

AROUND THE WORLD, 23 DAYS

Day 1: Fly Miami to Buenos Aires

Depart Miami at 10:15pm; arrive BA at 9:02am [In-flight meals]

Day 2: Buenos Aires

Arrive Buenos Aires at 9:02am. You'll check into the five-star Alvear Palace Hotel, in the fashionable Recoleta District. Frequent guests include the Emperor and Empress of Japan, the King and Queen of Spain, Jacques Chirac, Arthur Miller, and Ted Turner. Afternoon visit to Recoleta Cemetery. Cocktail reception and dinner at hotel. [In-flight meals, D]

Day 3: Buenos Aires

Join us for a panoramic tour of Buenos Aires this morning. Afternoon at leisure. Evening tango performance with dinner. [B, D]

Day 4: Buenos Aires

Morning at leisure. Lunch in the Winter Garden at the Alvear Palace; afternoon: lecture. [B, L]

Day 5: Buenos Aires to Easter Island

This evening you'll fly from Buenos Aires to Easter Island, Chile. Over 2,000 miles from the nearest population center, (Tahiti and Chile), Easter Island is one of the most isolated places on Earth. A triangle of volcanic rock in the South Pacific, it is best known for the giant stone monoliths, known as Moai, that dot the coastline. This tiny triangle of land has been the focus of intense archaeological and anthropological attention, as scholars have tried to piece together the story of an ancient Polynesian culture that seems to have plummeted from prosperity to warfare and cannibalism in the space of a few 18th century decades. Admiral Roggeveen, who came upon the island on Easter Day in 1722, named it Easter Island. Today, the land, people and language are all referred to locally as Rapa Nui; it casts an impressive spell as one of the most unique places you will ever encounter: the landscape is truly amazing with its volcanic craters, lava formations, beaches, brilliant blue water, and archaeological sites. You'll spend the next three nights at the rustic, but charming Hanga Roa Hotel. [B, In-flight meals]

Day 6: Easter Island

Today, a visit to the slopes of the island's southernmost volcano, Rano Kau, gives you a spectacular viewpoint over most of this tiny chip of land. Here the restored village of Orongo sits on steep cliffs; this was the ceremonial center of the island's Bird Man cult, active until 1862. Orongo is surrounded by rocks covered with BirdMan petroglyphs, many overlaid with fertility symbols, and a grouping of stones nearby has been identified as a solar observatory. [B, D]

Day 7: Easter Island

Stonehenge, the pyramids of Egypt, Easter Island—they are perhaps the world’s most fascinating remnants of past civilizations. Today’s full-day tour begins with a visit to several of these island sites, including Ahu Vinapu, whose unbelievably symmetrical stone walls look familiar to those who have walked the terraces of Machu Picchu. Continuing along the south coast of the island, you’ll visit Ahu Vaihu and Akahanga, and then Rano Raraku, the moai “factory.” Almost all of the statues on Easter Island were carved from soft volcanic tufa from this spot, and gigantic moai—some weighing more than 30 tons—cover the slopes nearby. [B, L, D]

Day 8: Easter Island to Sydney

After lunch at the hotel, you’ll visit Puna Pau, the quarry from which the cylindrical red hats or top-knots which once stood atop each moai figure were chiseled. You also visit Ahu Akivi, where seven statues look out over the sea, standing together in their original positions. Dinner will be enjoyed on the island before flying on Lan Chile #833, departing at 10:15pm, and arriving in Sydney the following morning at 8:15am. [B, L, D]

