

Travel

Spain: the best for less



Thirty million tourists can't be wrong, and that's how many visited sunny Spain last year alone. Even faced with a home inflation rate of over 20 per cent, it is estimated that more than two million Britons will find the means to holiday this summer on Spain's Mediterranean coast. One large British tour operator, "Thompson Travel", has already confirmed no less than

520,000 bookings and travel agencies in London report that 75 per cent of their clients want to go to Spain. You guessed it. Spain was chosen as the "top destination" for the second year. What's the attraction of Spain? Well, besides a history-steeped landscape that varies from snow-capped peaks in Andalusia to miles

of sun-washed beaches on both the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, and in addition to friendly people and novel cultural and gastronomic experiences... Spain offers top holiday value for money. For example, a somewhat lavish full-course meal in a good Madrid restaurant might cost around \$5.00 (Canadian). A comparable meal in Copenhagen or

a network of inns, hotels, "albergues" and "paradors". Albergues are wayside inns offering basic, clean overnight accommodation combined with particularly excellent dining. The paradors are a network of renovated castles, palaces, convents, monasteries, fortresses and stately homes which are operated on a "boarding house" basis of informality.

Privately operated hotels and inns are under the supervision of the Spanish Ministry of Tourism and standards have been established and are maintained by frequent inspection. Spain is now very definitely a place for the average

North American vacationer. Due to a decade of separate establishments, ranging from luxury hotels to guest houses... amounting in total to 2,254,645 beds with a high minimum standard of cleanliness and service.

Now is the time to cash in on Spain's vacation bargains. The new Spanish government has devalued the peseta. Now you get from 8 to 10 pesetas more for each Canadian dollar. And, the new government has also established duty-free shops (previously banned).

Result? If Spain represented value plus before in fun per dollar... well, a Spanish holiday is value PLUS now!

Seniors can pick and choose

Retired people can be the luckiest travellers in the world. They have time to really enjoy their travels. They don't have to rush from country to country to see Europe in 14 days.

Senior citizens get a break because they don't have to travel when everyone else does — in the summer. When Europe is jammed with students and teachers or at Christmas or during the March break when prices are higher, airports are a madhouse and major resort areas packed.

Retired travellers can choose the time of year when a destination is less crowded and conditions less frantic and what's more important, when the rates are at their lowest. Having plenty of time means that the travellers can pick packages and cruises which the average person cannot. An around-the-world cruise usually takes about three months which is out of the question for most people.

One of the best known tour operators — Lindblad Travel — offers expensive programs to the most exotic spots on earth, many of the packages lasting up to a month or more. There is no age restriction on these packages, which include trips to the Antarctic, Africa, Easter Island, the Himalayas and the Galapagos. Although not inexpensive they certainly are ideal for those who can afford the price tag.

Having lots of time means that the traveller doesn't have to rush through an itinerary, spending one night in each spot before frantically packing and moving on to another city for another one-night stand.

Having time means that travellers can break up long trips by stopping over for a night's sleep on the way. A trip to Australia can be broken up by a day or two or even a week in Hawaii and an East African safari can be a much more pleasant experience if the travellers stop in London, Paris, Rome or Amsterdam on the way.

Another way to arrive refreshed is to fly during daylight hours. An overnight flight on a crowded plane, especially if infants are on board, can leave any traveller exhausted for the first few days of the holiday.

Those who have retired usually prefer comfortable accommodation leaving the hitchhiking, knapsacks and youth hostels to the students. Nowadays this is no problem. Even Afghanistan has an Inter-Continental.

Through a good travel agent is the best way retired travellers can get the most out of their travels.

Such as one who belongs to ASTA-Canada, the association of Canadian travel agents, who can advise the traveller about medical services available, English-speaking doctors abroad, discounts for senior citizens on airlines and trains and packages designed with the mature traveller in mind.

Bus tours are popular, the companies usually make sure schedules are relaxed. Long cruises tend to attract an older more prosperous clientele, the entertainment on board usually reflects this.

