

Harriet R. Lewis

Vice Chairman, Grand Circle Cruise Line

July 25, 2012

Dear Traveler,

Change is happening all the time at Grand Circle Cruise Line. So quickly, in fact, that I've decided to send out quarterly updates to keep you better informed about "what's new" for our travelers. In this first update, I'll summarize the changes we've recently implemented to give you more *personalized* travel choices—and better value. And I'll show how you now have the flexibility to create the trip that's just right for you.

But before I begin, I wanted to share some great news. Grand Circle Cruise Line was just named #5 "World's Best River Cruise Line" for 2012 by the readers of *Travel + Leisure* magazine. This is the fifth year we've been recognized in this prestigious survey, and we were honored by our high ranking—especially since we offer our trips at \$50-\$500 less per day than those of our competitors on the list. What I like best about this award is that it comes from *you*—passionate travelers who read *Travel + Leisure* and took the time to vote and share their views with other travelers. This is what truly inspires us to keep coming up with new changes and choices for our travelers.

We love getting your direct feedback too. Almost all of the new travel choices we've introduced came about from events like the one Alan and I recently hosted at our Grand Circle Leadership Center, located just over the Massachusetts border in Kensington, New Hampshire. Just a few weeks ago, about 300 of our travelers—all of them women from across New England—gathered to meet with many of Grand Circle's leadership and a few dozen of our top Program Directors from around the world.

As we enjoyed lunch and relaxed under a big open-air tent, I got to listen to many heartwarming stories about life experiences and lifelong friendships gained through travel. The energy and passion given off by everyone in attendance was palpable. And since Grand Circle's goal is to help change people's lives, these stories touched me deeply. (I have to add that it was also quite refreshing to get an exclusive "women's perspective" on world travel.) But I wasn't there just to share stories about the joys of travel. I was there to listen to suggestions on how we could make our trips even *better*. And if there was one thing that came through loud and clear, it was that you wish to have more options available to you when exploring the world with Grand Circle.

Anyone who has traveled with us before knows that our trips already include just about everything you need—international airfare (if you wish), accommodations, most meals, unique cultural experiences, local Program Directors to give you their "insider's knowledge," and more.

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But maybe you want to branch out and explore another city—or country—after the conclusion of your trip. Or you'd like to rest for a night or two before returning home. Or perhaps you don't want to use our standard airline routing—or you want to be a bit more comfortable by upgrading your flight to Economy Plus or Business Class. In other words, you want more ways to “personalize” your travel experiences—the option of deciding exactly where you want to go, how you get there, and when you wish to leave. All of this makes perfect sense—it's *your* trip, after all. Well, we've listened to you, and we now offer several ways to ...

Personalize Your Trip

- Our “**Land-only**” option (now with airport to hotel/ship transfers available!)
- Extend your stay with **Trip Extensions**
- “**Break Away**” before or after your trip
- Extend your stay with a **Trip Combination**

Since not everyone is crystal clear on how to take advantage of these options (it *does* get confusing, I agree), I thought I'd try to shed some light on how you can create the trip that's just right for you. First, there's our ...

“Land-only” Option

Keep in mind that you don't have to purchase your airfare from us if you don't wish to. Reserving the “Land-only” portion of our vacations (actually, for our cruises this would be the “River CruiseTour-only or Small Ship CruiseTour-only” option) is becoming increasingly popular with our travelers. And it's easy to see why. Many travelers have accumulated frequent flyer miles from various airlines over the years. Why not use them? I know *I* wouldn't let them go to waste! So if you want to take advantage of those miles and make your own air arrangements directly with an airline, just let us know. Your fellow travelers will be there waiting for you at the start of your trip, so you won't miss a thing. And you won't have to worry about finding them when you arrive, since almost all our trips now include the option of purchasing **airport transfers directly to and from your ship or hotel** if you choose to make your own air arrangements.

And while we offer an unbeatable value whether you purchase our trips with international air or without, you should really look into the exceptional value of this “Land-only” option—especially since for 2013 we've managed to keep our “Land-only” prices the same or, in many instances, even *lowered* them from last year. And once you've arrived at your destination, we now offer several great ways to extend your discoveries, including one of the most popular ways of all ...

Our Trip Extensions—More to Choose From in 2013

I know how infectious the thrill of world travel can be. I can't even begin to tell you how many times Alan and I have found ourselves in some exotic and unfamiliar place and didn't want it to end. The best way to extend your time abroad with Grand Circle Cruise Line is by taking advantage of our trip extensions—and we're introducing several *new* ones for the 2013

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travel season. In fact, many of our vacations now feature at least two trip extension choices before or after your main trip. We've already announced new extensions to places like *Lviv, Ukraine* and *Lausanne, Switzerland*, but keep checking back at our website www.gct.com for the latest updates! If you've taken one or more of these extensions with us already, I think you'll agree that they offer a great way to see more of the world you've come so far to see. Plus, your per diem cost (the daily average price of your trip) is dramatically lowered. And who doesn't want to get the most for their travel dollar these days?