Day 9: Arrive Sydney

You’ll arrive in Sydney at 8:15am and be transferred directly to the award-winning Stamford Hotel, the former Ritz-Carlton Double Bay. Here, with its exuberant, cosmopolitan character, you’ll discover the many subtle delights of the Stamford—and feel as if you are at your own luxurious private club. This boutique style hotel has a distinctively European flavor, which belies its location in the heart of the central business district. You’re only a moment’s stroll from the world’s most beautiful harbor, the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Opera House, and many other Sydney landmarks. All Alumni World Travel guests will be ushered to the Stamford Club. Accessible only by key, the Club is a private floor with special amenities and the services of a Club concierge. Complementary food and beverages presentations are served throughout the day. Put your feet up for the morning—rooms are pre-registered so that you may check in immediately—then enjoy an afternoon orientation tour. You’ll travel the coast of the Sydney Harbor, home to Sydney’s most distinctive residences and tony neighborhoods. You’ll also visit the famed Northern Beaches and stop at the Waratah Wildlife Park, where you’ll pet your first kangaroo and cuddle a koala. Tonight enjoy drinks at the Stamford overlooking the lovely Botanical Gardens. [B]

Day 10: Morning Lecture * Free Afternoon * Dinner at Bather’s Pavilion

Morning lecture (or if you’re not having a lecture make this a full day at leisure).

So much to do in Sydney, it would be a shame not to have time to enjoy it. Many will want to shop the art galleries and boutiques of the Rocks district, while some will travel by ferry to the North Shore to walk around Manly Beach or North Sydney. Try a back-stage tour of the Opera House, or stroll the beautiful botanic gardens. If you’re feeling adventurous, take a train ride to the spectacular Blue Mountains. Then get ready for this evening’s gastronomy. A romantic and incredibly gourmet experience awaits you this evening at the Bathers Pavilion at Balmoral Beach. With a quick trip over the Sydney

Harbor Bridge at sunset, you'll be transported to one of the most outstanding restaurants on the unique Sydney dining scene. The decor is Moorish, yet the food is an exotic blend of Australian seafood with Asian influences. Superstar chef Serge Dansereau creates serious food in the lap of serious luxury, yet it has a subtle levity all its own. Courses tonight may include sensational Tuna Sashimi with warm Oriental Scallop Dumpling with a Sea Urchin Dressing or even Pork Duck and Salmon Rillettes with Yabbie Tails, Stonefruit and Rhubarb Salad. A walk in the moonlight along the beach is the perfect way to cap off the evening before returning to the luxury of your Stamford Double-Bay room. [B, D]

Day 11: Hunter Valley Wine Excursion * Lunch at Pepper's Guest House

This morning you'll travel northwest to the verdant wine country of the Hunter Valley. February is Harvest Time in the valley. In what seems like an instant, the quiet vineyards, laden with fruit, ripe and lush, become frenzied with action and activity. Man and machine work in tandem, collecting tons of luscious grapes, all bound for the winery where they will be crushed, fermented and bottled. It's a time of frivolity, with two months of "full bodied" fun around the vineyards, celebrating the annual harvest of the grapes.

Tastings will be had at two hand-selected vineyards that represent the best of the best of the Hunter Valley. The Constable & Hershon Vineyard is a boutique vineyard situated at Pokolbin in the heart of the valley. The aim of the owners was to develop a vineyard that combined award-winning wines of limited production together with magnificent country gardens. The gardens were planted in 1984 and feature four themes: a traditional English Secret Garden, Herb and Knot, and a Rose and Sculpture Garden. Boutique wine and garden lovers may experience a magnificent property against a backdrop of the Brokenback Ranges. You'll also enjoy a tasting at McWilliam's, Australia's oldest, family-owned wineries. Afterwards you'll travel to Peppers Guest House nestled amongst the vineyards of the Hunter Valley. Here, at the multi-award winning Peppers, you'll enjoy lunch at Chez Pok, the Hunter's most awarded restaurant. Stretch your legs, enjoy a flute of sparkling champagne, dine on exquisite French delicacies, and marvel at the beauty of the Australian countryside from the porch of this intimate country home. You'll return to Sydney for an evening at leisure. [B, L]

Day 12: Sydney Harbor Cruise & Lunch * Fly Sydney to Bangkok

A free morning gives you time to pack and enjoy your remaining moments in Sydney. You'll enjoy lunch and a stunning harbor cruise aboard the privately chartered catamaran, the Tartua. A perfect way to see Sydney for the last time, you'll travel by luxury cruiser through the inlets and byways of the harbor, ogling the spectacular real estate that dots each and every bay. A fabulous spread of lobster tails, crabbies, salads, accompanied of course by some chilled Australian wines and beers, makes this a fitting way to say goodbye.

