitement day and night on these get-aways.

Trafalgar and Contiki specialize in escorted vacations, which include lodging, some meals and activities, and guided sightseeing in one price that you pay upfront. Typically, a traveler can save up to 40 percent off the cost of organizing a similar trip on one's own.

A common misconception of escorted vacations is that they lock you into itineraries without giving you the chance to gain

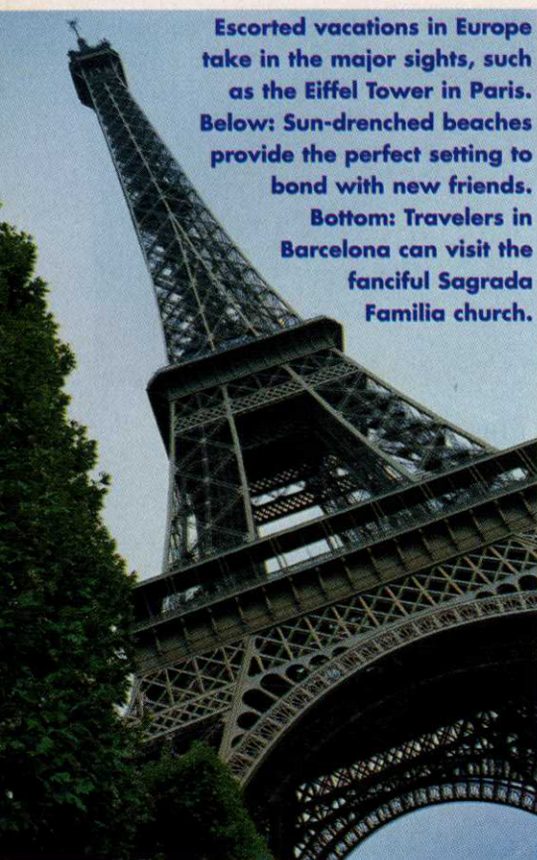
an authentic sense of your surroundings. But both Contiki and Trafalgar combine carefully planned group sightseeing with plenty of free time so that travelers can make their own discoveries.

"It's the best of both worlds," says Scott Harris, a travel counselor with the tours and resorts division of Vacations To Go, which sells escorted vacations from 22 of the world's leading tour operators. He traveled with Contiki on its "European Discovery" itinerary, eight countries in 14 days, and describes the experience as a good balance of education and adventure.

"The tour guides really know the history behind the attractions — they don't just throw you in front of the Colosseum," he says. "And one of the best parts is that it's all young people partying it up."

When you truly love what you do, it shows. The highly trained guides of Contiki have a genuine passion for travel, says Harris, which they want to impart to their guests. Guides provide insight into the lives of locals, they know well the layouts of each city, and they can offer expert suggestions for filling free time. ➤

Above: A quintessential scene in Venice — feeding the pigeons in St. Mark's Square



Escorted vacations in Europe take in the major sights, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Below: Sun-drenched beaches provide the perfect setting to bond with new friends. Bottom: Travelers in Barcelona can visit the fanciful Sagrada Familia church.

"Overall, it is fairly fast-paced because they want you to see as much as possible," Harris says. He says that, when one considers everything that these escorted vacations encompass, "you can't find any better value for your money."

For him, a highlight of the European Discovery trip was a full free day in Rome. "It's an amazing mix of old and new," he says of the Italian capital. "There's a Gucci store right by the Colosseum."

Escorted vacations are classified according to the quality and amenities of accommodations and restaurants. Contiki specializes in budget trips, predominantly in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. At press time, Contiki's European vacations ranged from four to 48 days and were priced from \$295 to \$5,585 per person, plus airfare. Trips to Australia and New Zealand ranged from four to 25 days and were priced from \$199 to \$2,409 per person, plus airfare.

For Contiki's trips for ages 18-35, visit TourVacationsToGo.com/Contiki.

Trafalgar's Breakaway to Europe vacations are classified as first-class travel. At press time, Breakaway's itineraries ranged from 11 to 35 days and cost \$1,365 to \$4,599 per person, plus airfare. Trafalgar

travel groups spend at least two nights in each major city.

Both Contiki and Trafalgar provide daily breakfasts and some dinners. Neither company includes lunch, which allows travelers to sample the local cuisine as they please. Indulge a craving as you encounter fresh-baked smells wafting from a *boulangerie*, or take advantage of recommendations from the tour guide, who can point you toward little-known bistros or tourist-friendly cafes, depending on your preference.

Ideal for young, budget-conscious travelers — including students, singles and those traveling far from home for the first time — Contiki and Trafalgar guarantee maximum fun and adventure. Nearly half of Contiki guests travel solo, and both companies will pair single same-sex participants with roommates for those who so desire, helping them to avoid the single supplement.

While both companies build ample free time into their itineraries, optional excursions and organized evenings on the town are available for an extra charge for



those who want them. On Contiki's trips, the possibilities range from a cabaret show in Paris and wine tasting in Germany's Rhine Valley to tandem paragliding or white-water rafting in the Austrian Alps. Trafalgar's optional excursions have included a Mozart concert in Vienna, lagoon cruise in Venice and dinner at Amsterdam's floating Sea Palace restaurant.

