



Q&A

NICK TREND ANSWERS YOUR TRAVEL QUERIES

EARLY SUN AND WALKING HOLIDAY

Q We want to book a walking holiday for early next spring, probably in April, somewhere where the weather is warm; perhaps Morocco or Sicily. We don't want to be with a group; we do want good food and a well-researched itinerary.

AL, via e-mail

A Trails and footpaths are not well marked in Morocco, so you'd need to find a private guide or join an organised group. For this reason, I've concentrated on Sicily instead. Headwater (01606 720199; www.headwater.com) offers a couple of self-guided walking holidays, including a nine-night Islands of Sicily Walk. This follows a volcanic-themed itinerary along Sicily's eastern coast, taking in Taormina's Greek Theatre and the historic city of Catania, with five days of hopping between the beautiful Aeolian Islands; there's a three-night stay on Lipari and two nights on Stromboli. It runs from 3 April and prices start at £1,257 per person, including breakfast, four evening meals, international flights and airport transfers. A self-guided walking holiday from Walks Worldwide (0845 301 4737; www.walksworldwide.com) covers similar ground, but is shorter (only seven nights) and cheaper, with prices starting at £645 per person; accommodation is in three- and four-star hotels, including breakfast, but excluding flights.

SKI CHALET

Q I'm looking for a ski chalet in a good resort that sleeps eight adults. It must be of a high standard, but the key thing is that it's near the piste and has ski-in/

ski-out access. We want to travel in January and our budget is about £1,000 per person. Any ideas?

JC, via e-mail

A Ski Verbier (020 7401 1101; www.skiverbier.co.uk) has Chalet Max (sleeps eight), a contemporary chalet apartment just a few metres from the end of the piste and a two-minute walk from the Medran lift station and town centre. A chef prepares breakfasts, afternoon teas, pre-dinner canapés and four-course meals with wine. Prices start at £8,450 for a week's rental in January, excluding flights. VIP Ski (0844 557 3119; www.vip-chalets.com) has Chalet Lugano (sleeps seven to 11) in La Plagne. It overlooks the pistes, lifts and

nursery slopes, and offers lift access to the shops, bars and restaurants. Rates in January start at £959 per person, including flights, transfers and chalet board. Lastly, Meriski (01285 648518; www.meriski.co.uk) has Chalet Bambis, one of only a handful of ski-in/ski-out chalets in Méribel. It has a master bedroom on the second floor and three other en-suite bedrooms on the ground floor. It costs from about £6,000 per week, excluding flights and transfers, but including full breakfast, afternoon tea and a four-course meal with wine on six evenings.

excursions and local transfers, but not international travel. You will be in a group of no more than eight guests with two chefs. The regular course aims to build on existing skills and includes demonstrations and six-course gourmet dinners. Tasting Places (020 8964 5333; www.tastingplaces.com) has a cookery school in Gascony, but focuses mainly on Italy where it offers small-group courses in several regions. A week-long course at the 15th-century Villa Casagrande in the Dolomites costs from £2,150, with tuition in making regional dishes such as *osso buco*.

Lastly, The Italian Connection (01424 728900; www.italian-connection.co.uk) offers a choice of cooking schools, including a long-established centre on the Amalfi Coast which has four- and six-night programmes throughout the year. Prices from £1,699, including breakfast, dinner, two lunches, wine and transfers from Naples airport; flights are extra.

ALTITUDE SICKNESS

Q I'll be travelling overland at high altitude (4,000-5,000metres) in December and am worried about altitude sickness. I have suffered before and have some Diamox to take, but a friend suggested ginkgo leaf extract might help, too. Is this effective?

JK, via e-mail

A You should contact your GP to discuss this. I am

not qualified to give advice on drugs, although I know that Diamox may be prescribed to help with altitude sickness. I don't know of any medical evidence concerning the effectiveness of ginkgo leaves, but your doctor will have access to current medical opinion. The key to adapting to altitude is to acclimatise slowly and ascend in easy stages.

Got a travel query?

Please e-mail your travel questions to expertstraveller@condenast.co.uk, or write to The Experts, Condé Nast Traveller, Vogue House, 1 Hanover Square, London W1S 1JU

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COOKERY COURSE

Q A friend and I want to do up to a week's residential cookery course in France or Italy, in a smallish group and in a convivial atmosphere. Our budget is £1,500 to £2,000 each.

LS, via e-mail

A The Walnut Grove (00 33 2 43 98 50 02; www.walnutgrovecookery.com) in the Loire Valley has five-day cooking courses throughout the year at €1,595 per person, including accommodation, all meals, tuition,