You'll then travel directly to the airport for tonight's flight to Bangkok. You'll fly British Airways #10 from Sydney to Bangkok at 5:05pm, arriving 10:25pm. This schedule allows the luxury of arriving after rush hour, which means you'll blissfully

avoid Bangkok's inevitable traffic. You'll be immediately transferred to The Oriental Hotel on the banks of Bangkok's Chao Phya, the fabled "River of Kings." The Oriental can genuinely lay claim to its status as one of the world's truly great hotels; it has been at the top of Travel & Leisure and Conde Nast Traveler's Gold Lists for several years running. During its 121 years of existence, dignitaries and distinguished travelers alike have followed the legendary river through the heart of Bangkok to the doors of the world's most luxurious hotel. [B, L]

Day 13: River Cruise * Eastern & Oriental Express Train to Chiang Mai

The most fascinating trip you may ever take in Thailand is aboard a luxury river cruiser as it plies the Chao Phya River between the Oriental and Ayudhaya, the ancient capital of Thailand, 85 kilometers north. Passing countless images of serenity and beauty along the way—long-tail boats, log-raft barges, temples and villages—it is a captivating picture of traditional river life leading to the heart and soul of the ancient kingdom. The journey includes two unforgettable sites: the Summer Palace at Bang Pa-In, an architectural fantasy encompassing four centuries of Thai and Western styles. The other is Ayudhaya itself, the capital between the 14th and 18th centuries, and all its glorious ruins, including hundreds of awe-inspiring palaces and temples.

This evening will prove to be a highlight of the luxury Around-the-World journey when you board the Eastern & Oriental Express train en route from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand. A quarter of a mile in length, the air-conditioned gleaming green and cream carriages evoke the great age of luxury train travel and are a world of opulence and fine craftsmanship. You'll dine on the very best of European and Asian cuisines, and enjoy time in the saloon car and the reading room with a varied library. The most popular place on board, however, is unquestionably the open-deck Observation Car, which provides an unbeatable opportunity to enjoy the ever-changing scenery. All aboard at 7:30 this evening. After you've settled into your roomy sleeping car, feel free to dress up for supper, a highlight of all Orient Express journeys. An after-dinner drink in the Bar Car with its resident pianist is the perfect way to end the evening. [B, L, D]

Day 14: Arrival in Chiang Mai * Check into Four Seasons Hotel

Breakfast is served in the privacy of your compartment before a morning arrival in Lampang. Here you'll disembark for a horse-drawn carriage ride through this charming Thai village. Climb back aboard for lunch and afternoon tea before you arrive in Chiang Mai at 1:25 this afternoon. You'll travel straight to the luxurious Four Seasons Regent Resort Chiang Mai, a hotel truly in a class of its own. Located in the beautiful Mae Rim Valley, The Four Seasons pays tribute to Chiang Mai's artistic and cultural heritage. Clusters of Lanna-style pavilions, each a roomy 750 square feet and decorated with rich Thai materials and fabrics, overlook gardens, terraced rice paddies and mountain views. The afternoon is free to relax around the beautiful pool, perhaps with a cool drink in hand, or wander the verdant gardens of the hotel. Tonight enjoy dinner al fresco at the resort's award-winning restaurant. [B, L, D]