And it's not just trip extensions that are new for 2013. By adding more Small Ships to our fleet, we now take you to more new travel destinations than ever before—from the icy wonderland of Antarctica, to the man-made marvel of the Panama Canal, or aboard cruises to the Mediterranean's idyllic islands and shores aboard our new 50-passenger Small Ships. Plus, we've just announced three all-new CruiseTours for the upcoming year, including *Burma & the Irrawaddy River: Bagan to Mandalay* and a cruise along *The Dnieper River & the Black Sea: Ukraine to Romania*. (Alan and I just returned from a trip to Ukraine and highly recommend this fascinating travel destination.) But new destinations and new trip extensions aren't the *only* way to extend your time abroad with us. Here's a great new way to show your travel independence . . .

Choose a Travel “Break Away”

At the traveler event in New Hampshire I mentioned earlier, I asked the women in the audience this question: “How many of you know what we mean by a travel ‘break away?’” I have to say I was shocked when I saw that only about a third of the 300 travelers in the crowd raised their hand. “Well, we're not doing our job then,” I told them.

When we talk about a “break away,” what we mean is when you choose to leave your tour group to spend some time on your own. You can “break away” before or after your main trip, or even after your trip extension! Sometimes it's nice to spend a few days—or even weeks—relaxing or exploring independently in a favorite city (it's the closest I get these days to my freewheeling, backpacking days in the '70s!). You might want to check out a few smaller museums and galleries, watch the world go by from a local café, or simply stroll the streets with no plan at all to get a feel for local life.

So when you plan your next trip with us, be sure to consider an independent “break away” from the group. Some travelers also like to start their trips early with an extra night or two in their arrival city to rest up so they'll be ready for a fresh start when the rest of the group arrives. Others might like an extra night at an airport hotel in their connecting city before or after their trip. If you wish to “break away” for a day, a week, or even a month, just let us know and we'll work with you on the details. And for passionate travelers like me, this is one of the best ways to extend your travels:

Choose a Trip Combination—and Save!

It doesn't surprise me that more and more of our travelers are choosing to take another trip directly after their first one ends. If you've got the time, combining two or more trips into one comprehensive journey makes a lot of sense. Think about it: If you're already in Europe, Asia, or

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South America, why not see more of the region and avoid another lengthy international flight? We have travelers who have taken two, three, or even more “back to back” trips before flying back home to the U.S.

And there is one more great advantage to heading to another destination directly after your first trip ends. Combining just *two* trips “back to back” can save you up to \$4000 compared to the cost of returning home and taking these trips separately—and a lot more as you add more trips. If you have the time, be sure to consider this great travel option. And with all these new choices, there’s one more thing I should mention ...

**With Grand Circle Cruise Line’s Lowest Price Guarantee,
You’re Getting the Best Value in Travel**

Wherever you go with Grand Circle Cruise Line—and however long you choose to stay—you can rest assured knowing that you’re getting the best value in the travel industry. And for 2013, we’ve made it easier than ever for you to reserve a vacation and be sure that you receive your first choice of departure dates, or a favorite trip extension before it sells out. Grand Circle Cruise Line’s NEW 2013 Lowest Price Guarantee allows you to get your reservation in early without worrying about a thing—because if prices *do* go down after you reserve, we’ll automatically refund you the difference. (For details on our new Lowest Price Guarantee, go to www.gct.com/priceguarantee.) And while we already offer the lowest prices around, there are a variety of ways to increase your savings *even more*. One of the best ways is by taking advantage of our exclusive Good Buy Plan, which can save you up to 10% of the price of your trip just by paying early. You can also apply any Frequent Traveler Credits you’ve accrued to your next trip. There are so many extra ways for you to save, I can’t list them all here, so be sure to check them out at www.gct.com/waystosave.

We want you to realize all of your travel dreams with Grand Circle Cruise Line. World travel and experiencing other cultures expands our minds and enriches our understanding of our common humanity. It’s good for the heart and soul, too. I’d certainly love for you to keep traveling with us, but the important thing is to listen to your heart and just keep traveling. The choice is yours.

Best wishes and happy travels



Harriet R. Lewis
Vice Chairman
Grand Circle Cruise Line

P.S. I’ll be sure to give you another seasonal update on more new changes and travel choices with Grand Circle Cruise Line in the fall. Have a great summer!