

**EXPERIENCE THE TASTES OF THE WORLD WITH
CULINARY TOURS FROM USTOA MEMBERS**

NEW YORK – August 14, 2012 – Culinary tours allow travelers to go beyond the tourist hotspots and experience the colorful history, unique culture, and distinct tastes of a destination, just like locals. According to an annual survey of United States Tour Operator Association (USTOA) active members, more than half of respondents (53%) planned to offer new "experiential" travel programs this year, naming culinary themed tours at the top of the list.

"Travelers tend to be more adventurous when exploring the world and this includes their taste buds. Many would rather take part in native culinary traditions than eat the same food they can get at home," said Terry Dale, president of USTOA. "Luckily for travelers, USTOA members recognize the importance of food in travel and celebrate authentic culinary experiences around the globe."

From Eastern Canada to Vietnam, here is a sampling of unusual and authentic culinary vacations offered by USTOA members:

Europe

- **Go Ahead Tours** makes chocolate the focus of their 10-day tour "A Taste of Tuscany & Umbria: Eurochocolate Festival," available October 13 and 15, 2012 as well as October 5, 2013 with a stop at Perugia's annual nine-day festival featuring chocolate sculpting, chocolate art displays, a chocolate spa with aromatherapy and chocolate facials, cooking demonstrations and of course, chocolate tasting. Travelers will also experience the unforgettable hilltowns and vineyards of Tuscany and Umbria. Prices from \$3,489 per person. More details can be found at www.goaheadtours.com.
- Travelers can discover their inner Julia Child on "A Taste of France," a 10-day excursion from **Tauck** that starts in Paris with hands-on instruction at Alain Ducasse's École de Cuisine before departing on a 7-night cruise along the Rhône River through vineyard country. Along the way guests will enjoy a market visit in Provence with local chefs, a visit to Lyon does famous market, Les Halles, and a wine taste in Beaujolais, among other activities. Available May 1, June 2, and September 2, 2013, prices start at \$5,290 per person based on double occupancy. For more information visit www.tauck.com.
- In Piedmont, a northern Italian region with medieval towns and fortifications, majestic countryside with views of the nearby Alps, and elegant baroque architecture, food is a celebrated part of the culture. On **Country Walkers'** seven-day "Italy (Piedmont)" adventure, travelers cover three to six miles a day and will have the opportunity to tour and taste at the historic Marchesi di Barolo winery, participate in a demonstration and tasting by a celebrated and passionate local cheesemaker, and learn about the evolution of beekeeping from a local beekeeper while sampling honey, among other culinary-focused activities. Available September 8, September 22, October 6, and October 13, 2012, prices start at \$4,598 per person. Visit www.countrywalkers.com for more information.
- During **Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection's** 13-day "Splendors of Italy 2013" cruise from Venice to Rome, travelers will have the opportunity to experience a pasta-making workshop in Bologna, a winetasting lunch at Castello Verrazzano, an Italian dessert-making demonstration, an olive oil and wine tasting, and a special wine and food pairing dinner. Available on multiple departure dates between April and November 2013, prices start at \$5,499 per person with savings up to \$1,200 per couple if booked by October 31, 2012. For additional details visit www.uniworld.com.

Asia

- From bun cha and pho in the north to bun bo, banh khoai, and other Nguyen Dynasty delicacies in the center, to the spicy, French infused flavors of the south, travelers on **Travel Indochina's** "Vietnam Culinary Discovery" will learn about the people and traditions of Vietnam from the vantage point of the kitchen. In addition to three cooking classes, one of which is a full day experience at the Red Bridge Cooking School in Hoi An, guests will visit Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue, Saigon, and the Mekong Delta. This 11-day journey is available on a number of departure dates through March 2014 with prices from \$1,995 per person. Visit www.travelindochina.com for additional details.
- Travelers on "Israel: A Touch of History, A Taste of Wine," a 10-day expedition from **Cox & Kings**, will experience traditional cuisine as lunch guests in an Arab home, taste local specialties at markets, enjoy a dairy lunch at an Ein Camonim goat farm, participate in a chocolate workshop, and sample "real" bagels at a beloved Jerusalem bakery. In addition to enjoying authentic cuisine such as crunchy falafel, creamy hummus, and substantial wine, travelers will visit the famous Western (Wailing) Wall, view the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount, and float effortlessly on the buoyant waters of the Dead Sea. Available through February 2013, prices start at \$7,815 per person based on double occupancy. For more information visit www.coxandkingsusa.com.