Day 15: Chiang Mai * Elephant Ride and Hill Tribe Visit

Many lowland Thais regard Chiang Mai city and province as something of a national Shangri-La, thanks to its beautiful women, distinctive festivals, historic temples dating from the 1300s, arresting scenic beauty, temperate fruits such as apples, peaches and strawberries, and a crisp, invigorating cool season climate. The people of Chiang Mai enjoy one of the most distinctive cultural identities in the whole of Thailand. Largely farmers and artisans, they have their own lilting dialect, their own customs, festivals, architectural traditions, indigenous handicrafts, dances and distinctive cuisine. Hill tribes also lend a great deal of character and color to the crisply beautiful mountainous landscape. This morning you'll see much of this first hand during a fascinating village tour. You'll make a visit to Wat Chiang Man, Chiang Mai's oldest temple, dating from 1296. The temple was the residence of King Mengrai, who founded Chiang Mai, and is noteworthy for a chedi supported by rows of elephantine buttresses and a small ancient Buddha image, Phra Kacow Khaow. You'll also enjoy the thrill of riding atop an elephant during an afternoon visit to one of the hill tribe villages. Enjoy a restful evening at leisure. [B, L]

Day 16: Fly Chiang Mai to Bangkok

Spend a leisurely morning at the hotel, or set off on your own to find some last-minute Thai souvenirs, including batiks, wood carvings and silk flowers. You'll depart Chiang Mai at 3:15pm on Thai Airways #113, arriving in Bangkok at 4:25pm. Once again you'll check into the glorious Oriental Hotel. Tonight enjoy cocktails overlooking the fabled Chao Praya River. [B]

Day 17: Bangkok at Leisure * Thai Dancing and Dinner

We've left a day completely free for you to pursue all the wonders of Bangkok at your own pace. You may wish to do nothing more than sit by the Oriental Pool, at the edge of the river, reading a good book and sipping a drink with an umbrella under the sun. Or, visit the hotel's legendary spa for an hour-long massage, Thai style. Shoppers will want to stock up on Jim Thompson silk ties and women's clothing. Or head to the outdoor markets for faux Rolexes, Prada bags and Hermes purses. No one at home will be able to tell the difference! Market. Tonight you'll enjoy dinner and dance at the hotel's Baan Rin Naan, a pleasurable boat ride across the river in a richly decorated traditional Thai pavilion. Stunning dance troupes accompany some of the most imaginatively and thoughtfully prepared food you're ever likely to enjoy. Don't forget your camera this evening! [B, D]

Day 18: Bangkok to Dubai * Check into the 7-Star (!) Burj Al-Arab

This morning the incredible wats (temples) of Bangkok await. See Wat Po's enormous Reclining Buddha and Wat Trimitr's Gold Buddha. You'll also visit the magnificent Grand Palace, including Wat Phra Keo's Emerald Buddha. You'll depart Bangkok at 5:25pm on Cathay Pacific #751. After a brief, one-hour layover in Bombay, you'll arrive at 10:40pm in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. Here you'll check into the newest, most luxurious property in the Middle East, the Hotel Burj Al-Arab. At 321 meters, this is the world's tallest hotel, only 60 meters shorter than the Empire State Building. The Burj Al-

Arab is both the new definition of luxury and decadence, and the new landmark of Dubai. Human language is not able to put this experience into words. Imagine: the "smallest" suites are 169 square meters (and all suites have two floors), the interior is a "museum of future art" and the views over the sea are beyond description. This sleek, all-suite property right on the sunny, sandy shores of the Arabian Gulf is where all the sheiks stay when they come to town. In fact, the sheik of UAE has his 7,000-square-foot penthouse here, complete with helicopter pad on the roof of the hotel. It's taking the travel world by storm and you'll soon find it cropping up on "Best Hotels in the World" Lists. But you can say, "I was there first." (Check out the February 2001 issue of Conde Nast Traveler. The hotel is featured prominently on its cover.) [B, L]