Contiki's free-spirited outlook comes from its founder, John Anderson, who arrived in Europe from New Zealand in 1961. On his own and without much money, he acquired a minibus, assembled a group of travelers and devoted 12 weeks to exploring the continent. The popularity of this informal tour led him to found Contiki Holidays three years later.

Contiki now offers its youth-oriented vacations in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, Hawaii and the continental United States, attracting travelers from more than 35 countries. You might find up to 15 different nationalities on any one trip, say company officials, although all tours are conducted in English. Most transportation is via air-conditioned motor coaches that accommodate 25 to 50 passengers. On some itineraries outside of Europe, smaller coaches or four-wheel-drive vehicles are used, carrying about eight to 20 people. Accommodations range from campsites and hostels to simple yet comfortable hotels. In some cases, guests share bathroom facilities.

Among Contiki's many European offerings is the six-day "Spotlight on Greece," which visits Athens, Olympia, Delphi and Kalambaka. Guided sightseeing tours explore the Parthenon, Acropolis, the temples of Hera and Zeus and the original Olympic stadium. It starts at \$799 per person, plus airfare. The eight-day "Berlin and Prague" itinerary gives participants ample time to visit these two historic cities, with a good mix of guided sightseeing and free time. It starts at \$695 per person, plus airfare.

For those who want to see a variety of European destinations, consider Contiki's "European Impressions" itinerary, visiting 10 countries in 20 days from \$2,239 per person, plus airfare. It's a whirlwind immersion into Europe's vibrant and varied cultures, promising a thoroughly rewarding experience. You'll start in London and see the White Cliffs of Dover



before traversing the English Channel to France and hopping a bus to Belgium, where medieval architecture and culinary specialties of waffles, chocolate and beer await. Visits to a cheese farm in Amsterdam, a perfumery in Provence and vineyards in Bordeaux provide opportunities to absorb local culture. Visit the glittering cities of Venice, Florence, Barcelona and Paris, and marvel at the stunning mountain vistas in Austria and Switzerland.

Travelers who journey to Australia and New Zealand with Contiki are treated to amazing landscapes, from steamy hot springs, lush forests, dazzling reefs and spectacular mountains to golden beaches that seem to stretch on endlessly. For an additional fee, Contiki can arrange for extras such as sailing the Whitsunday Islands, camel riding, white-water rafting, scuba diving and bungee jumping.

The 10-day "Best of Oz" vacation starts with three nights in Sydney, where an orientation sightseeing tour takes in Bondi Beach, the historic Rocks and Macquarie Street districts, Circular Quay and the iconic Sydney Opera House. You'll also enjoy an afternoon cruise of the city's harbor. Soak up the marvelous sunrise at Uluru, the awe-

inspiring rock formation in central Australia. In Cairns, learn about Australia's indigenous culture at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park and board the Skyrail for an enthralling gondola ride high above a tropical rain forest. Explore the quaint village of Kuranda, famous for its markets, before rounding out the day at one of Cairns' happening nightspots. For an additional fee, there is an optional trip aboard a high-speed catamaran to the Great Barrier Reef for scuba diving and snorkeling. Rates for "Best of Oz" begin at \$1,165 per person, plus airfare.

For Trafalgar's Breakaway to Europe tours for those 21-38, see TourVacationsToGo.com/Breakaway.

Founded in 1947, Trafalgar offers escorted tours on six continents. Its Breakaway series for young adults showcases the best of Europe. Guest stay in superior tourist-class hotels and travel in air-conditioned motor coaches. Breakaway tours don't leave the hotel before 9 a.m., allowing guests to sleep in for a bit. Transportation from the hotel to a city's best nightspots frequently is provided.

The popular "Viva Italia" itinerary fea-

tures 12 days in Italy for \$1,635 per person, plus airfare, and covers all the major attractions in Rome, Sorrento, Florence and Venice as well as a cruise to the island of Capri. This tour also takes in the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Juliet's balcony in Verona, Italy's fashion capital of Milan, St. Francis' hometown of Assisi and the picturesque waterfront resort of Portofino.

The 11-day "European Symphony" Breakaway itinerary spends three nights each in Prague, Vienna and Budapest, allowing guests to fully experience the sights, shopping, dining and culture of each city. This trip is \$1,365 per person, plus airfare.

Contiki and Trafalgar attract fun-loving travelers seeking new adventures, new friends and new experiences at a great price. Whether you're an adventurer or a shopaholic, history buff or photography hound, you'll find something to surprise or delight you on every trip.

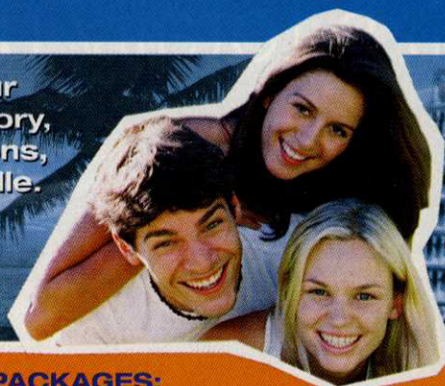
Information: For more information about traveling with Contiki or Trafalgar, call Vacations To Go at (800) 680-2858. Or, visit the following Web sites: www.TourVacationsToGo.com/Contiki or www.TourVacationsToGo.com/Breakaway. **V**



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