



ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION *of* SMITH COLLEGE

Empires and Explorers: A Private Jet Expedition

February 20-March 13, 2008

DETAILED PRELIMINARY ITINERARY

(subject to amendment)

February 20 & 21, 2008

Depart U.S.A/ London, U.K.

Depart on individual commercial overnight flights to London. The following day, meet follow travelers, lecturers, and expedition staff at our hotel for a welcome reception and dinner.

Four Seasons Hotel, London

February 22

Bamako & Timbuktu, Mali

Our first exotic stop is Bamako, Mali. At the National Museum, built in local mud-brick style, discover collections of musical instruments, costumes, photographs, and ritual objects. Enjoy a special performance by Dogon dancers at our hotel.

While Europe labored through the Dark Ages, Timbuktu thrived as one of the most advanced cities in the world. Once a center of Islamic learning and a major stop for gold and salt caravans on trans-Saharan trade routes, it is now one of the world's most remote outposts. En route to Ghana, we stop to explore Timbuktu's unique architecture, and observe the camel caravans of nomadic Tuaregs distinguished by their traditional blue clothing.

Sofitel l'Amitié, Bamako

February 23 & 24

Ashanti Kingdom & Akwasidae Festival, Ghana

From Accra, travel to Kumasi, spiritual capital of the Ashanti Kingdom, to take part in the ancient Akwasidae Festival. Costumed dancers perform and storytellers memorialize the history of the Ashanti kings to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets.

Enjoy a private audience with Nana Osei Tutu II- the Ashanti king, or *Asantehene*- adorned in massive gold jewelry and flanked by sword-bearing guards and subordinates waving ostrich-feather fans.

In a suburb of Accra, visit world-famous Ga craftsmen who create ornate coffins- shaped like cars, leopards, bottles, even microphones- to symbolize the deceased's persona or affiliation.

Labadi Beach Hotel, Accra

February 25, 26 & 27

Namibia's Skeleton Coast

A maritime graveyard for the many seafaring explorers whose ships wrecked on its rugged shore, the Skeleton Coast harbors a wealth of natural beauty and history.

From Walvis Bay, where hundreds of flamingos feed in the lagoon, take a dune drive to the coastal German colonial town of Swakopmund. Adjacent to the enormous desert wilderness of Namib-Naukluft Park, you may wish to fly over the breathtaking dunes or go quad biking through the desert. Or choose to cruise the coast past a huge colony of sea lions, and enjoy fresh local oysters.

Swakopmund Hotel

February 28 & 29

Livingstone, Zambia

Explorer and missionary David Livingstone, the first European to see Mosi-oa-Tunya- "smoke that thunders"- renamed the spectacular waterfall Victoria Falls for his queen.

On the Zimbabwe-Zambia border, the mile-wide Zambezi River plunges 350 feet into a narrow chasm to create one of the world's magnificent sights. Our hotel has its own access to the falls, which you may visit as often as you like. We also take a "Flight of the Angels" for an aerial view of this marvelous spectacle.

You may choose to see many of the explorer's personal effects at the Livingstone Museum, the largest in Zambia. Other options include a wildlife safari in the surrounding bush or a visit to a Zambian village.

Royal Livingstone Hotel

March 1, 2 & 3

Maldive Islands

The Maldive Islands may have been explored as early as 1500 B.C. Explorers who crossed the Indian Ocean were compelled by the ocean currents to stop in the atolls of the Maldives.

The islands are known today as a paradise of pristine white sand beaches, brilliant turquoise lagoons, and swaying palm trees. Visit an island village, enjoy exotic marine life among the coral reefs, or explore the diverse collections of the National Museum.

Taj Exotica, Four Seasons, or Soneva Gili, Maldive Islands

March 4 & 5

Angkor, Cambodia

Imagine as members of the British Royal Geographic Society in the 1850s became the first Westerners to gaze on the marvels of the fabled Khmer capital of Angkor. Luxuriant jungle covered much of the site, but the temples still stood as emblems of the ancient kingdom of Cambodia.

Visit magnificent Angkor Wat, a symbolic representation of Hindu mythology and one of the wonders of the world; the Bayon with its enigmatic faces watching over every corner of the former Khmer empire; and Ta Prohm, where encroaching jungle foliage intertwines with immense stones in the unexcavated temple.

Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor

If you have visited Angkor before, we would be happy to arrange an excursion to Bateay Srei- the citadel of women- or to the Rolos Group of temples built 400 year before Angkor Wat.

March 6 & 7

**Rangoon & Pagan, Burma
(Yangon & Bagan, Myanmar)**

Burma, officially known as Myanmar since 1989, is mainland Southeast Asia's largest and yet most isolated nation.

In the capital of Rangoon (Yangon), the dazzling gold stupa of the Shwedagon Pagoda has dominated the city's skyline for more than 2,500 years. Legend has it that the Shwedagon enshrines eight hairs of the last Buddha. Visit Scott Market, renamed Bogyoke Aung San Market in honor of Burma's national leader, where 2,000 shops sell everything from jewels to costumes to herbs.

The following day we explore the ancient capital of Pagan (Bagan), one of the world's most remarkable religious centers. In the two centuries before Kublai Khan overran the region in 1287, some 13,000 temples, pagodas, and other religious structures were built on the vast plain east of the Irrawaddy River. Today, more than 2,200 monuments remain in this "Kingdom of the Temple Builders."

Traders Hotel, Rangoon

Travelers who have already visited Burma's glorious cities may wish to explore the fascinating floating villages of Inle Lake.

March 8 & 9

Jaipur, India

In Rajasthan's exotic pink-stone capital of Jaipur, discover the intricate mosaics, marble, and glittering chamber of mirrors in the Amber Palace. Explore the Hawa Mahal- the palace of winds- built in 1799 so ladies of the Mogul court could view public events.

Also visit the City Palace and Jai Singh's observatory, a marvel of brick curves, slants, circles, and pillars. Enjoy a special, private celebration including entertainment by costumed musicians, dancers, puppeteers, and artisans during a gala Rajasthani dinner.

Rambagh Palace Hostel, Jaipur

March 10 & 11

Lisbon, Portugal

Some of the world's most intrepid explorers sailed under the flag of Portugal in its golden age of discovery. Most expeditions departed from the capital of Lisbon.

You may choose a scenic walking tour of Lisbon's medieval streets, flowered courtyards, and ancient monuments. Or drive along the coast to the Arrabida Mountains, stopping to enjoy the cobbled seaport of Setúbal and lunch at a pousada. As a third option, drive to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Sintra. Celebrate with a gala farewell dinner at our hotel.

Four Seasons Hotel Ritz, Lisbon

March 12 & 13

London/ Return to U.S.A.

Depart for London on the last leg of our journey. Arrive in the afternoon and enjoy a leisurely evening.

After breakfast at our hotel the following morning, return home on regularly scheduled commercial flights.

Four Seasons Hotel, London