Day 19: Visit to Dubai Gold Souk * Dinner in Underwater Restaurant

After a leisurely morning at the hotel, you'll set off for an orientation tour of Dubai, followed by lunch at The Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club. The magnificent clubhouse—its design mirroring the sails of the traditional Arabian dhow—became an instant landmark when opened in 1993. Before returning to the hotel you'll enjoy a couple of hours of free time at the gold souk. The largest of its kind in the world, the souk offers stall upon stall of affordable gold jewelry and icons. The gold souk shop windows literally drip with pounds of 22K & 24K gold bracelets and chains. Priced by the ounce, with almost nothing charged for the design or labor, you'll be sure to find beautiful gifts for friends and family—and perhaps a little something for yourself. This evening you'll dine on the hotel's superb cuisine in a dramatic setting below the sea. The Al Mahara seafood restaurant is reached by a scenic underwater ride from the lobby. [B, L, D]

Day 20: Dubai * Desert Dune Safari * Camel Ride & Belly Dancers

The morning is at your leisure to swim in the warm waters of the Gulf, work out in the hotel's spectacular, glass-enclosed gymnasium or perhaps book a tee time at the Emirates Golf Club. (If we want to host some kind of lecture it could be done this morning.) This afternoon you'll depart for a fantastic desert dune safari. Traveling to the desert by four-wheel-drive jeep, you'll arrive at your camp at sunset, where cool towels, ice-cold drinks and a host of curious camels greet you. Hop aboard one of these "ships of the desert," before dinner is served under the stars. A belly dancer and a band of sitar players will serenade you under a sky sprinkled liberally with stars. With oriental carpets spread at your feet and plates of Middle Eastern delicacies, you'll truly feel like an Arabian knight! [B, D]

Day 21: Fly Dubai to London * Check into Berkeley Hotel

This morning you'll fly from Dubai to London, non-stop on British Airways #108, arriving at 1:30pm. En route to the Berkeley Hotel, the top address in the UK capital, you'll enjoy an orientation tour of the thriving metropolis of London. For first timers this will provide you with an overview of those places you'd most like to explore—and shop—on your own tomorrow. Close to Hyde Park, The Berkeley is ideally situated for the nearby boutiques of Knightsbridge and Sloane Street. Newly restored suites and rooms have been delightfully appointed and individually decorated by some of England's most famous designers. The public areas have been most thoughtfully designed. For private entertaining, meeting and dining, rooms range from the splendid Ballroom to the

boardroom-style Wilton and Knightsbridge rooms. The Berkeley Health Club and Spa provides Christian Dior health and beauty treatments. Overlooking Hyde Park, it has a rooftop gym and swimming pool with a roof that opens to the sky in fine weather. Dinner this evening will be enjoyed at La Tante Claire, one of London's most celebrated restaurants. Pierre Koffmann is a respected chef whose Gascon French cooking is unmatched in London. The elegant dining room, designed by David Collins, is inspired by the camellia flower. Happily, it is located in the Berkeley Hotel. [B, D]

Day 22: London at Leisure * Farewell Gala Dinner

A full day at leisure allows you time to explore London on your own. Browsing the bookstores on Charing Cross Road, taking in a matinee in the West End or a visit to the grand Tate Museum are all worthy pursuits of a Sunday in London. Or some may just wish to rest up for tonight's grand farewell dinner. You'll be treated to dinner this evening at Bibendum, one of London's hottest and most renowned eateries. "The room designed in homage to the Michelin man ...and the French motor industry, which brought so many good restaurants within reach (the building was formerly headquarters of the tyre company), is a delight to all. I would defy anyone not to feel a-quiver with anticipation when sitting down to eat at the handsomely laid places. It costs a bit but a meal at Bibendum is a treat worth saving for."—London Restaurant Guide. And travel reviewer Fodor's says, "This reconverted Michelin showroom, adorned with Art Deco decorations and brilliant stained glass, remains one of London's dining showplaces." A fitting way to end an unforgettable journey all the way around the world. [B, D]

Day 23: Fly London to New York

A leisurely morning gives you time to pack and say goodbye to fellow travelers over a sumptuous breakfast at the Berkeley. You'll depart this afternoon at 1:30pm on British Airways #177, arriving at New York's JFK Airport at 4:30pm. There is ample time to make connections onward. [B, In-flight meals]