

After the Family Holidays

WORDS: MICHELLE HARRIS

At a recent afternoon tea, I asked some dear friends Pam and Leon, their thoughts on the most interesting places to visit outside of the normal holiday destinations. We discussed at length our favourites and they suggested I should compile a top 5 for this month's column.

So after much thought and with consideration for the many cities travelled throughout my wanderlust days – these are the firm favourites and especially if you enjoy walking around interesting cities:

1. JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is and always will be – my number 1.

There is the most incredible feeling in this most holy and spiritual of cities. Most people who visit are touched by its magic and the tangible pull that brings you back and connects with you on a cultural, religious and personal level. There is no other city in the world like Jerusalem, however as each experience is unique to the traveller, the only way to know just how special, this wonderful city really is... you need to visit. If looking for some recreational respite, the best shopping arcade is Mamilla near The Old City, however take plenty of Euros/Sterling/Shekels – the shops are wonderful, the merchandise is irresistible and everything is exorbitant!

2. NEW YORK

New York buzzes with a 24/7 pulse. Vibrant, dynamic, unrelenting in its ability to enthral, excite and stimulate: whether shopping, architecturally, theatre or dining. If going to New York, it really is imperative to stay in Manhattan and if possible, to see a show on Broadway. I saw The Producers in London and on Broadway. Broadway was much better!

3. ISTANBUL

Istanbul is the only city which belongs to two continents: Asia and Europe. If going to this fabulous city, it is essential to visit Sultanahmet (Old City) as most of the famous, historical sights are located in this part of Istanbul. Most interesting places are: The Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace (including the Harem) and the Grand Bazaar. Hagglng is essential and expected so don't be shy...

4. ST. PETERSBURG

St. Petersburg is architecturally beautiful and has one of the best museums in the world: the Hermitage. It is not possible to visit The Hermitage and Winter Palace in one day so if in St. Petersburg for a few days, it is worth buying a two day ticket. This is the absolute minimum and I would recommend researching your preferred rooms. For me personally, I thought the Winter Palace was breath taking. I will never forget the sense of awe I felt in the Malachite Room and the Czar's Library.

5. VENICE

This has to be one of the prettiest cities in Italy, if not Europe. Venice is like visiting a film set, so spectacular it's almost unreal in its exquisite perfection. It is therefore not surprising that so many films have used Venice as one of their locations including From Russia With Love, The Italian Job, Death in Venice, various versions of The Merchant of Venice, The Talented Mr. Ripley plus many others. In total, 88 films have Venice in them.* I sometimes go just for the day. Sounds strange albeit a strenuous exercise. As most of the readership for this magazine is relatively near to the M11, Stansted is not a difficult destination. On certain days, Ryanair have their first flight to Venice at 0630 (FR792) and the last return flight is at 2230 (FR799) so with just a handbag, fan, Euros, passport, keys, map and tissues – Venice is the perfect venue, for a delectable lunch... Worth looking out for ticket promotions but be warned, parking in the short term car



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park at Stansted is ridiculously expensive unless sharing the cost with a friend or two. Also pickpockets are rife in Venice – be careful.

So here's to post-holiday travel to places which don't have beaches or a Mickey Mouse (apart from the Disney Shop in New York!)

If you have any comments on this feature – please contact Michelle Harris direct: Michelle@starcopywriting.com / www.starcopywriting.com

* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Films_set_in_Venice