The Americas

- Wine connoisseurs and people who simply like to dabble in wine tasting are offered the opportunity to explore California's renowned wine country on "San Francisco & California Wine Country," a seven-day journey from **Globus**. After a guided sightseeing cruise across San Francisco Bay, travelers will visit a number of wineries throughout the regions of Napa and Sonoma including Cline Cellars, Ravenswood Winery, Mumm Napa, V. Sattui Winery, and Buena Vista Winery, also sampling a selection of extra-virgin olive oil along the way. Available September 21 and September 28, 2012, prices start at \$1,749 per person based on double occupancy. For more information visit www.globusjourneys.com.
- No epicurean tour of Eastern Canada would be complete without maple taffy in the snow and travelers on **Collette Vacations** "Collette Classic Touring: The Best of Eastern Canada" will get the opportunity to try this favorite regional treat. While experiencing two night stays in Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, and Toronto, as well as a Maid of the Mist cruise to see Niagara Falls up close, visitors will enjoy breakfast at a local sugar shack and learn about the traditions of maple syrup making while sampling a number of delicious traditional foods made with local maple syrup. Available on a number of dates in October 2012, April through October 2013, and April 2014, prices start at \$2,149. Visit www.collettevacations.com for more information.
- Travelers can explore the Pacific Northwest on **Lindblad Expeditions'** seven-day "Columbia & Snake Rivers Journey: Harvests, History and Landscapes" sailing aboard the 62-guest National Geographic Sea Bird and National Geographic Sea Lion. The itinerary highlights regionally inspired sustainable food and includes a trip to The Gorge White House, a 102-year-old working family farm that features panoramic views of Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams, culminating in a delicious meal using farm ingredients on the property's garden patio. With weekly departures through the end of October 2012 and prices from \$3,990 per person, visit www.expeditions.com for more information.
- Guests on **Trafalgar's** "Costa Rica Eco Adventure" will hunt for the delicious "pipa" (a variety of coconut), visit a banana plantation, visit a local cheese factory, eat lunch at a master chocolatier's workshop, and explore a local Tico family plantation learning about delicate heart of palm. Available through March 29, 2014, prices start at \$1,249, per person. For additional details visit www.trafalgar.com.

Africa

- **Lion World Tours'** "Culinary Safari," offered on several departure dates in 2012 and 2013, provides travelers the opportunity to explore the stunning views, local culture, and exquisite cuisine of South Africa. Foodies will enjoy cooking with game in the kitchens of the Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa in Cape Town, using uniquely South African ingredients at Le Quartier Francais in the heart of the Cape Winelands, and preparing Potjiekos, a stew prepared outdoors over an open fire. Prices starting from \$6,499 per person, visit www.lionworldtravel.com for more information.
- From the world-famous Jemaa el Fna Square in Marrakech, which houses an array of food, snake charmers, local musicians, and fortune tellers, to the numerous monuments and world's first established university in Fes, travelers on the 11-day "Morocco Foodie Tour" from **GoWay** will get a full picture of the sights, sounds, and tastes of Morocco. Culinary highlights include visits to couscous, oil, saffron, and rose co-ops and cooking classes. Available November 1, 2012 and March 20, May 1, and June 26, and September 25, 2013, prices start at \$3,069 per person. For more information visit www.goway.com.

Australia

- **Swain Tours'** "There is Nothing Like Australia" tour offers guests the opportunity to eat breakfast with kangaroos, participate in hands-on tutorial on the art and science of blending grape varietals in a winemaker's laboratory, and cruise like a local on Sydney Harbour before eating an Australian barbecue lunch served with regional wines and beers. Throughout the journey, travelers will cross the International Date Line, explore coastal and rainforest scenery, and tour the spectacular Sydney Opera House. Prices from \$12,070, this extraordinary 12-night journey must be booked by November 30, 2012. Visit www.swaintours.com for additional details.

For questions and more information on USTOA, visit www.ustoa.com, call 212-599-6599, or email information@ustoa.com

Editor Note: Information was provided by individual companies and was correct at time of writing. All tours/packages subject to availability. Images available upon request.

About USTOA:

The Active member companies of U.S. Tour Operators Association provide tours, packages and custom arrangements that allow travelers unparalleled access, insider knowledge, peace-of-mind, value and freedom to enjoy destinations and experiences across the entire globe. Each Active member company has met the travel industry's highest standards, including participation in the USTOA's Travelers Assistance Program, which protects consumer payments up to \$1 million if the company goes out of business. USTOA Associate members represent an array of travel supplier companies such as airlines, tourist boards, attractions, hotels and resorts, ground operators, and more.

As a voice for the tour operator industry for 40 years, USTOA also provides education and assistance for consumers and travel agents.

Contact:

Gina Sisco/Liz Carty
Redpoint Marketing PR., Inc.
212-229-0119
Sisco@redpointpr.com
Carty@redpointpr.com

###