



THE 100 BEST VACATIONS TO ENRICH YOUR LIFE By: Pam Grout (Publisher: National Geographic)

Stop to smell the roses on a walking vacation Hiking Trails Across the Country & Beyond

"For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land." –Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau is most remembered for his books *Walden*, about simple living amid nature, and *Civil Disobedience*, on resistance to government. But among his published works is a small treatise on walking, about which he once wrote, "I regard this as a sort of introduction to all that I may write hereafter." In "Walking," first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* after his death in 1862, he extolled the virtues of traveling by foot, saying we should walk "in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return."

While we don't recommend never returning, a walking vacation can be great because it offers an intimacy with a place that you don't get when you're zooming through in a car. And for those of you who are thinking, "But I won't get to see much," consider this. If you drive by a field of purple flowers, you see a swatch of purple, but if you walk by the same field, you get to examine the petals, notice the bee flitting in and out, maybe even figure out what type of flower it is. It's a matter of what you want to see. Lapping a bunch of time zones doesn't mean you've seen more.

By moving more slowly, you get to meet locals, stop in tiny cafés, hear about the cow that got loose last night from Farmer John's field, and breathe the fresh air. It's the only way to fully immerse yourself in the cultural and natural history of a place. And do we really need to point out the health benefits? Everyone from fitness guru Kathy Smith to your doctor will tell you that walking burns calories, boosts energy, lowers blood pressure, and reduces your risk of diabetes and perhaps even osteoporosis.

The following company offers amazing walking vacations complete with self-indulgent lodging (after all that time on your feet, don't you deserve it?), gourmet dining, and fascinating itineraries.

Classic Journeys. This company out of La Jolla, California, offers what it calls "cultural walking adventures" throughout the United States and to dozens of countries around the world. In its view, walking is the best way to travel because that way "the world can't slide past you faster than you can absorb it." Classic Journeys hires locals to lead the tours, guides who, as the brochure says, will "be the kind of person who knows the man whose wife's brother owns the olive press...the opening day of truffle season (and the truffle hunter who'll let you tag along) ... and which local specialties don't appear on the menu." If you need help with anything from haggling for a rug to buying guidebooks, their guides have an "in." Typically, you'll walk for three to four hours a day. Some of their North American itineraries include Washington's San Juan Islands, Napa Valley, Utah's national parks, Nova Scotia's coasts, and Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. Prices range from \$2,395 for a six-day trip to Nova Scotia to \$3,895 for a ten-day of Vietnam. Both of these trips include accommodations, transportation within the region, and most meals.

Excerpted from The 100 Best Vacations to Enrich Your Life (National Geographic Books; ISBN: 978-4262-0095-3; May 15, 2007; \$19.95), by travel expert Pam Grout, showcases a broad range of experience-driven getaways in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

For more information on Classic Journeys' Cultural Walking Adventures in 55 regions worldwide, contact Classic Journeys at 800-200-3887 or www.ClassicJourneys.com.