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Contact: Sarah Thies

Tel: 800-200-3887

Email: sarah@classicjourneys.com

Custom-Tailored Tours From Classic Journeys Defy Travel Downturn

Adventurers now able to tweak established itineraries to personal tastes

La Jolla, CA – Following a year when almost every trend in the travel industry seemed to point in one direction – down – Classic Journeys has revealed a specific segment of their adventure travel business on an unprecedented upswing.

The niche-within-a-niche is called Private Journeys, an increasingly popular option that allows guests to choose their traveling companions – family members, friends, even professional colleagues – and put their own personal stamp on the trip that suits them best. As of this month, the company has 135% more guests reserved on Private Journeys for the 2009 tour season than it did at the same time last year for the 2008 tour season.

“In real life, one size doesn’t fit all,” explains Edward Piegza, president and co-founder of Classic Journeys. “Even with more than 65 cultural walking adventures, culinary tours and family journeys worldwide, we know that not every itinerary will provide a perfect fit.”

The program’s premise is simple: any one of the company’s adventure tours can be turned into a Private Journey. Guests gather up their wish lists and the company’s Private Journey coordinators take it from there. Using their published itineraries as a starting point, tour coordinators may add a day here or fine-tune an agenda there...enabling guests to maximize every moment on tour.

Named a World's Best Tour Operator by Travel + Leisure Magazine

Classic Journeys • 7855 Ivanhoe Ave., Ste. 220 • La Jolla, CA 92037

800-200-3887 or 858-454-5004 • fax: 858-454-5770

www.classicjourneys.com • moreinfo@classicjourneys.com

For some groups, crafting a Private Journey might be as simple as picking a destination, coordinating calendars, and selecting a date when everyone can take a week off at the same time. For others, the company might tweak an itinerary to include a can't-miss cultural experience or a visit to a must-see locale. Hence the Private Journey slogan: “Your group. Your date. Your agenda.”

Whatever their preferences, Private Journey guests have the luxury of traveling on their own terms without worrying about logistics or language barriers. All the perks of Classic Journeys’ regular tours remain as is, from knowledgeable native guides to exceptional accommodations and foodie-caliber meals. Final pricing is contingent on each group’s customized itinerary. Owing to the dollar’s recent gain in value against most foreign currencies, costs compare favorably with rates for regular tours.

A look at a few upcoming scenarios from the company’s Private Journey file illustrates their appeal:

* Next June, 30 members of one family – three generations – will be joining a Private Journey to the [Dalmatian Coast](#).

* Another multi-generational family of 16 will be spending New Year’s Eve on a weeklong Private Journey to [Costa Rica](#).

* A travel agent on the East Coast will be leading her ninth Private Journey for a group of women friends, this time to [Morocco](#). While there, the company has arranged for them to enjoy a cooking instruction at a private farm in the Middle Atlas Mountains, henna painting and a pottery-making workshop.

Since 1997, when the company began offering Private Journeys, the concept has grown to represent more than 20% of its total business. As the four couples who have traveled on a Private Journey every year for the past eight years will attest, flexibility, creativity, and the enthusiastic rapport with Classic Journeys staff are what keep them coming back.

Readers who want to learn more about how to create a Private Journey of their own can click on www.classicjourneys.com/private, or speak directly with a Classic Journeys Tour Coordinator at (800) 200-3887.

About Classic Journeys:

Classic Journeys offers cultural walking adventures, culinary tours and family journeys in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific. Guests enjoy luxury accommodations and gourmet meals that reflect the best of each region, coupled with soft adventure activities, daily interactions with locals, and native guides who make countries and cultures come alive. Tours are six to 12 days long with two to four hours of easy-going walking per day. Land-only tour prices range from \$2395 to \$6995 per person (with discounts for small groups and children traveling with parents). Average tour size is 10, limited to a maximum of 18 guests per departure. Full details and links to itineraries are available at www.ClassicJourneys.com.