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Debunking Self Guided Travel

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Discover France Takes the Mystery Out of the New Popular Trend of Travel

FRANCE—What inside travel secret have the Europeans known for so long that seems to have escaped North America travelers? It's the understanding and utilization of self-guided touring.

“Self guided travel is a growing trend due to the flexibility it presents and the extraordinary price that accompanies it,” states Discover France founder Loren Siekman. “It applies primarily to bicycling as well as walking tours, but certainly to many other activities as well. Because it offers support as well as independence, guests don't have to put forth any effort in order to generate a relaxing and memorable vacation.”

The differences between group travel and self-guided travel are quite vast. With the most obvious being that with group travel there is a fixed date that vacationers must fit into their schedule, as opposed to being able to choose departure dates and trip duration with a self-guided trip. In addition group travel tosses guests into a pool of fellow travelers that will not be known in advance, and of course there is a colossal difference in price.

Self guided biking and walking can be characterized by the following benefits:

Flexibility - Durations can be modified to meet a clients needs, hotels are available for many budgets and there is no minimum participation, eliminating the threat of cancellation by the operator.

Affordability - Prices are amazing by comparison to the group guided option, yet worth the extra it might cost over doing it all yourself in a self-contained concept.

Support - Most operators offering the self-guided programs also provide baggage transfers, emergency support, orientations, transfers, and add on services. Often, these support services are extremely beneficial because they are founded on

expert knowledge of the region, and therefore a very reliable source for finding and offering unique properties, routes, and visits.

Individuality - Many of the tours follow themes, and are created with a unique vacation experience in mind. Off the beaten path routes are well chosen and naturally provide for a lot of interaction with the locals and their culture.

As with all other types of travel, there are a number of questions guests need to ask themselves before deciding if self-guided travel is right for them. It's an individual case each time, and the team at Discover France will be glad to help travelers make a decision.

Guests should first ask themselves if they are fit enough to accomplish the requirements of the trip they are contemplating. Cycling or walking tours always require some minimum level of fitness; however, on a self-guided trip local support contacts would have to be notified in the event that a participant can't finish the stage.

Secondly, travelers need to know if they can get by in a vernacular that is not their primary language. This doesn't mean they have to speak a second language, just simply get by. For example, will phrasebook pronunciations and charades be enough? If this causes panic to the traveler, it may not be an ideal fit. On the other hand, many good experiences result from these types of cultural encounters.

Finally, guests will need to be able to read a map and follow road signs. This is generally an easy task, but if travelers are not comfortable with the interpretations, it again may not be an ideal vacation plan. Nearly all self-guided trips will have this little "adventure" built into it, so guests should count on it with any tour.

The routes, the organization and logistics, as well as the services that accompany self-guided travel have been in place and operating in Europe for many years. The team at Discover France is hopeful that North American travelers will now make an informed decision to join the many who have gone before, and continue to go self-guided touring year after year.

For a list of available self-guided packages, pricing, and booking information call 800-960-2221 or e-mail info@discoverfrance.com .