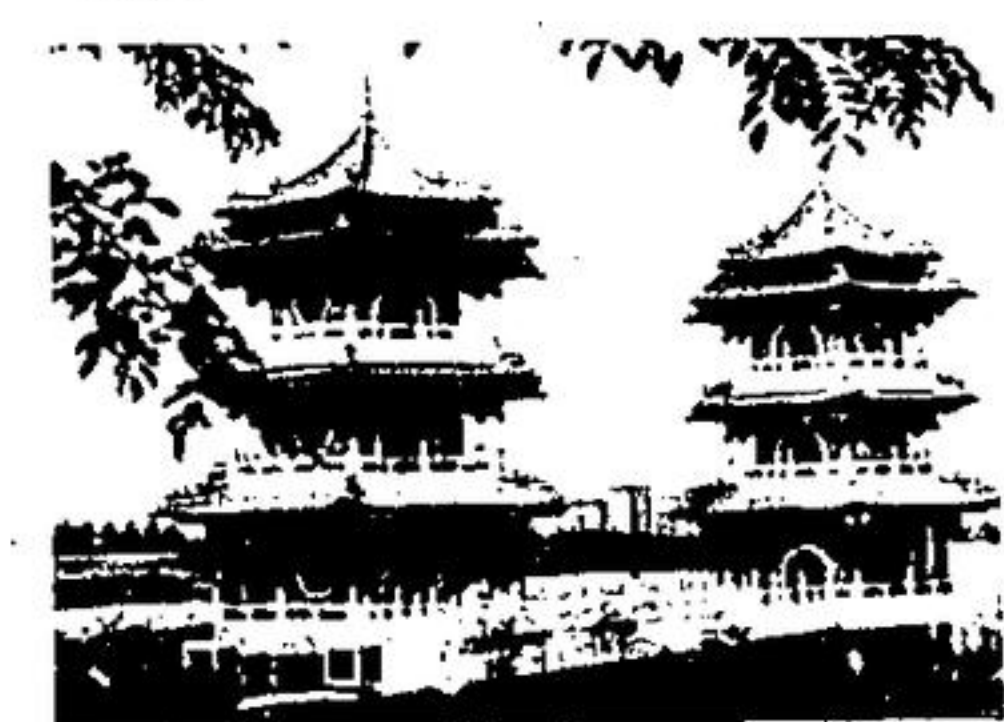
Travel agents know these details, with careful planning the years of retirement can be the best travel years. Remember in most instances the bulk of the cost of a vacation is embodied in the transportation. A few extra days or even weeks in some destinations can be cheaper than living at home. That's particularly true in Portugal, Spain, Mexico and Hawaii.

Hong Kong now as cheap as Europe



Unfortunately, until recently the true excitement of the East was overlaid with a kind of false mystery that comes with far away places. Experience of China, Japan and Southeast Asia was denied to the ordinary vacationer because of the time necessary to travel from North America to Asia. China, Japan and Southeast Asia remained "the Far East", and that slow boat to China may have conjured up wistful daydreams of oriental adventure, but it made Far Eastern tourism a marginal business.

But now ultra modern jet travel can bring the ancient and timeless East to you as a practical vacation proposition. After a decade of European experience in putting together package tours, operators have turned their attention to the orient.



TWO-WEEK ADVENTURES TO HONG KONG, TAIPEI, BANGKOK, and Pattaya at prices that compare with junkets to Europe. This year American Express and Creative World Travel are offering two weeks in Hong Kong, including return jet fare and accommodation in either the Hong Kong Hilton or the Hyatt Regency... for just \$829.00, that's from Niagara Falls U.S.A., its somewhat cheaper from Seattle Washington. That kind of price turns oriental daydreams into bird-in-the-hand reality. And let it be said

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immediately that these Far Eastern tours are just as "together", as European packages. Although a relatively new addition to the travel market, there's nothing "pioneer" about passengers' experiences.

SIDE TRIPS FROM HONG KONG TO KUALA LUMPUR, SINGAPORE, TAIPEI, BANGKOK OR PATTAYA at prices that range between \$199.00 and \$429.00 in addition to the basic Hong Kong tour price of under \$850.00.

With this kind of travel bargain, not to mention the unbelievable bargains of Asian shops, it isn't surprising that Far Eastern tourism is growing by leaps and bounds. Last year, there was a 43 percent increase in tourist traffic to Hong Kong and 1977 may very well top that.

So, if you've ever said "someday, maybe, I'll see the Orient"... well, there isn't a better time to stop dreaming and start planning.

And maybe the best part of it all is that you can still enjoy that slow boat trip, not to China, but once you get there. Most tours include day or night trips around Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong (meaning: "Fragrant Harbour") aboard a Chinese junk.

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